Ten Trails for Spectacular Summer Stargazing

Twashington Representation

A Publication of Washington Trails Association | wta.org

Hiking Solo

>> Doing It Safely and Loving It

CLIMATE CHANGE: How It Affects the Way We Recreate

Reduce Your Impact
On and Off Trail

Jul+Aug 2016





SUMMER VACATION >> SPEND A WEEKEND GIVING BACK

Spend a weekend, or longer, volunteering with WTA to accomplish much-needed trail work. Experience beautiful new locations, camp out and make new friends on a weekend event, or challenge yourself on an extended weekend with a Backcountry Response Team!



SIGNUP AT wta.org/volunteer



Karen Daubert / karen@wta.org

50"ANNIVERSARY

In 2016 WTA is celebrating 50 years of protecting trails. From our humble beginnings as a little newsletter to our current role as a leading voice for trails, our goal to empower hikers continues to drive our work of protecting and promoting trails in Washington state. This year, as we acknowledge the founders, members and volunteers who inspired and led us to this point, we will turn our sights to the future of trails.

As the state's leading hiking resource and the nation's largest volunteer trail maintenance community, WTA serves more than 4 million hikers each year through our bimonthly magazine, online resources, social communities and collaborative partnerships. Through our grassroots advocacy, WTA focuses on trail issues including funding, access and wilderness protection, while our innovative youth and families programs educate and empower families, teachers and youth groups to discover the outdoors.

In a time when more people are looking to get outside, WTA will continue to find new and innovative ways to encourage safe and sustainable hiking and trail systems, while working to improve access to hiking opportunities for all Washingtonians. We invite you to continue this journey with us, as we continue to explore new ways to empower, inspire and engage the hikers of today and tomorrow.

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

CONNECT WITH WTA:











See You On the Trail

love absolutely everything about trails! So far this summer, two favorite memories include exploring a new urban trail with a dozen young people and being so lost in conversation on another hike, with two not-as-young hikers I had just met, that we all ended up hiking an extra 3 miles and laughing at our mistake. Every time I am on trail, I enjoy a special memory. And I have enjoyed sharing those memories with you, which brings me to this: my last Front Desk.

Serving as executive director of Washington Trails Association has been my dream job. It has not only been the high point of my professional career but its culmination. It is now time for me to explore those trails that I have worked so hard to protect—and to retire!

I turn 60 in July, I have a new grandchild, and my husband is retired and looking for a hiking partner. It feels like the right time to start my next adventure. I very much look forward to returning to WTA as a volunteer. My last day will be July 30, my birthday, and until then I will be working hard!

I am pleased we have achieved so much in the last five years, including financial growth and program expansion across the organization. I am especially proud of our bold strategic plan, innovative work to introduce new youth to the outdoors, expansion into northwest and northeast Washington, investment in technology and establishment of an ever-growing legacy program, of which I am an enthusiastic member. I'm awed by what we have accomplished together. I leave an organization that has become a national leader in outdoor recreation and is well-positioned to welcome a new director to continue this path onward.

As for my future plans, I won't be going far. As a new assistant crew leader, I am already signed up for four days of volunteering in the Olympics; you can follow my adventures through trip reports.

The future of WTA is bright, and I regard my time with the organization as incredibly rewarding. I am grateful for WTA's generous members, passionate volunteers and excellent staff and board. I am honored to have had the opportunity to lead this great organization, and I can't wait to see what happens in its next chapter. Senior director Rebecca Lavigne will serve as interim executive director, and WTA's board of directors has assembled a search committee to recruit and hire a successor.

Once again, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to each of you, whether you are a member, volunteer, donor or community partner. I look forward to seeing you on the trail!

Karen & Danbert













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COVER: For experienced solo hikers, there's no better trail to go it alone on than the Pacific Crest Trail. This solo hiker enjoys the wide-open views from Cispus Pass in the Goat Rocks Wilderness. Photo by Melissa Ferrell.

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Oregon Calling

I thasn't been a secret (but it hasn't been widely publicized) that for the last four-and-a-half years I have been managing Washington Trails from WTA's super-secret rebel base in Portland—my home. This has allowed me to keep one hiking boot in Washington and one hiking boot in Oregon, to both manage a fantastic Washington trails and advocacy magazine, and to develop my soon-to-be-released Hiking the Pacific Crest Trail: Oregon guidebook. But after four-and-a-half years, it is time for me to focus my efforts closer to home.

This summer, in addition to preparing for the launch of my PCT guidebook, I'll be starting development on two new Oregon hiking guidebooks. This will be in addition to working with some of Oregon's recreation managers and conservation organizations to try to shed some light (and muchneeded funding) on Oregon's hiking trails—some of which are in dire need of some TLC. It's my hope that one day Oregon will have its own statewide organization similar to WTA—one that advocates for, helps maintain and assists hikers in discovering the fantastic trails to be explored in Oregon.

It's been a privilege to serve as *Washington Trails*' editor for the past several years. But I could not have maintained this publication without the aid and contributions of an incredible crew of volunteer writers, photographers and illustrators—all happy just to share their knowledge and experience in helping you get outdoors and discover new things on and around Washington's trails. If you've been reading *WT* for a while now, you've probably become familiar with who these people are, and recognize their unique and creative voices and styles. If you're newer to WTA, you will soon discover the wealth of information that these hikers, authors and adventurers have to share.

As I sign off on my final production of *Washington Trails*, I would like to dedicate this issue to these fine folks: Kelsie, David, Lindsay, Brittany, Mike and Holly for sticking with *WT*'s trail team from the very beginning—you guys rock! Nate, Jer, Kristen, Brandon and Rachel for joining on later and elevating the trail team even more; guidebook authors Tami and Craig for your expertise and invaluable contributions over the years; Jim and Rebecca for your exhaustive efforts in proofing every issue; Buff, Doug, Whitney, Lindsay and Andy for sharing your art and imagery; the countless other contributors and photographers I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with, including Stacy, Deanna, Ray, Charlie, Ashley and Sarah; and Cassandra, *WT*'s MVP for the last two years, who never missed an assignment—even while trekking across Europe for nine months! Thank you, one and all!



I wish everyone safe and enjoyable adventures on trail. And if you want to venture "south of the border" this summer, pick up a copy of Lisa Holmes' new book, I Heart Oregon's Seven Wonders, packed with 23 hikes in some of Oregon's most scenically stunning locations. I can vouch for all of them!

Happy trails,



Risk and Responsibility

Being accountable on trail

It's getting late, and the sun is setting behind a row of craggy peaks, bathing the valley in shadow. We've been hiking for six hours, and our group is tired. After an ascent of 3,000 feet in just over 6 miles, some of our party are having difficulty keeping up, and minor injuries have slowed some down. Still miles from the car, and with night quickly approaching, we realize we've put ourselves in a potentially dangerous position with no clear backup plan.

This scenario is more common than you might think. When we set foot on a trail, we accept that our choices can have consequences, that we are entering a realm where we are no longer in control of every detail. Circumstances can be unpredictable. With the right preparation though, we can mitigate the risks inherent in recreating outdoors.

Recognizing Risks

Risks come in many forms. Some risks are obvious: a strong-flowing creek you need to cross. Others are harder to predict: a twisted ankle on a loose rock. Either way, our approach to these risks will define the outcome of our hikes. If the sun is setting and you decide to keep hiking, you're taking a risk that you won't make it back before it gets too dark to see. If an injury slows you or a member of your party down, you'll need to factor in the extra time and carry appropriate equipment to handle it. If you choose to pass a trail closure sign, you're accepting the risk that there may be hazardous conditions ahead. Showing up prepared and getting in the habit of recognizing risks will help you make smart decisions when you do have to face them.

Taking Responsibility on Trail

When hiking, responsibility goes beyond just keeping yourself safe. It also includes being accountable for your actions, as they may impact others. If you hike in a group that's making choices you're not comfortable with, speak up. We can all enjoy the hiking experiences Washington offers, but preparation and careful consideration are critical for ensuring your hike is a successful one. Be responsible for your actions and the outcome of those actions. While we can't control nature, we can control ourselves and our choices.

See the full original article at wta.org/risk.

Mitigating

Consider all the possibilities that could occur as a result of your actions. At the end of the day, you're responsible for yourself. Only put yourself in situations you know you can get out of. Ask yourself:

- How long is the hike, and how much elevation will I be gaining? It will take much longer to gain miles if you're going up a steep mountainside.
- Do I have enough food and water? Always worth the weight.
- Am I bringing the right clothing? Weather in the Northwest can shift suddenly.
- Do I have the proper gear for an emergency? Could I spend the night outside safely if I needed to? Carry the Ten Essentials.
- Do I know the trail that I'll be hiking well enough to get back to my car if I get separated from my group or take a wrong turn? Know your route and how to get back.
- Do I understand my impact on the trail and environment? Small actions add up. Practice Leave No. Trace ethics.

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY AND MANAGERISKS WHEN YOU HIKE?

Listen to your gut and don't hesitate to turn around and call it a day if you're not feeling right. Making it to the destination is optional; making it back safely is mandatory.

Aaron Wilson, hiker

I stay aware of all things around me, take mental note of water sources, potential emergency shelter areas and natural survival resources, edible plants, etc.

Shelley Stevens, hiker

We have a turnaround time, carry a jacket even on nice days and have a map.

Linda Roe, WTA member

When the trail has washed away and the river rises, [it's] time to turn back or go to higher ground.

Nick Stephens, hiker

I always let the most novice hiker in the group set the pace and difficultly level for the day. To avoid tripping, I stop hiking when I want to really look around.

> Kindra Ramos WTA staff

TRAIL SMARTS

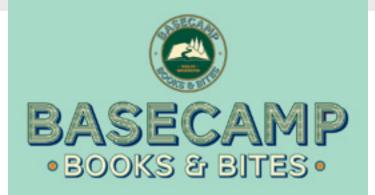
Driving Forest Roads

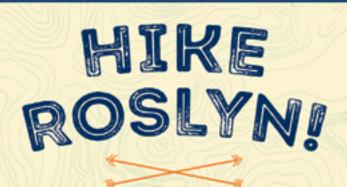
You don't have to drive forest roads to hike in Washington, but with terrific trails to visit on seven national forests, you probably will at some point. Here are a few tips to help you navigate these potentially tricky roads.



- **A)** Pay attention to signs. Clearly posted routes using white horizontal numbers on a brown background indicate routes that are better suited to passenger cars than are roads marked by signs with vertical numbers.
- **B)** Go slow, and keep to the right. Besides saving your car from pothole damage, it will also give you time to stop if you encounter an oncoming car, logging truck or obstacle.
- **C)** Exercise passing courtesy. When approaching another car on a single-lane road, look for a turnout to wait in and let the other pass. Give drivers going uphill the right of way, even if that means backing up.
- **D)** Don't tailgate. Don't drive so close to another vehicle in front of you that all you see is their dust. Back off and give them lots of space.
- **E)** Park for the people. Park well off the road, but don't block turnouts. Make sure emergency vehicles or vehicles with horse trailers can pass.
- **F)** Clear your vision. Wipe off your headlights before leaving the trailhead—especially in evening hours—to remove accumulated dust.
- **G)** Don't count on Google, cell service or roadside assistance. Have a detailed map and extra supplies in your car in case you get a flat or get stuck. It might be awhile before you can flag down help.

For more information, visit wta.org/trailsmarts.





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WTA Tackles the Blues

It's not every day that Washington Trails Association volunteers get to venture into new territory, but that was just the case when a recent Backcountry Response Team (BCRT) headed into the Blue Mountains to work the Rattlesnake Ridge-Panjab Loop Trail. The trip marked the first time that WTA volunteers have worked on the Umatilla National Forest, a 1.4 million-acre forest that covers southeast Washington and northeast Oregon and represents a continued effort by WTA to support hiking resources statewide.

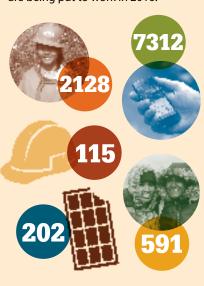
It was certainly a successful first venture into this area. The group of 12 volunteers from all over the state spent four days on the Panjab Trail and removed more than 150 downed logs. The next step is to tackle the Rattlesnake Trail, which is in need of extensive treadwork. WTA BCRT crews hope to be back in the Blues next spring to continue making improvements on these area trails. In the meantime, there are other trails in Washington that need your help this summer. To find out where you can join a WTA trail work party, visit wta.org/volunteer.





MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Here's a look at how your contributions are being put to work in 2016.



- VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTED
- TRIP REPORTS FILED
- TRAILS WORKED ON
- YOUTH ENGAGED VIA OLT
- BAGS OF CHOCOLATE FOR VOLUNTEERS

WTA Volunteer Joins the U.S. Forest Service

The work undertaken by WTA's trail maintenance program would not be feasible without our many land manager partners. We collaborate closely with these



When asked about her experience with WTA and what she'll be taking with her to her new post, Nguyen shares, "The most important skill I've learned from working with WTA is the ability to work closely with a diverse group of people. The relationships built during Backcountry Response Team [trips] have given me a good understanding of how to read a team of people and find my place in that team, as well as where I can be most effective."

We appreciate Cindy's leadership and know that she will be a great asset to the Forest Service this summer. Check out the full interview with Cindy at wta.org/ signpost/wta-acl-joins-forest-service-ranks.



MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

Montana Wilderness Association Launches Online Hiking Guide

This spring, the Montana Wilderness Association (MWA), a conservation nonprofit based in Helena, launched **hikewildmontana.org**. The project was conceived by Kassia Randzio, MWA's community engagement manager, and modeled in part on Washington Trails Association's hiking guide, maps and trip reports.

"We wanted to make this information available for people to get out and connect with these areas, especially in places we are trying to protect, [and] connect people with outdoor adventure," Randzio told the Bozeman Daily Chronicle

It's an advocacy approach shared by WTA, based on the belief that people will become stronger advocates for public lands that they have visited. Want to take advantage of the great new hiking guide? Many of Montana's summer trails are well within reach for Washington hikers on the eastern border. Check it out, and remember to file a trip report when you get back!

WTA Helped Me Get Into College

We consider ourselves lucky to work with some really great young people. Annually, more than 1,000 kids and teens work with WTA, rain or shine, to improve trails all over the state. Volunteer service is increasingly required to graduate from high school, but it also looks great on college applications. We asked two WTA youth ambassadors and soon-to-be graduates why they included their volunteer experience with WTA on their college applications.

Yale Warner, 2014 youth ambassador: "I was proud to be selected as part of the [youth ambassador] program, and the leadership aspect was highly beneficial in showing my capabilities for working with a team. It was a nice culmination of my years working with WTA and a demonstration of my ability to commit to a specific organization."

Madeline Kramer, 2015 youth ambassador: "The youth ambassador title helped [demonstrate] my passion not only for the outdoors but also my desire to connect with people and think more about how the outdoors fits into modern society."

Learn more about WTA's youth volunteer opportunities and how to sweeten your own college application at wta.org/teens.





WTA Highlights

TOP: Hats off to the volunteers, crew leaders and agency partners who made the 2016 Crew Leader College such a success!

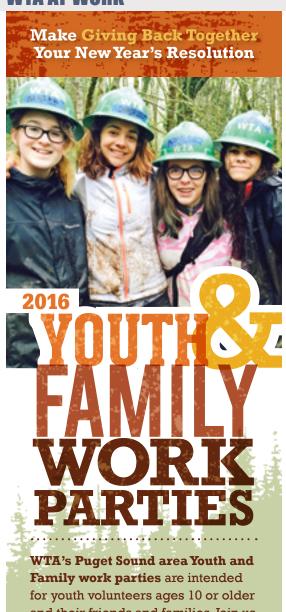
UPPER: WTA board member Titti Ringstrom and crew leader Michael Bellis at a gathering for WTA donors, members and volunteers.

LOWER: WTA's 2015 youth ambassadors reunited at Federation Forest State Park for a weekend of celebration, reflection and trail work.

BOTTOM: WTA and Cowiche Canyon Conservancy teamed up on National Trails Day for WTA's first work party at Snow Mountain Ranch.







and their friends and families. Join us for shorter, all-ages service projects and fit more fun into your Saturdays!

Summer 2016 Dates:

July 9: Soaring Eagle, Sammamish Aug. 20: Soaring Eagle, Sammamish Sept. 24: Coming soon!

All events are from 9am to 2pm



Thank You for Giving BIG!

We are blown away by the amazing support demonstrated by our entire community. Despite a few hiccups on GiveBIG day, you helped us raise more than \$250,000 to protect and maintain Washington's trails. Here are a few examples of what donors were saying about WTA on GiveBIG:

- "Been enjoying the great resources for years. I buy the products that donate to WTA. Time to donate directly."
- "Happy 50th WTA. Keep up the great work! Thanks to all the trail volunteers."
- "I have enjoyed your work personally and love hitting a well-maintained trail. Thank you!"
- "Thank you for all you do, and looking forward to raising money for our trails in this year's Hike-a-Thon!"
- "Love all of what your organization is about! Keep up the stellar work!"







After the Burn

LAKE CHELAN - Many of us were impacted by the fires that raged across the state last summer. The warm temperatures, drought and severe lack of snowpack all contributed to one of the most devastating fire seasons on record. Unfortunately, epic wildfires are becoming more commonplace. So is the damage they cause to trails and recreation.

While fires can help forests thrive, they also have long-term impacts on trails, even after the blaze ends. It takes many years for vegetation to fully recover after a significant burn. This not only affects the aesthetic draw of an area but also undermines hiking trails in these areas in a number of ways. Following a fire, the lack of vegetation and its supportive root networks makes the land more susceptible to erosion and landslides. When large tree roots burn out underground, they create holes in the trail surface that need to be filled in with rocks and soil to help maintain trail safety and stability. In addition to these challenges, the sheer number of standing dead trees-and the drastically increased risk of tree-fall-pose a major risk to hikers visiting the area. The risk is so severe that these trails often get closed for years at a time in the name of public safety.

To help repair some of the trail hazards created by the 2015 Wolverine Creek Fire, a recent Volunteer Vacation trail crew spent a day working on the Domke Lake Trail near Lake Chelan. At the end of a week of hard work, the crew improved nearly 2 miles of trail with new treadwork, log-outs and debris removal. However, work on the Domke Lake Trail is not done. Land managers estimate that the trail could remain closed for a few more years, as the trail will need more work and will continue to be monitored for additional potential hazards.





A hiking holiday celebrating public lands and preserving their future. Go outside on #watrailsday.

Get involved at wta.org/watrailsday

Hikers, Hunters, **Birders on Public Lands Means Millions** for Local **Communities**

OLYMPIA - Communities near Bureau of Land Management (BLM) properties benefit from millions of dollars in spending from nonmotorized recreation, according to a new study by ECONorthwest. This is the latest in a series of studies that prove what Washingtonians have known for years: The outdoors create healthy communities in body, soul and wallet.

This is the first study to look at the impact of BLM lands. "We found that the majority of visitors to BLM lands enjoyed nonmotorized recreation; in the process, they spent \$1.8 billion in the economies of local communities, which resulted in \$2.8 billion of economic output at the national level," says ECONorthwest's Kristin Lee, who led the research. "This study shows that in addition to providing nonmotorized recreational opportunities enjoyed by millions of people, these lands



Goose Butte outside of Ritzville is one of the many places enjoyed by hikers and managed by BLM. Photo by Anne Boyd.

also provide local economic opportunities and contribute billions of dollars to the U.S. economy."

According to the report, in 2014, 413,000 visits to Washington's BLM lands alone generated \$18 million in direct spending within 50 miles of the recreation sites.

BLM manages more than 422,000 acres of land in Washington state, including conservation gems like the Juniper Dunes Wilderness, San Juan Islands National Monument and Chopaka Mountain Wilderness Study Area. They also manage more than 25 recreation sites, mostly in Eastern Washington, including the Yakima River Canyon, Escure Ranch, Coffee Pot Lake, Palmer Mountain and Douglas and Duffy Creek.

Don't Get Caught Bear-ly Aware

Setting up camp at the end of a long day of hiking can feel like a chore. After pitching your tent and making dinner, it can be tempting to just take your food into your tent with you overnight, but it's best not to tempt fate—or animals. To avoid encounters with bears and other wildlife, it is important to properly store your food and other scented materials.

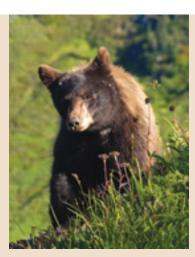
"Bears are naturally wary of humans," says Rich Beausoleil, bear and cougar specialist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. "But they can overcome that fear when they are rewarded with food provided intentionally or unintentionally by people."

There are two types of bears in Washington: black bears and grizzly bears. You are far more likely to spot a black bear, but it's important to remember that they can come in a variety of colors, including

cinnamon brown. You can identify black bears by their large, round ears and straight face; they roam most of Washington's mountain regions. Grizzly bears can be identified by their large shoulder humps but are extremely rare in Washington and mostly range in the far northeast corner of the state.

TIPS FOR HIKING IN BEAR COUNTRY:

- ► Talk, sing or wear bear bells to warn wildlife of your presence while hiking.
- ► Keep dogs on leash at all times and keep children
- Learn to properly hang a bear bag or invest in a bear-proof food canister.
- ▶ If you will be in an area where encounters are more common, or if it just makes you feel more confident, carry bear spray.



This young black bear is searching for food in Mount Rainier National Park. If you're camping in bear country, be sure to store your food securely. Photo by John Albert.

Thank You to WTA's **Corporate Partners**

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WTA has several special 50th anniversary partnership opportunities for 2016. To find out how your company can support WTA's work for trails, call us at (206) 508-6849.

New National Recreation and Water Trails to **Promote Increased Outdoor Recreation Opportunities**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In honor of National Trails Day, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis recently announced the designation of six local and state National Recreation Trails, adding more than 350 miles to the National Trails System, and three National Water Trails, adding more than 600 miles to the National Water Trails System.

"By designating these new national trails, we recognize the efforts of local communities to provide outdoor recreational opportunities that can be enjoyed by everyone," said Jewell. "Our world-class network of national trails provides easily accessible places to enjoy exercise and connect with nature in both urban and rural areas while also boosting tourism and supporting economic opportunities in local communities across the country."

"The network of national recreation and water trails offers expansive opportunities for Americans to explore the great outdoors," said Jarvis. "With summer here, I hope everyone will take advantage of a trail nearby to hike, paddle or bike. It's a great family outing and an opportunity to fill your lungs with fresh air and enjoy the beauty of the world around us."

New trail designations include the 67-mile **Backbone** Trail in California's Santa Monica Mountains, the 250-mile Bartram Trail in Florida's Putnam County, and the 192-mile Arkansas River Water Trail in Kansas. Here in Washington, the 9.1-mile Roche Harbor trail system on San Juan Island was designated as a National Recreation Trail.

The National Recreation Trail designation recognizes existing trails and trail systems that link communities to recreational opportunities on public lands and in local parks across the nation. Each of the newly designated trails will receive a certificate of designation, a set of trail markers and a letter of congratulations from Secretary Jewell.

The National Recreation Trails program is jointly administered by the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service, in conjunction with a number of federal and nonprofit partners.





Planning some exciting hikes for this summer? Turn those miles into dollars for your favorite trails! Hike-a-Thon is WTA's annual fundraiser that gives members like you the chance to make your miles count. Whether you are a summer summit-bagger, a wildflower-seeking wanderer or a new hiker exploring trails for the first time, signing up for Hike-a-Thon gives you the chance to win awesome prizes and connect with WTA's vibrant and collaborative community.

HOW-TO



HIKE-A-THON
Then & Now

1st Annual Hike-a-Thon (2004)

18 participants 700 miles \$5,300 raised for WTA 12th Annual Hike-a-Thon (2015)

289 participants 11,300+ miles \$123,043 raised for WTA*

* Hike-a-Thon funds support all WTA programs—including the hiking guide and our volunteer trail maintenance teams!



Photo by Cheri Dahlke

ADVICE FROM VETERAN HIKE-A-THONERS

"You don't want to wait until August to get sponsors. Sign up at the beginning and start getting the word out. I pick a theme or goal for my Hike-a-Thon and plan my hikes around it. One year I wanted to hike my age in miles; the next year it was 100 miles; last year it was exploring new hikes. " ~ LINDA ROE

"Hike-a-Thon is a great excuse to get family and friends out on trail who may not come otherwise. You can get people excited about this goal you are trying to achieve, and if they can't donate, they can often support you by coming out on trail with you. My husband is still not a big hiker, but I got him to go out at least five times that first Hike-a-Thon! - LAURA BARON

"Always keep your pack ready to go. Reorganize immediately after a hike, and if you need to add last-minute stuff for the next trip, just put a sticky note in the top of your pack." ~ LIZ FALLIN

¹⁴My first few years of Hike-a-Thon, I just wanted to average 1 mile a day. And that is easy to do around Seattle in Carkeek Park, Discovery Park, Seward Park, etc. You shouldn't feel like you have to carve out a ton of time from your day to make a difference for Washington's trails. ** - AMANDA ARKEBAUER

READY TO MAKE YOUR **MILES COUNT?**

Now

- (1) Go to wta.org/hikeathon to sign up for notifications when registration opens on July 1.
- (2) Get excited and start planning your hikes for August! You can even save them in your "My Backpack" account on wta.org.

July 1

- (1) Register for Hike-a-Thon at wta.org/hikeathon. The \$20 registration fee includes:
 - The 2016 Hike-a-Thon T-shirt
 - Your own fundraising page to share with friends and family
 - Weekly Hike-a-Thon tips during the month of August
 - Access to a host of awesome prizes from our sponsors
- (2) Collect pledges and donations from your friends and family on your donation page.

Aug 1–31

Go hiking and log your miles. Keep collecting donations on your fundraising page. Support one another on the WTA Hike-a-Thon Facebook page. File trip reports for your hikes to help other hikers know what to expect out on trail.

September 17

Celebrate your Hike-a-Thon successes at WTA@50: Celebrate & Recreate and collect your prizes in person. Hike-a-Thoners will be treated to extra swag at our 50th anniversary party in Snoqualmie.



Sign up today at wta.org/hikeathon

A MOOSE A PIKA VALK I.NTO

... Both were in search of a new environment to call home.

By Jennifer Jarstad

Unless you've been living under a mountain for the past few years (where the temperature is a cool and constant 42 degrees1), you've probably heard about a little thing called climate change. Temperatures are rising around the globe, and the impacts are being seen and felt from high-latitude alpine environments to the equatorial tropics. We hear stories of extreme weather resulting in everything from massive blizzards and floods to excessive temperatures and droughts. And the effects, whether positive or negative, are being felt by nearly all living species.

This past April, the Puget Sound area experienced temperatures that climbed into the upper 80s for several days and broke numerous regional temperature records. This is a trend we have been experiencing with greater regularity every year. Forests are suffering loss from drought, fires and pest infestations, while rising temperatures are altering wetland ecosystems, melting glaciers and causing sea levels to rise.

At a recent hearing before the House Natural Resources Oversight Committee, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell described the loss of natural areas (due to development) in the West as occurring at the rate of a football field every twoand-a-half minutes! So perhaps it's time to take a cold, hard look at what hot temperatures mean for those of us who love to spend our recreational time in the great outdoors—and what we should expect as a result of a changing climate. To begin, we need only to look to the animals.



Last December, a sea turtle (affectionately named Tucker the Turtle) was found on Cannon Beach, Oregon, roughly 1,200 miles from his natural, warm-water habitat off Mexico's Pacific Coast. Hypothermic and hungry, Tucker was no longer able to swim in the frigid waters and was rescued and brought to the Seattle Aquarium for rehabilitation. How he ended up so far from his tepid home waters is not fully understood, but according to Seattle Times reporter Lynda Mapes, any number of factors may have contributed to his journey, including being carried by currents in winter storms or possibly losing his navigational perception as a result of high domoic acid that resulted from the West Coast's toxic algae bloom last fall.

Matthew Godfrey, with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, has written of numerous similar events along the Atlantic Coast, and indicates that based on historical documentation, sea turtles have been gradually moving farther north over the past century. Whether or not these incidents are due to storms, searching for food or other factors, every year some sea turtles are found farther from their original habitat.

Unfortunately, there is not a similar migration option for the pika. Often compared to the canary in the coalmine, the pika is an indicator species of climate change because it occupies a very specific high-elevation alpine ecosystem. As a critter that is unable to survive temperatures in the upper 70s for even a few hours, on hot days pikas are forced to hide out in rocks on cool, moist talus slopes and they ascend to higher elevations to avoid predation as temperatures cool. They also suffer in

¹ Average year-round temperature at Ape Cave near Mount St. Helens.



extremely cold temperatures if there is not a sufficient blanket of snow to burrow under for insulation. With warming temperatures squeezing out their habitat, pikas are running out of compatible higher elevation environments that can support them.

The adjustment to a changing climate will be easier for some species to adapt to and more difficult for others. The north-south trending mountain ranges in the Northwest are advantageous in that they allow some wildlife to journey within their mountainous habitat as temperatures lure them farther north—hopefully providing them an improved chance of survival. Some species have other advantages. Birds that are able to move greater distances will likely have an easier time seeking out more hospitable climates than species that are unable to move long distances. Conservation Northwest has indicated that the ranges for many bird species are shifting farther north each year—to the delight of those who love to spot new varieties in their backyards. Still, locating a suitable

territory with proper nutrients and protection from predators adds to the challenge for many species.

These obstacles are not just faced by fauna. Some flora are blooming earlier and longer in response to temperature change, when pollinators can help them thrive. Trees, however, are somewhat limited by the distance they can disperse their seeds or extend their roots. There is some evidence that alpine trees have already been moving higher in elevation in search of cooler climates. Thus far, it appears that the wetter west-facing woods have tolerated changes in our climate better than the drier east-side forests.

While it may be difficult to consider the decline of some of our amazing wildlife, it remains to be seen how many species will adapt. But what exactly is happening in the environment that is driving this? >



During seasons of increased rainfall, we are likely to see a greater number of roads, trails and bridges washed out in floods and landslides. NASA's Earth Science Communications Team website states that a rise in global temperatures should be expected for the next several decades, and the cause of those changes is primarily anthropogenic (influenced by human activity and pollution). In contrast, University of Washington's Professor of Atmospheric Sciences Cliff Mass indicated that the vast majority (90%) of the changes we are experiencing in climate are due to natural variability, and a much smaller proportion (10%) is exacerbated by human activities. The reality may fall somewhere in the middle. Regardless of the cause of climate change, there is no denying that the signs are becoming increasingly obvious.

In 2013, Island Press (a nonprofit environmental publisher) updated their quadrennial report entitled "Climate Change in the Northwest," part of a series of national climate assessments advising the president and Congress on the status of climate change science. The report explains that what ultimately determines the earth's surficial temperature is the equilibrium between the solar radiation that is entering the atmosphere and the infrared radiation (heat) that the earth emits. Several gases in the troposphere absorb some of the earth's radiation, thereby decreasing the amount of heat that is discharged to outer space. Other factors, such as large volcanic eruptions, can cool the planet for

years post-blast due to the presence of tiny particles reflecting sunlight back into space.

In addition to global influences, local factors also affect climate conditions. Weather patterns in the Pacific Northwest generally oscillate between El Niño and La Niña. What determines the system is the interaction between oceanic circulation and atmospheric conditions. In the Puget Sound area, there is a complex interplay between coastal conditions and mountainous topography that contributes to large vacillations in temperature and precipitation within a relatively small area.

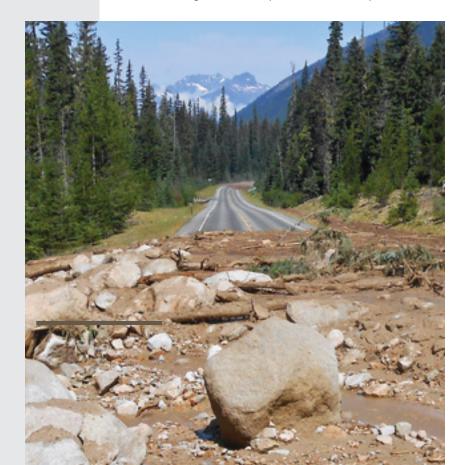
As a result of warming temperatures, the Pacific Northwest will likely experience increased periods of inadequate snowpack and shrinking glaciers. Although snowpack is the most significant source of riparian flow, Island Press notes that in the North Cascades, glacier runoff makes up 10 to 30 percent of summer current. Melting glaciers can also have profound effects on streamflow and temperatures, taxing Pacific salmonids and other aquatic wildlife.

Moving a little lower in elevation, the diet of big game animals could be adversely affected as well. Resources for the Future's publication *Backgrounder* notes that a warming climate causes plants to absorb more CO2, reducing the nutritional value for those eating the leaves. This will contribute to a spike in malnutrition in some animals, such as mule deer, which require a higher level of nutrients for survival than, say, elk.

Another factor we experience as our climate warms is an increase in pests and pathogens. Destruction to forests from pests is on the rise, and it will continue to increase, says *Backgrounder*. The greatest impact will be felt by the high-elevation forests. Bark beetles, described as the size of a grain of rice, thrive in warm weather and drought conditions.

The ripple effect continues, as the combination of periods of drought and pests that kill off younger trees will in turn generate more fuel for wildfires. Island Press referenced a study estimating that in the next 25 years, Pacific Northwest wildfires will engulf an additional 900 square miles each year. And while wildfires will certainly displace many, the authors state that there are some species, such as the northern flicker and hairy woodpecker, that prosper following scorching fires.

With warming temperatures, melting glaciers and more severe storms, our coastal areas will likely





see significant changes as well. The 2013 study from Island Press offers a prediction that by the year 2100, the Washington coast sea level will rise somewhere between 4 to 56 inches. This wide range is based on local variations influenced in part by El Niño systems and the presence of active tectonics, such as those underlying the Olympic Peninsula. Already we have experienced an average rise of 0.12 inches per year between 1993 and 2012. Even the lower 2-inch rise estimate suggested by Backgrounder could put as much as 56 square miles of land in the Puget Sound under water within the next 50 years, displacing more than 44,000 people, as well as geese and ducks that use that habitat during migration.

As the temperature of Northwest coastal waters increases, so will the distribution of marine species and the occurrence of detrimental algae blooms. Ocean acidification has already been found to weaken the shells and skeletal structures of some marine life, and yet, demonstrating the flip side, Island Press has written of sea grasses that actually benefit from an increase in acidified waters.

This is a pretty grim and sobering outlook on what our environment could face in the coming decades. But what does a changing climate mean for those of us who love to recreate in the great outdoors?

CHANGING THE WAY WE PLAY

We may have different reasons for heading outdoors. Some of us are motivated by exercise challenges, while others are looking for solitude or an escape from daily life. Some may be in search of berry picking, bird watching, hunting, fishing or stunning views. No matter your reason for heading out into the wilderness, you may find that you will need to acclimate to changes in the outdoors that are the result of a rapidly changing climate.

In December 2015, many skiers and snowboarders in the Northwest got a holiday present when the Cascades received more than 112 inches of snowfall in one week, and as much as 25 inches in a 24-hour period. That was the equivalent of more than a quarter season's volume of snow in one week! The downside, of course, was I-90 closing over Snoqualmie Pass for days while crews tried to keep up with clearing the roads and controlling avalanche potential.

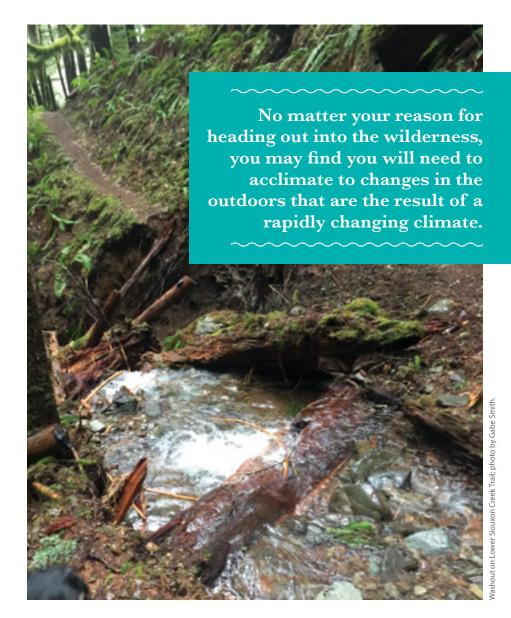
When asked about snowpack trends in the Northwest, avalanche meteorologist Garth Ferber stated that we should >

expect to see less snow in coming years. This is bad news for skiers and ski resorts, which may experience shorter seasons and may have to start relying on artificially produced snow to extend their season—or expanding their recreation potential by supplying mixed-season amenities, such as golf or mountain biking. On the other hand, this could be good news for hikers, who may be packing away snowshoes earlier each year in favor of hiking boots.

But less snow could also mean more—or less—rain. During seasons of increased rainfall, we are likely to see a greater number of roads, trails and bridges washed out in floods and landslides. Conversely, dramatic drought periods will likely increase the potential for forest fires, wiping out vegetation in areas that are currently used for outdoor recreation.

In addition to planning for changes in activities based on our weather, there are reasons to believe that heading into the wilderness may require increased vigilance. The old Boy and Girl Scouts motto, "Be prepared," is a given for most outdoor adventurers, but some of the things we may take for granted when heading into the great outdoors will possibly require greater awareness as our climate transitions. For example, some of the water sources we rely on when backpacking or hiking may not be available during times of warmer, drier weather, and therefore carrying extra water may require greater consideration. The surge of tick populations has already resulted in a rise in cases of Lyme disease, so as we head outdoors, we may need to be more vigilant about protecting ourselves from bug bites. We should also anticipate more rigid fire restrictions as the risk of wildfires increases.

More powerful storms may generate higher incidences of wind damage, rising sea levels, increased coastal erosion, depleted beaches and altered marine life patterns. Island Press expects cold-water marine life to decline, while warm-water species are likely to increase in abundance in response to a warming ocean. Those who head out for a fishing trip may be trying new lures and bait to attract different yields.



WEATHER OR NOT, HERE WE GO



Although we may feel the effects of a changing climate, it doesn't mean we will all be locking ourselves into our air-conditioned houses all summer. In fact, many studies indicate that warmer temperatures will extend our summers, resulting in a greater desire for outdoor recreation. We are likely to see more people hiking, camping, fishing and visiting beaches as warmer temperatures tempt us outside. And this just might result in a deeper appreciation of what our wilderness has to offer and how important it is to protect that which we value.

Oh yeah, and what about that moose who walked into the bar? How is the moose adapting? In recent years, Alaska has seen an increase in the moose population in tundra regions, yet in the Northeast and north-central parts of the U.S., moose are on the decline and will likely disappear in the future. Because moose are comfortable living in a cold, harsh climate, milder winters will likely reduce their numbers. So what might you order while sitting at the bar with that moose and pika? How about an ice-cold Moose Drool and a "Pika" Place beer. Together, we can all kick back and sing along with R.E.M., "It's the end of the world as we know it, and I feel fine."

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

By Rachel Wood

You don't have to seek out polar bears to spot a climate change indicator species. You're likely to encounter a charismatic climate change spokes-beast on rocky alpine slopes right here in the Northwest.

Hiking through a talus field, you'll hear them. The telltale, "Eeeeeppppp!" sounds almost like the squeak of a dog toy. If you're lucky, you might catch a quick glimpse of them scurrying through the scree, often with a mouthful of grass or wildflowers. American pikas make for charming trail companions, A member of the rabbit family, pikas have sizable round ears and are roughly the size of a large potato. They make their homes beneath the cool rocks of alpine mountainsides—a place that is threatened by rising temperatures due to climate change.

IN A WARMING CLIMATE

Pikas are ideally adapted to their rocky habitats, which help them keep cool, avoid predators and seek shelter. They spend their summers preparing for winter by building "haypiles," a collection of grasses and other vegetation—sometimes more than a meter thick! Pikas do not hibernate, but instead live off their happiles, insulated underneath the snowpack. Their regimented life leaves little room for change.

With warming temperatures, biologists have already begun to observe dwindling numbers of pikas, especially among populations in California, Utah and southern Colorado. Pikas cannot be out in temperatures above 75 degrees for very long, meaning that as summers in the high country get warmer, the less time pikas can collect food for winter. A warming climate also forces them to higher and higher environments, where vegetation declines as the elevation increases. This means that as pikas move upslope, there will be greater competition for food.

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

But the pika might be more resilient than we give it credit for. Researchers have reported finding

populations of pikas in Utah living off a diet of lichen and moss, which have nutrient levels close to cardboard. Even more surprising, there's a thriving population of pikas living at low elevations along the rocky slopes of the Columbia River. Like the pikas in Utah, moss is a big part of their survival. Besides being a food source, pikas use moss in their homes to keep temperatures cool enough in the summer and warm enough in the winter.

HIKING FOR PIKAS

The unique Columbia Gorge population is also one of the driving reasons behind Cascade Pika Watch. A collaborative pika-monitoring program, Cascade Pika Watch sends researchers and citizen scientists out on trails throughout the Cascades to record pika observations through opportunistic sightings. The organization first started in the Columbia River area, before gaining more volunteers and expanding to cover mountain populations across Washington and Oregon's Cascade Mountains. This summer also marks an exciting time for the program—it will be the first summer that all observations and data will be collected solely by citizen scientists.

Want to be a pika hiker? Cascade Pika Watch offers citizen scientist training programs, Pika Hikes and online certification to become a citizen scientist for the program. Visit oregonzoo.org/cascades-pika-watch to learn more or sign up for a training session.

66Eeeeepp! Cascade Pika Watch offers citizen scientist training programs, Pika Hikes and online certification to become a citizen scientist.



Reducii mpact

Smart choices for preserving our wild lands



t's no secret that hikers value the wilderness areas where they recreate. They cherish untrammeled meadows, pristine alpine lakes and unspoiled old growth. They advocate for the preservation of natural areas, and they support organizations like WTA. And yet, in the ultimate catch-22, those same hikers can be inadvertently leaving behind more than footprints when they venture outdoors.

Simply put, use creates impact. Despite our best intentions, recreating outdoors affects the environment. While some effects are immediate and obvious, like litter on the trail or a campfire in an alpine meadow, the majority go unnoticed until the cumulative effects become apparent months or years later. One backpacker going off trail likely won't leave a trace but that could become a well-trodden social trail over the course of several seasons. Pitching one tent in a fragile meadow may not create a long-lasting effect, but 20 tents throughout the summer surely will. The seemingly minor actions of one person quickly become major impacts when repeated by others.

Luckily, it's not only damaging actions that snowball. Small, positive actions replicated by many can undoubtedly minimize negative environmental impacts on our favorite wild places. Responsible outdoor enthusiasts can take many simple measures to ensure they leave the smallest footprint possible when enjoying time outdoors.

getting started ▶

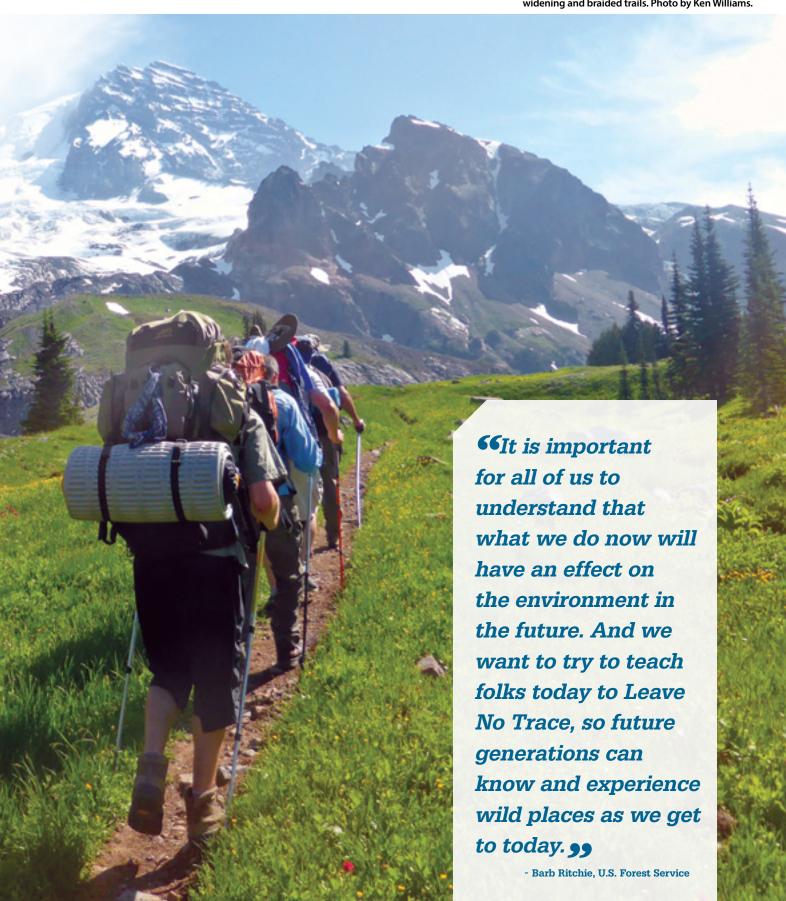
Minimizing your footprint begins long before your boots even hit the trail. Simply traveling to and from trailheads presents a major environmental hurdle. According to Greenpeace International, every tank of gasoline in the average American car releases 300 pounds of carbon dioxide. Considering the distance that many of us travel to reach our starting points and how many times a year we venture outdoors, it is easy to see how quickly those carbon emissions add up. However, the pretrip decisions we make can alleviate some of the problems that inherently stem from gaining access to remote wilderness areas. Consider the following scenarios.

I'm an avid hiker, but I worry about the effect that hours of driving to and from trailheads has on the environment. How can I balance my love of hiking with my desire to reduce carbon emissions?

Explore closer to home. A shorter drive equals less carbon emissions. Without a doubt, there are certain hikes that are worthy of a lengthy car ride, but there are also many hidden gems right in your own backyard. Spending some of your hiking time in local, city and county parks instead of remote regions will cut down on pollutants from gas-powered vehicles while still giving you the nature fix you crave.

In my everyday life, I use public transportation as much as possible. How can I incorporate public transportation into my hiking plans?

Thanks to expanding public transit systems, it is possible to use bus transportation to reach trailheads. Seattle area residents can use Sound Transit and Metro bus lines to reach trails in the Issaquah Alps. Using a combination of bus and bike transportation allows you to reach even more trailheads. You can ride a Community Transit bus to Gold Bar and then bike just a few miles to reach the trail network at Wallace Falls State Park. Shuttle systems for hikers are also gaining steam. Using public transportation may be a little less convenient than driving straight from your house to the trail, but you'll be doing your part



to reduce carbon emissions and decrease congestion on roadways and at trailhead parking areas.

I want to carpool to trailheads more, but sometimes the logistics seem cumbersome. Any suggestions?

Carpooling is a bonafide way to be kind to our planet, yet it can be challenging. Being flexible with dates and times for hiking trips can help alleviate some of the logistical stress. Also, remember that some carpooling is better than none. You and your hiking partners can drive separately to a convenient meeting location, and then carpool the rest of the way. You're still being eco-friendly, and there will be fewer cars crowding the trailhead lot.

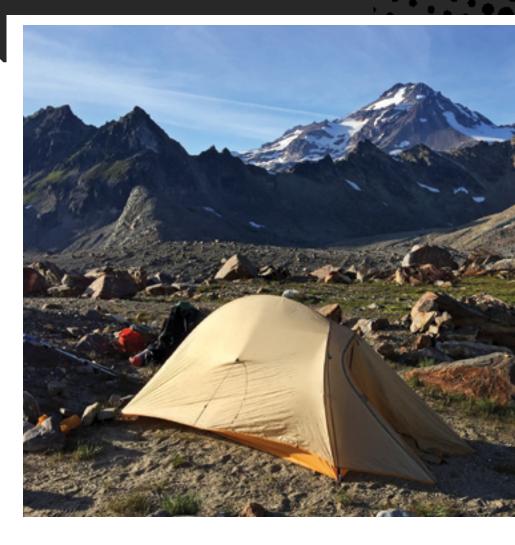
With a little extra effort, there really are so many simple ways to reduce your environmental impact before you even reach the trail.

hiking & camping

With the large upswing in outdoor recreation following World War II, it guickly became clear that minimum impact techniques needed to be utilized if our natural spaces were to remain natural. Thus, Leave No Trace was born. Organizations such as the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Boy Scouts of America and Sierra Club helped spread the word about recreating with an eye toward minimizing impacts. Today, many outdoor enthusiasts are familiar with the seven principles of Leave No Trace's outdoor ethics. The following situations help to exemplify some of these principles.

Sometimes when I'm hiking I get the urge to break away and leave the manmade bridges and well-groomed trail behind. Is it OK to travel off trail?

While it's true that trails themselves are not a natural part of the landscape, they serve a vital function in decreasing the effect of repeated bootsteps. Just imagine if the throng of hikers climbing Mount Si all forged their own paths to the top. Vegetation would be trampled, social trails would be created and erosion during the winter rains would be widespread. The entire mountainside would suffer the effects. Funneling all those hikers onto a narrow ribbon of trail preserves the rest of the mountain. With that said, staying on trail is best, especially in heavily used areas. However, there are places where off trail travel is permitted.



With a little extra effort. there really are so many ways to reduce your environmental impact before you even reach the trail.

If you do venture off-trail, minimize your impact by walking on durable surfaces like bare ground, rocks and snow. If you're with a group, spread out so you aren't walking single-file, which can leave an unintentional trail in your wake.

I'm going backpacking for the first time. How can I choose the best campsite?

Many popular backpacking locations have designated sites, and they exist for a reason. Just as a trail channels all hikers onto one small swath of land, designated campsites keep overnighters concentrated in one area, leaving the surrounding areas untouched. Depending on where you travel, using designated sites may be required. If dispersed backcountry camping is allowed, remember that the best campsites are found, not made. Look for a durable surface (e.g., dirt, rock, dry grass) to pitch your tent on, choose a site at least 200 feet away from water sources and do not alter the site by moving rocks or logs. Doing these things assures that vegetation and







Consider taking Leave No Trace's Online Awareness Course. This free, guick, self-paced class reviews the basics of all seven LNT principles, and you even receive a certificate upon completion. To take the course, visit Int.org/learn/online-awareness-course.

wildlife are not disturbed. When breaking camp, "naturalize" the area by spreading pine needles around, brushing out footprints and fluffing up matted grass, leaving the site pristine for future visitors to discover and enjoy.

A roaring campfire is a quintessential part of the camping experience. When and where is it acceptable to have a fire?

Campfires rank highly in terms of their immediate and long-lasting ecological impact, particularly in alpine and subalpine zones. Fires visibly scar the earth, damage root systems and, under certain conditions, can spread to become dangerous and uncontrolled wildfires. For these reasons, campfires are restricted in certain areas and at certain times of year. In areas where campfires are allowed, be responsible about minimizing their impact. Use established fire rings when available and keep your fire small. Collect wood that is already dead and on the ground. Before leaving, completely extinguish the fire and scatter any unused wood you collected.

Following basic Leave No Trace principles while hiking and camping is simple to do and goes a long way toward preserving your favorite wild places for future visitors.

pack it out 🕪

Without the urban convenience of garbage receptacles on every corner, trash is a major hindrance on trail. Litter is an eyesore,

packing out trash can be inconvenient, and human and pet waste can be troublesome to handle properly. Trash that's left behind can take years to break down, so it's important to dispose of waste correctly. Take into account these common scenarios before your next trip outdoors.

Trash seems to pile up quickly when out on trail—granola bar wrappers, orange peels, sandwich baggies—the list goes on and on. What's the best way to handle the trash that accumulates while hiking?

The old adage "pack it in, pack it out" definitely applies here. Bring along a large zip-top storage bag to collect all of your trash—and don't be afraid to pick up other pieces of refuse you find. Be sure to pack out everything, even natural items like fruit peels and sunflower shells. These items take a long time to break down and disrupt the natural food sources of wildlife. When you return home, dispose of the trash properly by recycling and composting what you can.

I'm going on a backpacking trip to a remote area with no backcountry toilets. What steps should I take to reduce the impact of my human waste on the environment?

When available, pit toilets are the best choice. They help prevent water pollution and are the most sanitary option. If no toilet is available, then you will need to dig a cathole. Choose a site at least 200 feet from water, camps and trails, and use a





Reducing your impact is easy. Try taking public transportation to nearby trailheads, and be sure to properly dispose of waste.

small trowel to dig a hole about 6 to 8 inches deep in which to bury your waste. Remember to pack out your toilet paper and any other hygiene products. At high elevations where the soil is thin or snow covers the ground, digging a cathole is not practical. In this case, you'll need to pack out your human waste, too. There are specially made products available (e.g., WAG Bags) for these situations.

I love taking my dog hiking with me, and inevitably, he does his business while on trail. Since animal scat is all over the place anyway, is it really necessary to pick up after him?

Yes! A dog's diet is very different than the diet of wild critters. Therefore, a dog's droppings contain different microbes, which can contaminate the soil and water. Be sure to bring a supply of doggy waste bags when you hike and pack them out with you. It may not be pleasant, but it is part of responsible dog ownership.

Trash is messy business and has the potential to greatly impact the environment. By disposing of waste appropriately, you are helping to keep wilderness areas natural and pristine.

working together

Barb Richey, the wilderness and trails program coordinator for the Mount Baker

District of the U.S. Forest Service, recently asked a group of 5th and 6th grade students if there will be wild places left for people to enjoy in 50 to 100 years. The responses were mixed, but through a series of handson activities, the students learned that it's up to all of us to be good stewards of the land and to ensure that there will still be wild places for future generations to take pleasure in.

It can be easy to take for granted that our favorite natural places will remain unspoiled into the next century. While out hiking, it's easy to get caught up in the here and now and to forget about the ripple effect our actions can have months or years down the road. However, if we want those 5th and 6th graders to experience the same sense of awe that we do when we cast our gaze upon a sea of wildflowers gently blowing in the breeze or dip our toes in the crystal clear waters of a glacially fed stream, we need to take action today.

In Richey's words, "It is important for all of us to understand that what we do now will have an effect on the environment in the future. And we want to try to teach folks today to Leave No Trace, so future generations can know and experience wild places as we get to today."

THE LIFE OF TRASH

Unfortunately, litter is commonly found in popular recreation areas, but just how long will that trash last if it is left in the outdoors?

· Paper: 2 to 4 weeks

• Fruit peels: up to 2 years

• Plastic bags: 10 to 20 years

• Diapers: 10 to 20 years

· Aluminum cans: 80 years

• Six-pack holders: 100 years

• Fishing line: 500 years

Considering how long trash takes to break down, it is certainly worth taking a few extra seconds to look around before leaving your lunch spot or campsite to be sure you have packed everything out.





WHAT IS YOUR LEGACY?

A lasting impact—by making a legacy gift to Washington Trails Association, you're protecting the trails you love for future generations. Anyone can participate, and no amount is too small.



Learn more: wta.org/legacy | (206) 625-1367



Your guide to doing it safely and loving every minute of it! By Cassandra Overby

So you're ready to embark on your first hike alone? Don't lace up your boots guite yet. Make your first solo hiking experience the best it can be with our top 10 tips for hiking solo. From building your confidence to growing the right skills to having fun, you'll be ready for the trail in no time.



It's important to prepare yourself for the feeling of being truly alone on trail. Focusing your mind on something other than your own thoughts can help you enjoy the experience of being by yourself.

Build your confidence

If you've got the right route in mind but you're still a little nervous about getting out there on your own, build your confidence prehike by searching out other trekkers who have gone solo. Ask around in your community; your adventurous coworker or neighbor might be a solo hiker with tips and encouragement to share. If not, the Internet is full of good blogs and forums for solo hikers. Hearing the stories of others who have braved a hike—or many—on their own can greatly ease your mind and give you a burst of confidence to do the same thing yourself. You can also look for inspiration from the WTA community. Check out trip reports from JoeHendricks and hikingwithlittledogs.

Grow your skills

Photo by Pamela

at Navaho Pass in the

Another way to build your confidence prehike is to practice any rusty trail skills at home. Make it a game to filter water, wrap an Ace bandage or light a fire (safely). The more you practice, the better you'll feel. As you practice your trail skills, you'll probably notice there are some areas you're naturally weaker in than others. It might be packing the Ten Essentials, navigating with a map and compass or being familiar with wilderness first aid. Whatever it is for you, take note and commit to growing your skills. After all, you'll be the only one on trail, so you'll need to know how to do everything—and well. Don't know where to start? You can find a Ten Essentials packing list on the WTA website, REI offers excellent workshops on navigation, and several organizations, from The Mountaineers to the Red Cross, offer classes on wilderness first aid.

Choose the right trail—and ease into it

One of the most important things you can do before you head out on your first solo hike is choose the right trail. Take into account your physical abilities, fears and comfort level. Once you have the right route, prepare to ease into it. Hike it with a dog. Have a friend walk 10 minutes behind you. Go on a weekend, when the trail will be busy. Don't be afraid to start small. Your goal here is to make hiking alone as comfortable for yourself as possible. There's plenty of time to work up to more challenging hikes and more solitary experiences. Remember, your abilities will increase and your comfort level will grow over time, but you'll have the best solo hiking experience if you choose a trail that reflects what you're capable of right now. Even after your first solo trip, add in mileage and cut out company at a pace you're comfortable with.

▶ WHO'S GOT MY BACK?

The BUGLE APP (free) is key for solo hikers who want to let someone know where they're hiking. You only have to input your personal information and emergency contacts once. Then, every time you go hiking simply update the app with any new information (ex. your itinerary for the day) and set the alarm. Once you get back to your car, shut the app's alarm off and no one is the wiser. But if something happens on trail and you don't turn the alarm off, at the preselected time an alert with your itinerary, personal information, etc. will be sent to your emergency contacts, along with information on how they can call for help on your behalf.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

It was different to go out by myself but then I realized that I like that too. I found that when you go by yourself, you end up talking to people that you see on the trail. People are very friendly and you're never totally alone. You'll run into somebody. It's nice. I've just decided that it's cool to go by yourself.

~ Jenny Lamharzi, solo hiker

Tell someone where you're going

Once you've got your trail picked out, you're feeling confident and your skills are up to snuff, it's time for your first solo hike. Make sure to tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back. To be on the safe side, download WTA's hiking itinerary form (wta.org/hiking-info/ basics/hike-itinerary) or the Bugle app. Both have room for more personal information than you can communicate easily over the phone, from a description of you and your vehicle to the ins and outs of your itinerary. It can also be a good idea to check in at the ranger station on your way to the trailhead. Let the ranger know you'll be hiking alone, and ask if there are any hazards on trail that solo hikers should be aware of. Don't forget to check out again on your way home. Regardless of whom you're checking in and out with, whether it's someone at home or a ranger, once you've given them your itinerary, don't deviate from the plan.

Prepare to feel alone Even if you have the ability to communicate with your loved ones, it's important to prepare yourself for the feeling of being truly alone on trail. It might seem counterintuitive, but a challenge of hiking alone can be feeling alone, as in lonely. Especially in our busy and loud

world, it's not often that we have such uninterrupted guiet time to ourselves. You might find yourself uncomfortable with your own company. You'll get used to it over time, but don't be afraid to ease into things by packing headphones and an audiobook or your favorite music. If you're going to backpack alone, bring along a journal, cards for solitaire and other solo activities for camp. Focusing your mind on something other than your own thoughts can help you enjoy the experience of being by yourself.

Have a game plan for interactions

Of course, you probably won't be alone the whole time you're hiking. On all but the most remote trails, you're bound to run into other people as you walk. If you're feeling anxious or vulnerable about being by yourself, have a game plan for those interactions. Remember, nine times out of 10 you're going to cross paths with friendly, wonderful people who enjoy the outdoors—just like you. With those folks, a smile might turn into a conversation. But you don't need to feel compelled to talk with or be overly friendly to everyone you meet on trail. A simple nod of acknowledgement is just fine. And if someone makes you uncomfortable, don't be afraid to assertively mention that your hiking partner is just behind you.

Bring protection you're comfortable with

Being alone on trail can make you feel a lot more vulnerable than hiking with other people. Chances are, you'll never have to use it, but it can help to bring along a form of protection that you're comfortable with. Knowing that you have the ability to protect yourself from animals or shady humans can make hiking alone a lot more comfortable. We recommend getting creative with the trail gear you probably already have. Bear spray, a pointed walking stick or a Swiss Army knife can be used to defend yourself if push comes to shove. No matter what kind of protection you choose, make sure it's allowed on the land you're hiking and practice using it beforehand.

ON THE FENCE ABOUT GOING ALONE?

Considering the pros and cons of solo hiking can help you decide if it's for you.

PRO: No matter when you want to go hiking (midweek, mid-January or mid-shower), you can go. There's no searching around for someone anyone—to be free, up for the hike you want to do or enthusiastic about doing it in the rain. There's just you, and that translates to a lot of flexibility. It also translates to a different kind of hiking experience. Because let's face it: sometimes you just want to pay attention to what's around you instead of who's around you. When you hike alone, you have the space to contemplate nature, meditate on the experience or even simply zone out for miles at a time. You can also hike at your own pace and stop for pictures whenever you want. All of that can be really wonderful.

CON: It's a big responsibility. When you hike alone, there is no one to back you up if you forget one of the Ten Essentials or help if you get lost. Unless you happen to run into someone on trail, there's no one to help you call for help if you get hurt. (And according to the statistics, a self-injurynot a scary human or animal encounter—is the most common danger for solo hikers.) You are literally, and figuratively, on your own.



Know your limits

Just like when dealing with strangers, as you get further into your hike it's important to trust your intuition and know your limits. Solo hiking is not the time to test what you're capable of or push your boundaries. Maybe it's getting dark earlier than you expected or the trail has become dangerously slick because of an afternoon shower. It could be that you're a couple of miles from your turnaround point but you're already exhausted. Whatever situation you find yourself in, make the conservative choice. Don't be afraid to turn around early. There'll be another day, another hike, another chance to try again—it's something you can look forward to.

Have a way to call for help If something does go wrong on trail, it's important to have a way to call for help. Don't just rely on your cell phone, though. Cell phone reception is never a guarantee on trail, especially when you're in a remote corner of the state or deep in the wilderness. A good supplemental communication device is a SPOT Satellite Messenger or Personal Locator Beacon (PLB), which can send your precise location and an emergency alert to the proper authorities if you run into trouble. If your loved ones want the ability to check in on you as you hike, both the SPOT and the DeLorme inReach Satellite Communicator allow you to share your location. The inReach also allows you to send and receive text messages anywhere in the world.

Have fun!

Once you've done the hard work of preparing yourself as best you can for your solo hike, it's time to simply enjoy where you are and have fun! Don't forget to savor all of the things that made you want to get outside by yourself in the first place: the flexibility of hiking on your own schedule, the renewing power of solitude, the magic of having a personal encounter with nature. Celebrate your new skills and your skyrocketing ability to be self-sufficient in the outdoors. Pat yourself on the back—and then vow to get even better. This, in all its glory, is what solo hiking is all about. •

WANT TO BACKPACK SOLO?

- ◆ DO DRY RUNS OF EVERYTHING. From setting up your tent to using your cook stove, make sure you know exactly how to work your
- ◆ GO LIGHT. You won't be able to share the burden of heavy gear, so choose lightweight options whenever possible.
- ◆ BE YOUR OWN CHEERLEADER. Learning how to motivate and celebrate yourself, even when you're tired or wet or hungry, won't just help you on trail. It will improve your whole life.



Withering With the H

Disappearing glaciers and the growing threat to our national parks | By Charle Lieu

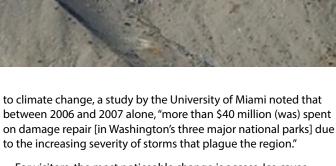
s the helicopter landed on Noisy Glacier in Nord Cascades National Park, on Noisy Glacier in North its whirling blades made for a deafening sound in an otherwise ironically un-noisy landscape. For the 24th season in a row, the thwop-thwop of the rotors announced the arrival of Jon Riedel at the glacier to monitor its health—and it's not looking good.

The story of climate change began long before man, but data from the last 1,000 years shows that we have accelerated its progression. The warming trend might be imperceptible to humans but is dramatic to Mother Nature. In the last 50 years, all of the glaciers in Washington have either receded or vanished altogether.

Impacts On the Parks

Disappearing glaciers have serious implications, and national parks are at the forefront of managing the impacts because most of Washington's glaciers are within their boundaries. Historically, glacier and snowpack reserves have buffered us from droughts. In recent years, less snowfall and earlier thaws have resulted in summer water shortages that threaten flora and fauna and create fire danger.

The warming climate also causes heavier rains and exacerbates glacial melt, which in turn leads to flash floods that result in loss of habitat, roadways and infrastructure within parks. In fact, maintenance, repair and debris management have grown dramatically over the last two decades. While the National Park Service does not produce annual estimates of costs attributed



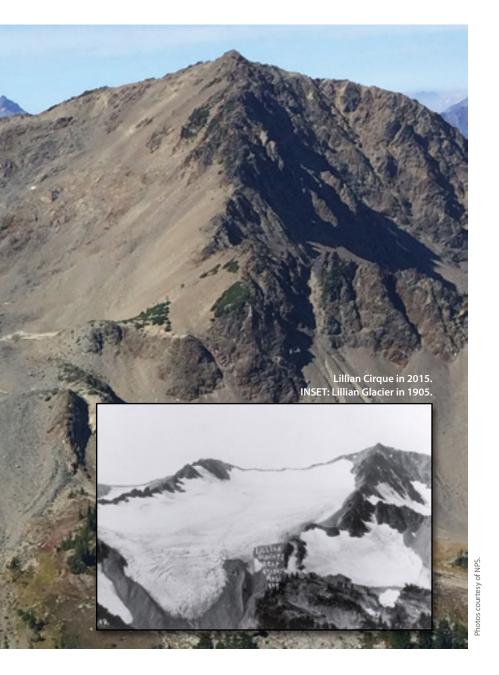
For visitors, the most noticeable change is access. Ice caves and low-altitude glaciers, once abundant, are all but gone, and destinations that once enjoyed well-worn paths are no longer accessible due to crippling damages. In 2006, storm damages

were so severe that Mount Rainier was closed to the public for six months, and in 2013, storm damages nearly closed Olympic

National Park.

Impacts Beyond the Parks

Disappearing glaciers are also changing the hydrology for the entire Pacific Northwest and impacting more than 12 million residents of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. In a region known for water availability, droughts seem counterintuitive. However, at a recent irrigation conference, attendees from all over Washington discussed the need to inject water underground to raise the water table and create artificial aguifers to provide the reserves necessary



to last through the summer. Water is something that we used to depend on glaciers for, but no longer.

The ever-dramatic cycles of water shortages and floods also have "downstream" effects beyond agriculture: drinking water, hydropower, salmon runs and property damage. These issues are not hypothetical, but very real and present.

What Can We Do?

As we head into the future, the devastating effects of disappearing glaciers will only become more pronounced. It's something that we can no longer ignore, and it's not too late to make a difference. But how? With lower carbon emissions, renewable energy sources, water conservation and better purchasing decisions we can put a dent in the progress of climate change—and maybe even save Noisy Glacier.

The glaciers of the Pacific Northwest have shrunk drastically since the end of the last century. This loss is an imminent threat because glaciers provide the consistent runoff that supplies us with water, food and energy. Make no mistake, the glaciers WILL continue to wither with the heat of human consumption, and we must not ignore this problem.

~ Jon Riedel, Geologist and Climate Scientist, National Park Service



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK tells the story of the Nez Perce people. Discover the history and culture of the Nez Perce (Nimiipuu) and how they adapted to and

continue to make the land their own. When visiting, start your explorations at the visitor center located in Spalding, Idaho.

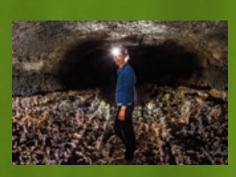
INFO: nps.gov/nepe



WHITMAN MISSION NATIONAL

HISTORIC SITE is a rest stop along the historic Oregon Trail. Located in Walla Walla, Washington, this historic site preserves and tells the story of the events that took place on the Columbia Plateau, from the establishment of the Whitman mission in 1836 up until a tragic massacre in 1848, after which Oregon became an official territory of the United States.

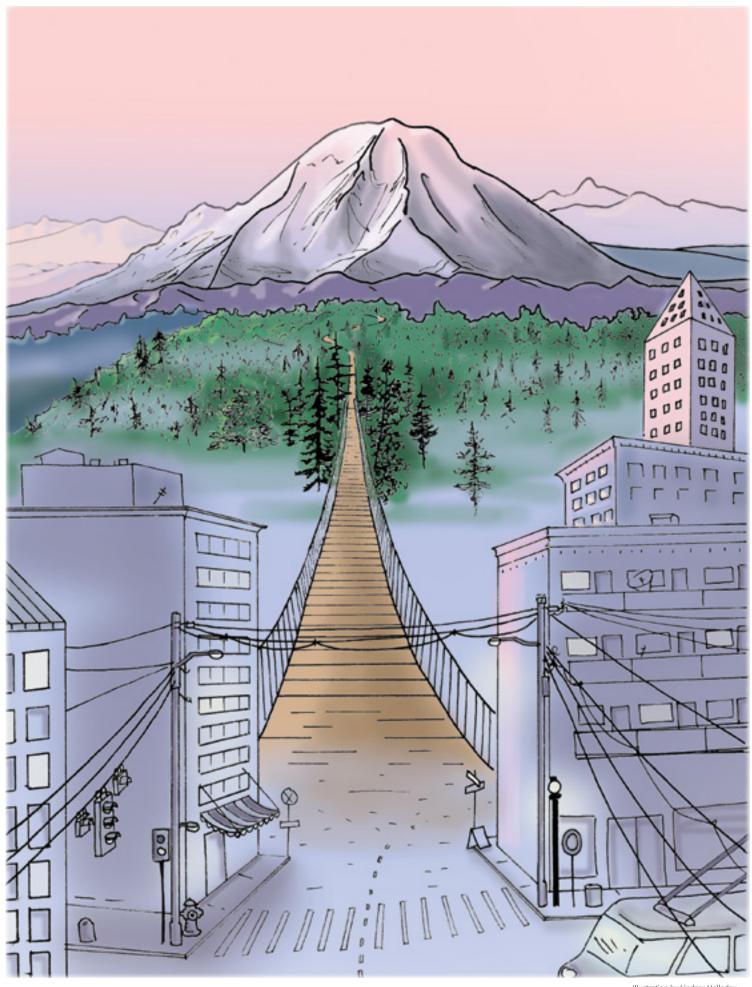
INFO: nps.gov/whmi



CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL **MONUMENT AND PRESERVE** is a

volcanic wonderland comprising a vast ocean of lava flows, lava tubes and tree molds with scattered islands of cinder cones and sagebrush, all along the Great Rift of Idaho. The monument also features the deepest known open rift crack on earth, at a depth of approximately 800 feet.

INFO: nps.gov/crmo



This little newsletter has been an experiment so far, testing a hunch I've had that such a means of communications among walkers is needed.

~ Louise Marshall, Signpost, 1966

BUILDING

BY KINDRA RAMOS

y now, you're probably familiar with Washington Trails Association's origin story. A little newsletter printed in a barn. A growing constituency of people connecting over trip reports, letters to the editor and a shared love of Washington's special places. This is not only how WTA (formerly Signpost) was created, this principle, of inspiring and empowering people, still guides our communication efforts today. WTA is building bridges—connecting people to the outdoors, growing a community and laying a path for the future of hiking.

Connecting People to the OUTDOORS

From new hikers to new families, long-time backpackers to long-distance dreamers, WTA lays out an information pathway to help hikers go further and become connected to the outdoors. Whether you're at an in-person event, searching the hiking guide, scrolling through Instagram or browsing this magazine, we are happy to provide hike suggestions. We strive to build upon this inspiration with educational blogs and through our many email newsletters featuring tools and techniques—all to help people become more skilled hikers

and stronger trail advocates. It is not just about providing information but fostering a relationship with every person we connect with.

"My wife and I moved from the Boston area to Seattle two years ago in search of adventure in the Pacific Northwest," says Andrew Bertino, who became acquainted with WTA's website shortly after resettling. "I knew we were surrounded by national forests and parks, but I had no idea where to start. So like everyone else in my generation in need of guidance, I turned to the Internet. I found wta.org and I couldn't believe the wealth of information all in one place—for free! I went through it all: trip reports, seasonal hike suggestions, maps, blogs, you name it! I was awakened to a world of possibilities and given the confidence to start exploring."

Often WTA is not an introduction to hiking, but rather a gentle push to go farther. As more hikers are getting out close to home, those seeking solitude are looking to discover wild places farther afield. WTA member Linda Roe saves her magazines and marks hikes she wants to do. Recently, in search of sunshine and wildflowers, she pulled out the stack and was inspired to go to Snow Mountain Ranch outside of Yakima. Roe says, "I would not have known of [this trail] if it wasn't for the magazine, as it wasn't in any guidebook. We did see lots of cool wildflowers we'd never seen before."

The relationships we develop aren't just with individuals. We also help connect partner organizations with trail information and the people out enjoying them. Staff at the U.S. Forest Service or Washington State Parks will often

he desire to meet other hikers is something that we hear time and again. To help strengthen the connections in the hiking community, WTA brings hikers together.

use WTA's website, both to learn about current trail conditions and post trip reports to raise awareness about issues on particular trails. David Minaglia, who staffs the Outdoor Recreation Information Center at REI, relates, "As a ranger providing hiking, camping and other outdoor recreation information to the public, I have come to truly appreciate the resources offered by WTA and other sites. All of us at the ranger desk inside REI like to get outdoors, but we can only cover so much ground in our free time. One of the features of WTA's website we find especially helpful is the statewide hike-finder map."

hikers stay informed. In the age of instant information, WTA's trip reports and online communities can be a trusted source of up-todate information. Ranger Minaglia appreciates trip reports that "provide useful information on road and trail conditions [such as] road washouts, where one encounters snow on the trail (and how deep) and how frequent the downed trees are, etc."

While WTA is a great source of trail data, we believe it's the people that truly make our community outstanding. Trip reporters are more than providers of information. Often, real relationships can form from these online inspirations. There is a mutual respect for and connection with people we may only know by their trip reporter names. Trip reports can help people foster a hiking community, and trip reporters can become new friends that you may eventually meet in person. A few years back, trip reporter Girl and Dog helped out some fellow hikers with car trouble at the Maple Pass trailhead, only to discover, as she shared in her trip report later, they were "celebrity" trip reporters Bob and Barb. This interaction led to a lovely conversation in a trip report comment stream about gratitude for the hiking community and favorite photos from past reports. It also led to Bob and Barb and Girl and Dog going out hiking together. Their Sharpe Park adventure was, of course, shared with the whole WTA community—thanks to Bob and Barb's trip report.

The desire to meet other hikers is something we hear about time and again. To help strengthen the connections in the hiking community, WTA brings hikers together. Whether at Hike the State, where people converge to learn about new trails in a fastpaced evening, or at the land manager potluck, where hikers ask thoughtful questions of Forest Service staff, connecting hikers face-to-face deepens our shared sense of belonging and our commitment to be a part of protecting the places hikers love.

experience, but providing a space where a community can come together and help each other allows many people to become inspired and engaged. As Louise Marshall wrote in the second Signpost, there were two purposes of the publication: "to keep backpackers informed" and to "discover if there is a general need for an informal news-sharing medium." It quickly became clear that there was a need. Today, the desire for community informationsharing is greater than ever. From adding new hikes to the wikihiking guide to providing intel in a trip report, hikers are helping

Connecting People to the

Providing information to a single person can improve their

HIKING COMMUNITY

Connecting People to a **Better FUTURE FOR TRAILS**



Sharing the joy of hiking and bringing people together are powerful motivators, but there is an additional purpose to our work—to help unlock the advocate inside every hiker. At its core, WTA strives to empower people, to create a movement of hikers that speak up for our public lands and trails. Building on Ira Spring's theory of "green bonding" (that an area can only be protected if it is well-known, visited and treasured), we encourage people to get outside and experience all the outdoors has to offer. We then show hikers ways they can get involved in protecting trails, whether that means sharing a story from a Youth Volunteer Vacation or urging people to speak out for funding. WTA's Signpost blog is a tool for breaking news, as well as rallying people to take action in support of trails.

In 2015, WTA took a multichannel approach in our efforts to help create a policy advisor on outdoor recreation in the governor's office. Early in the year, we wrote a blog about how important outdoor recreation is to our state and how a position in the governor's office could help keep pressure on investing in it. Then WTA's members and supporters were encouraged to join us for Hiker Lobby Day. More than 60 hikers from all over the state joined us in Olympia to tell legislators why funding for trails and investment in the outdoors are critical issues for Washington. We followed this up with emails from our Trail Action Network activists who could not join us in person. Thanks to WTA's activists and our partner organizations, in May 2015, Gov. Jay Inslee appointed Jon Snyder as the senior policy advisor to promote and increase opportunities for outdoor recreation in Washington. This is just one small example of how hikers have come together to support trails.

Often, creating a better future starts in the hearts and minds of youth. WTA's youth programs help spark this movement. Today, 25 percent of WTA's trail maintenance volunteers are under the age of 18. A growing number of teens are also helping WTA connect with the next generation of hikers. The Youth Ambassador Program (YAP) allows teens to become involved in peer outreach and to present WTA to their schools. Since the program started in 2013, 65 ambassadors have presented to more than 2,800 students at

39 schools and community groups. Former ambassador and 2016 intern Alex Compeau says the program taught him how to convey what is special to him. "WTA has inspired me and given me a new vision of the outdoors," says Compeau. "Due to WTA, I know what direction of work I want to go in, and I know I want to live in a place with trails and forests. I love being involved in WTA."

That is what WTA is striving to achieve—a community that values trails and wants to protect them. When it comes to connecting people to the outdoors, the hiking community and a better future for trails, communication is key. Building relationships and creating a shared vision of the future helps bridge the actions of hikers today into a movement to protect the outdoors for the hikers of tomorrow. Whether you introduce a friend to hiking, write a trip report connecting someone to a new place, or tell your elected official to invest in our public lands, as a member of the WTA community, you are an important part of ensuring the future of trails.

Build Bridges With WTA

- Share your love of trails by writing a trip report.
- Be an active part of the WTA community by becoming a member or volunteer.
- Join WTA's Trail Action Network (wta.org/action) and speak out for Washington's public lands.

ften, creating a better future starts in the hearts and minds of youth. WTA's youth programs help spark this movement.



NW WEEKEND: Summer Festivals

By Brandon Fralic & Rachel Wood

ashingtonians, rejoice—summer festival season is here! Outdoor fests like Seafair and Bumbershoot are summertime traditions for getting outdoors and having a good time. Celebrate across the state with live music, local foods and craft beer—one of the best ways to recharge after a day of hiking.

Celebrate Sunshine

in the Great Outdoors



WEIRD BEER ON THE RIVER

This aptly named beer festival takes place next to the Columbia River and features at least 25 "weird" beers from as many breweries. Boasting live music, food vendors and free parking, this is one unique festival not to miss.

Each brewery must serve at least one "weird" brew, made exclusively for the event—and they will be exceptionally odd. Last year, Fremont Brewing offered Summer Sushi Pale Ale, made with pickled ginger and nori (seaweed). Expect beers made with fruits, vegetables and various other ingredients.

The best thing about Weird Beer on the River? All proceeds from the event support services for veterans, the elderly and persons with disabilities. This festival is a benefit for CDM Caregiving Services, an organization providing services that allow individuals to "live with dignity in their home." Cheers to a good cause!

EAT HERE For something a little different, walk over to the nearby **Puffin Cafe**. This guirky floating restaurant sits (literally) right on the Columbia River and serves up tasty Caribbean cuisine and cocktails. Try the hand-dipped halibut fish and chips.

HIKE HERE Earn your beers (or work them off) by hiking to the 1,300-foot high point of Cape Horn, high above the Columbia River. The trailhead begins at the Skamania County park and ride on SR 14. The lower portion of the trail is closed between February 1 and July 15 to protect nesting peregrine falcons, but hikers can still get in a good workout year-round on the upper section. Climb the steep, rocky trail to the Nancy Russell Overlook for falcon's-eye views of the mighty Columbia. Visit capehorntrail.org.

WHEN/WHERE July 8-9 at Marina Park in Washougal.

INFO facebook.com/weirdbeerontheriver







SEQUIM LAVENDER WEEKEND

A celebration of the flowering herb grown in the Dungeness Valley, the Lavender Weekend includes activities for the whole family, including a street fair and tours of participating farmsand 2016 marks the 20th year of the festival.

This year, 17 farms will participate in the event, offering tours and more. Lavender soaps, chocolates and other products will be available, and some farms will have u-pick opportunities. Many of the farms are open for free, but some charge an admission fee. Visit sequimlavenderweekend.com for information on farm tour fees and times.

While in Sequim, head downtown to the street fair! Peruse 150 arts and crafts booths, featuring everything from photography to jewelry. Grab a bite to eat, or sip on a lavenderinfused margarita or martini in the beer and wine garden. The festival will also host Lavenderstock, with live musical performances all three days, including a dance party on Saturday night from 7 to 9pm.

SEE IT BEST Each of the **Farms on Tour** is easily accessible by bike. Farms will happily hold any purchases too big to balance on your handlebars for you to pick up later by car.

HIKE HERE Hit the beach! Dungeness Spit is the longest coastal spit in the continental U.S., extending 5.5 miles from shore into the Strait of Juan de Fuca. For an 11-mile roundtrip hike, make the Dungeness Light Station your destination. It's best to visit during low tide, making it easier to walk along the sand, rather than scramble over drift logs. The spit is a protected wildlife refuge, so please respect area closures, and dogs are not permitted.

WHEN/WHERE July 15-17 in downtown Sequim.

INFO visitsunnysequim.com

SUMMER MELTDOWN

Originally started as a seasonal party on San Juan Island, this music fest is a family friendly event "where the music meets the mountain." Now in its 16th year, Summer Meltdown has grown into a festival so large that it occupies a 40acre site. Each year festival-goers gather for a long weekend of live music, camping and outdoor adventures. 2016 headliners include electronic artists GRiZ and Gramatik, along with genrebending experimental group Beats Antique and Seattle's own hip-hop duo Blue Scholars.

Beyond the music, there are plenty of activities to keep attendees entertained. Kids can play with hands-on games, art projects and workshops, while adults can enjoy a beer garden and several ways to adventure outdoors, including a swimming hole on the Stillaguamish River or joining in an organized excursion.

CAN'T MISS The festival has partnered with local businesses to offer guided river rafting, rock climbing and horseback riding. Sign up early to guarantee your spot!

HIKE HERE Built in 1901 by the Northern Pacific Railroad as a 27-mile route between Arlington and Darrington, the Whitehorse Trail now exists as a wide, flat, 6-mile walking trail. Head east from the campground to Darrington, or follow the North Fork Stillaguamish for a few miles west to Swede Heaven Road.

WHEN/WHERE Aug. 11–14 at Whitehorse Mountain Amphitheater in Darrington.

INFO SummerMeltdownFest.com

PIG OUT IN THE PARK

The name says it all: Pig Out in the Park is for foodies, and it turns the long Labor Day weekend into an extended six-day celebration of food and music with 45 food booths, and something to satisfy everyone. Festival-goers can chow down on everything from pierogies to chocolate-dipped cheesecake while overlooking the Spokane River. With over 200 menu items to choose from, you certainly won't go home hungry!

The event also features 100 concerts from local, regional and national artists on three different stages. Whether it's jazz, country or rock 'n' roll, the festival's musical performances will have you tapping your toes. Adult attendees can grab a beer or glass of wine to enjoy along with the show in one of the beverage gardens.

CAN'T MISS Pig Out for less! Food vendors are open from 11am to 10pm daily, but visit between 3 to 5pm and 9 to 10pm for \$3 bites!

HIKE HERE Burn off some of those calories on the extensive trail system at nearby Palisades Park. For an easy hike, take the upper loop to experience soaring views of Mount Spokane and the city skyline from high basalt cliffs. Bird watch in the park's wetland area, or seek out Indian Canyon Falls. Extraordinary rock formations and wildflower-filled meadows make the city of Spokane seem much farther than 5 miles away.

WHEN/WHERE Aug. 31-Sept. 5 in Spokane's Riverside Park.

INFO spokanepigout.com

A FEW MORE SUMMER FESTIVALS WORTH CHECKING OUT:

- Northwest Raspberry Festival, July 15-16, Lynden
- **▶ Winthrop Rhythm and Blues Festival**, July 17-19
- ► Seafair Weekend, Aug. 5-7, Seattle
- ► Everett Craft Beer Festival, Aug. 20
- ▶ Bremerton Summer Brew Fest, July 15-16
- ▶ Bellevue Festival of the Arts, July 29-31
- ▶ International Kite Festival, Aug. 15-21, Long Beach
- ► Wenatchee Wine & Food Festival, Aug. 27

By Brittany Manwill

SHOP SMART:

GO FOR GREN

As environmental impact studies continue to demonstrate, we each have a part to play in protecting this world we live in. This isn't a new concept. In fact, for much of the outdoor industry, going "green" was a no-brainer. The smartest companies accepted this concept early on, and now lead the industry by implementing processes and practices that also

reduce their carbon footprints.



■ It's great to see

companies that give back, and even greater when they're located in the Northwest. Portland-based KEEN, maker of the funky and functional active closed-toe sandals, has been committed to their "create, play, care" mantra from the getgo. Just a year into business, KEEN pulled their entire 2004 advertising budget and rerouted it to tsunami disaster relief in the Indian Ocean. Since then, KEEN has been dedicated to strong communities and a healthy planet.

Two of KEEN's corporate responsibility programs, Hybrid.Care and the KEEN Effect, focus on providing monetary and in-kind support to organizations with the purpose of improving environmental and social conditions around the world. Their current partners include American Whitewater, The Conservation Alliance, Leave No Trace, The Forest Park Conservancy, 21st Century Conservation Service Corps, The Wilderness Society and MercyCorps.

>> Walking the Talk

- * Awards multiple \$10,000 grants each year to groups and nonprofits "committed to preserving the places we all play."
- ♣ Distributed more than \$7 million in cash and resources to nonprofit organizations.
- * Reuses "junk" material in store and tradeshow displays to reduce landfill waste and environmental impact.



From the top down, Patagonia

is one of the most dedicated environmental activists among leading outdoor brands. In a category where companies tempt us season after season to update gear with the newest colors or designs, Patagonia has taken steps in the opposite direction. Their Worn Wear program challenges customers to take pride in their stained, ripped and well-loved gear by repairing rather than replacing it and by clamping down on the "more" mentality to reduce landfill waste.

In 2010, Patagonia began collaborating with several organizations and agencies to create what is now called the Sustainable Apparel Coalition. This group's aim is, "an apparel industry that produces no unnecessary environmental harm and has a positive impact on the people and communities associated with its activities." While a sizable goal, this has been a huge move for evaluating the supply chain of the entire industry.

>> Walking the Talk

- * Donates 1% of sales to environmental groups, totaling more than \$70 million in cash and in-kind services since 1985.
- Pays for employee volunteer time and matches employee charitable donations.
- * Awards more than 700 grants per year for funding environmental work.



■ When it really

comes down to evaluating the environmental frontrunners in the outdoor industry, it's easy to pay respect to the brands with logos all over our gear. But there's more to it than that. Just as your favorite recipe can't be called organic if it uses nonorganic ingredients, brands rely on their supply chain partners to produce products that match their environmental standards.

If you own a down puffy jacket or sleeping bag, there's a good chance it is stuffed with feathers from **ALLIED Feather & Down**. ALLIED is the world's largest supplier of certified, responsibly sourced down and is favored by top gear brands for their adherence to the Global Traceable Down Standard and Responsible Down Standard. To receive these stamps of approval, supply lines must meet environmental, health, animal welfare and sustainability standards. ALLIED continues to improve internal sourcing and processing practices that strengthen the "greenness" of the entire industry.

>> Walking the Talk

- Received Bluesign approval, which recognizes companies that display optimal environmental performance and oversight.
- ★ Certified more than 70% of its global supply chain, with a goal of 100% by 2017.
- Works with legislatures across Europe to improve animal welfare for birds.

In an era where we each have our own hot-button issues and personal convictions, we all probably still have room to improve—i.e., reduce—our own impact on the environment. And when industry leaders embed "going green" into their corporate missions and culture, it encourages all of us to take similar steps. Here are six companies leading the way in environmental stewardship that we can all get behind.

Tips for Choosing "Green" Gear

When shopping for green gear, here are a few things

- ☐ MATERIALS: Look for natural fibers and those that are produced and/or collected sustainably.
- ☐ **RECYCLABILITY:** Is it made of raw materials that are easily recyclable, or will they just end up in a landfill?
- □ **DURABILITY:** Don't skimp on quality. Check the manufacturer's website for repair/warranty info to make sure a product will last.
- ☐ **LOCATION:** Where is it manufactured? Where is it shipped from? Choose local when possible.
- ☐ CORPORATE CULTURE: Just because a product isn't overtly "green" doesn't mean the company isn't. Check social media pages to see if a company is doing its part.



out of your gear before replacing it. Bellinghamnative **Gear Aid** is one of the industry's premier manufacturers of repair and maintenance products to keep your gear working like new, because extending the life of a product is more sustainable than simply replacing it.

While the company's aim is "green" on its own, Gear Aid also strongly believes in supporting the outdoors through youth outreach programs. Under the umbrella of its "Take a Kid Outside" initiative, Gear Aid began working with the Donate-a-Pack Foundation to equip at-risk, low-income and disabled children with backpacks and other gear to expose kids to the outdoors. By these actions, Gear Aid hopes to raise an entire generation that understands the importance of protecting our wild areas.

>> Walking the Talk

- * Supports the North Cascades Institute's Mountain School with more than \$24,000 in outdoor gear and repair services.
- * Donates products to organizations that support and restore endangered wildlife.
- * Provides repair services and products to Donate-a-Pack, giving a second life to used items (85% of donations are recycled gear).



With power comes responsibility. But making a big impact doesn't necessarily mean that you have

to do big, resource-intensive things. While large-scale change through legislation and major cultural changes is no doubt significant. the cumulative effect of multiple small actions can produce equally long-lasting and impactful benefits. Osprey, one of the industry's leading pack manufacturers, demonstrates how making small changes can make a big difference.

Osprey's products have a lifetime guarantee for quality and durability, which keeps plenty of packs out of the landfill. It also has a robust history of supporting environmental causes, including a biannual Locals' Sale where it donates 5% of proceeds to local nonprofits. Osprey's commitment at the local level sets an example that is, in many ways, easier for individuals to relate to and incorporate into their own daily lives.

>> Walking the Talk

- # Focused on sustainable operations at their Colorado headquarters, they employ 100% green-sourced power.
- * Purchases carbon offsets for shipping and travel and provides sustainable transportation incentives for employees.
- * Manufactures products that are free from BPA, PVC/phthalates and triclosan.



Living and

operating by the motto "use less, give back, explore more," Boulder-based ZEAL Optics is doing it right in the production of their adventure eyewear. Instead of the industrytypical petroleum polymer, ZEAL sunglasses utilize Z-Resin, a plant-based material that reduces the amount of CO2 produced during manufacturing. These eco-friendly specs are also light and durable, making them ideal for protecting your eyes while you're outdoors.

ZEAL supports projects and organizations with missions that "reduce our environmental footprint, create social change and leave us all with better memories of our time outdoors." One such partnership is with Packing It Out, an organization that cleans up trash on the nation's most popular trails—this summer it's tackling the Pacific Crest Trail. ZEAL also works with groups that keep plastic out of the oceans (5 Gyres), help prevent climate change (Protect Our Winters) and establish clean drinking water in developing countries (Second Mile Water).

>> Walking the Talk

- Created the M49 collection, featuring natural materials that begin to biodegrade after just 18 months underwater or in soil.
- # Helped remove more than 1,000 pounds of trash from the Appalachian Trail last summer by supporting Packing It Out.
- Plants 5,480 trees per year with American Forests and Project 5480.

By Doug Diekema

Buying Green

Preserving our beautiful landscape for future generations is a responsibility we all share and careful attention to the products we buy can help minimize our environmental footprint. Here are a few quality products we like that incorporate ecofriendly practices.

Tips to Reduce Your Gear **Impact**

☐ SHOP CAREFULLY AND **BUY DURABLE PRODUCTS. By** and choosing gear that will last for items that end up in the landfill.

□ BUY GEAR FROM ECO-FRIENDLY COMPANIES. Choose impact manufacturing techniques.

CHOOSE REPAIR BEFORE

☐ BUY USED. Pre-owned gear

PATAGONIA TECH FLEECE HOODY This warm and comfortable hip-length fleece jacket looks good in the city and functions well in a wide range of temperatures during active pursuits. It's made from polyester fleece that is Bluesign approved, a designation granted only when the entire fabric production process meets the highest level of environmental and consumer safety by employing chemicals, processes, materials and products that conserve resources, and are safe for the environment, workers and customers. \$139



FEATHERED FRIENDS HYPERION VEST Started in a Seattle basement in 1972, Feathered Friends is the quintessential Northwest company and the Hyperion Vest was built for the Northwest environment. Weighing less than half a pound, it features a water-repellent shell and 850+ goose-down insulation that meets the strict requirements of the Responsible Down Standard, a process that assures the welfare and ethical treatment of the geese from which the down originates. It also compresses to the size of a softball for easy packing, \$189



BIG AGNES GUNN CREEK 30 SLEEPING BAG This rectangular sleeping bag will keep you warm on all but the coldest nights, provides more room than a mummy bag and features a special construction to minimize drafts. It also employs an integrated full-pad sleeve to keep you and the bag in place overnight. Best of all, the Gunn Creek features synthetic insulation made from recycled plastic bottles. This is a great example of giving waste that would be sent to a landfill a new life in a product that will last for several more years. \$159



BIOLITE WOOD-BURNING CAMPSTOVE Most camp stoves require fuel canisters that can be difficult to recycle. The BioLite CampStove uses existing biofuel, like twigs, sticks and pinecones, to create an efficient, smokeless campfire that can cook meals and boil water as quickly and efficiently as a gas stove. Using only 2 ounces of wood, the CampStove can boil a liter of water in less than 5 minutes. The integrated USB charger generates usable electricity from the stove for charging LED lights, mobile phones and other personal devices. \$129



SEA TO SUMMIT KITCHEN SINK, WILDERNESS WASH AND WILDERNESS WIPES Here is a handy way to clean up on trail without polluting water sources. The collapsible 5-liter Kitchen Sink weighs only 3 ounces and features sturdy carrying handles. Combined with Sea to Summit's biodegradable Wilderness Wash, environmentally friendly cleanup just got a lot easier. Wilderness Wipes provide an even more eco-friendly alternative—after you wipe down, pack'em up and compost them when you get home. \$3-\$20



GEAR AID REPAIR PATCHES While buying "green" may be important, one of the most important contributions we can make to the environment is maintaining and salvaging our used gear. Gear Aid's patch kits make it easy to rescue damaged gear that might otherwise be consigned to the trash heap. We recently repaired a nasty gash in a tent fly with Gear Aid's Gore-Tex patch kit and saved a favorite tent from the junk pile. A variety of options, including Tenacious Tape, allow a host of repair options for tents, packs and outerwear. \$3-\$8





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By Cassandra Overby

Classics **Rock**

44 Like classic literature. and classic film, a classic hike should be a superb representation—in this case, of trails—capturing the full essence of our outdoors and outdoor experiences. It should be timeless—not replicated anywhere—and the experience should remain indelibly etched in our minds. Washington is a beautiful state with big mountains, big rivers, big lakes, a big coastline, big trees, big animals and big tracts of public lands traversed by thousands of miles of trails—the ideal place to find classic hikes. ***

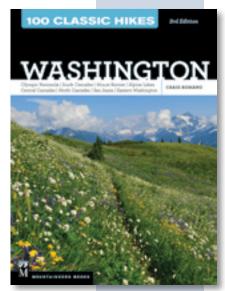
~ Craig Romano

100 Classic Hikes: Washington By Craig Romano

If you're looking for inspiration on where to hike this summer, from dayhikes to backpacking trips, and you want to tackle the most iconic trails in our state, 100 Classic Hikes: Washington has you covered. The all-time best-selling hiking guidebook for Washington is hot off the press with a new update by prolific Pacific Northwest guidebook author

The new edition includes a host of updates and changes, from new trails to new maps. And did we mention that it's in full color? But that's not all you can expect. You'll also find updated research on 50 "legacy" hikes (those that also appeared in the original edition), more geographic coverage of Washington (including Eastern Washington and the San Juans), trailhead GPS coordinates, and permit and fee info for park and wilderness areas.

That just leaves the hard decision of where to go.



Hike It Now

Craig Romano.

These summer-friendly trails are great additions to your hiking bucket list. For more information, from driving directions to trail descriptions, check out 100 Classic Hikes: Washington at MountaineersBooks.org, Amazon.com or your local bookstore.

5 LEGACY TRAILS

- ☐ Ozette Triangle (Olympic Peninsula)
- ☐ Indian Heaven Loop (Mount Adams)
- ☐ Naches Peak Loop (Mount Rainier)
- ☐ Green Mountain (North Cascades)
- ☐ Windy Pass (North Cascades)

5 NEW CLASSICS

- ☐ Leadbetter Pt (Olympic Peninsula)
- **☐** Mount Constitution (San Juans)
- ☐ Cape Horn (Columbia River Gorge)
- ☐ Badger Mtn (Eastern Washington)
- ☐ Mt Spokane (Eastern Washington)



By Brittany Manwill



Meals To Go

Lightweight, easy to prepare and shelf-stable for years, freeze-dried and dehydrated meals are the easiest and quickest way to get a warm meal on the table (or rock/stump/ground/lap) in the backcountry. Luckily, this camp staple has come a long way over the years.

Because serving sizes vary, and because hungry hikers often need more than one serving, we've indicated the calorie count for a typical package to help you plan for your individual needs.

BREAKFAST: COLORADO OMELET, BACKPACKER'S PANTRY No need to boil water for this one—just mix in cold water and cook it over a hot skillet. This breakfast scrambles freerange eggs with cheddar cheese, bell peppers and onions, and because it's meat-free, it's low in sodium. This protein-packed meal will fill you up so you can log major miles before lunch. Two 240-calorie servings. Available at backpackerspantry.com. \$9

LUNCH: MAC & CHEESE, MOUNTAIN HOUSE When you're relying on prepared meals for lunch, it's nice to be able to eat quickly. You'll still have to boil water, but this mac and cheese only needs to stand for eight minutes—less than half the time of other options. It packs a good portion of noodles and creamy sauce in each pouch, making it a nice budgetfriendly selection among packaged foods. Three 320-calorie servings. Available at REI. \$8

DINNER: PAD THAI & THAI CURRY, GOOD TO-GO FOODS These two dishes feature unique blends that feel too exotic for the backcountry. Group Good To-Go's Pad Thai or Thai Curry with some naan or extra instant rice, then pass everything around family-style. Both are gluten-free and pescatarian. Pad Thai, two 430-calorie servings; Thai Curry, two 380-calorie servings. Available at goodto-go.com. \$11.50 each

DESSERT: HOT APPLE COBBLER, BACKPACKER'S PANTRY Before you pack up the stove and clean the dishes for the night, make this comforting dessert to enjoy around the campfire. Warm apples are tossed with cinnamon and topped with a streusel-like crust. This dessert requires a few extra steps and requires a bit longer cooking time, so it might not be suitable if you're short on fuel or patience. Two 270-calorie servings. Available at REI. \$4

D.I.Y: BACKPACKING KIT, HARMONY HOUSE Itching to adapt your own favorite recipes for the trail? This convenient bulk kit features a variety of dehydrated vegetables and beans, giving you plenty of options for creating a custom menu for your trip. Available at REI. \$55

Special Diets

Diet or allergy considerations? No worries! Several backpacking favorites have been reformulated for specific dietary needs, and new brands are popping up as well. Here are a few options that are readily available right now.

ORGANIC: SHEPHERD'S MEAT PIE, MARYJANES FARM If you picture organic meals as "hippie" food that will leave you hungry, let this stick-to-yourribs dinner change your mind. This meat pie ranks high among hikers for its cheesy mixture of beef and potatoes. One and a half 250-calorie servings. \$12

VEGETARIAN: SICILIAN LASAGNA. **BACKPACKER'S PANTRY** This one has been around for a while but it has been recently reformulated and is worth giving another shot. Now organic and non-GMO, this tasty dish is perfect for a warm and tasty meal on the trail. One 410-calorie serving. \$9

VEGAN: VEGETABLE BURRITO BOWL, ALPINEAIRE FOODS This vegan selection is a favorite with many dietary crowds, as it's also gluten-, lactose- and soy-free. With cilantro-lime rice, black beans, corn and bell peppers, seasoned with a blend of Mexican spices, you won't miss a thing. Two 300-calorie serving. \$6.50

GLUTEN FREE: INDIAN VEGETABLE KORMA, GOOD TO-GO FOODS Oh, yum! This gluten-free vegetarian dish features yogurt and coconut, adding a creamy texture that balances out the fragrant spices and veggies. Pair with some easyto-prep instant rice for a well-balanced meal. Two 390-calorie servings. \$11.50





















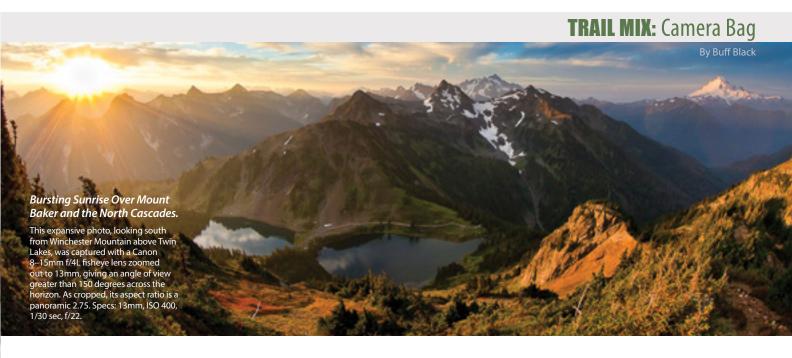












Panoramic Pics

In last issue's Camera Bag column, we discussed backpacks for carrying cameras to the big scenes. This column is about capturing those big scenes—those splendid panoramas accessible from Washington trails.

Stitching Wide (the easy way) A great many of us have at our fingertips (day and night, inseparably) the means to capture panoramas: our smartphones. Switch the mode to panorama, press the shutter button, pan horizontally at a slow to medium pace, press the shutter button again. Done. No clunky aligning this edge with that edge anymore. The in-phone camera automatically stitches together many "slivers" of the scene into a seamless whole. Check out Doug Diekema's Sunrise From Sahale Camp in the Mar+Apr 2016 issue for a great example.

Stitching Wide (more creative) While in-phone stitching is incredibly convenient, if you want more creative control, use a DSLR (or mirrorless or point-and-shoot) to capture a series of overlapping frames. This can be done freehand (steady now!) or with a tripod (use a panoramic head to reduce distortion). Postcapture, you can stitch the individual images together on your computer using Lightroom, Photoshop or another image editing platform. You can even process HDR (high dynamic range) images while stitching to ensure the composite image is well exposed.

Shooting Wide To capture an expanse in a single (unstitched) shot with a DSLR, reach for a wide-angle lens (fixed or zoom) with a focal length in the range of 35mm to 24mm or an ultra-wide from 24mm to about 14mm. (For reference, a standard lens is 50mm, and telephoto is 70mm up to 300+ mm. Even selfieready smartphones shoot wide these days. The Samsung S7 is at 26mm, and the iPhone 6S is at 29mm.) Going even wider, a fisheye lens at 15mm to 8mm can fit in a full 180-degree sweep of the horizon, spanning sunset to moonrise in one optically distorted frame.

Cropping Wide Panoramic images usually have an aspect ratio (AR: the ratio of width to height) of at least 2:1 and often 3:1 or higher. Smartphones and flatscreen TVs are mostly 16:9 (almost 2:1). If you stitch photos together (in-phone or on computer), you will likely end up with an AR greater than 2:1. But the aspect ratio of a DSLR image is only 3:2 (36mm W x 24mm H, for full frame), which is not proportionately very wide. In order to render it panoramic, crop to at least 2:1 and try 3:1 or 4:1, depending on the image.

Becoming Pro(ficient) with **Panoramics**

As you compose, capture and process your wider images, here are several ideas worth keeping in mind.

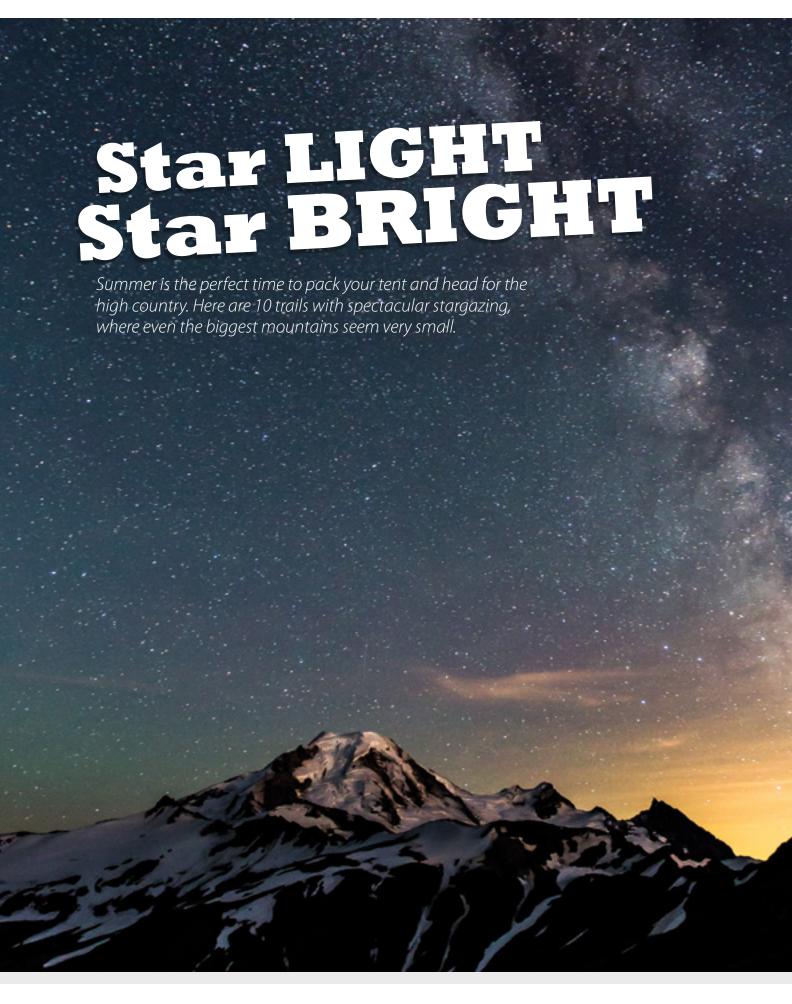
WHEN CAPTURING TO STITCH a panorama with your smartphone/camera, hold your phone/camera vertically in portrait orientation as you pan horizontally. This gives the image more height along with its elongated width. Otherwise the composite can turn out wide but too skinny.

WHEN USING WIDE-ANGLE LENSES

remember that the focal length of a lens is dependent upon whether the DSLR sensor is full-frame or has a 1.6x crop. For example, a 16mm ultra-wide lens on a camera with a cropped sensor will be about 25mm.

WHEN CROPPING remember, as always, that good composition is king. Sometimes a set aspect ratio such as 3:1 is great. Other times a custom crop will bring the image alive. Importantly, even telephoto shots can be cropped to be honorary panoramics.

WHEN CAPTURING PANORAMICS think up and down, as well as side to side. There are plenty of vertical panoramas waiting for you to compose. How about a tall and thin riverto-ridge composition, or a ground-to-crown portrait of an old-growth evergreen.





E After just two miles of hiking, you are rewarded with panoramic mountain views and countless places to survey the expansive night sky. ~ RACHELWOOD



Skyline Divide / MOUNT BAKER

Skyline Divide's rolling ridgeline offers more than just wildflowers and mountain views. After dark, enjoy wide-open skies from 6,000 feet on this spectacular stargazing trail.

Gaining roughly 1,500 feet in the first 2 miles, the Skyline Divide Trail starts out steep. Hemlock forest provides plenty of shelter from the elements as the trail switchbacks up to the ridge. After 2 miles, walk out of the woods into an alpine wonderland. Here, at nearly 6,000 feet above sea level, views of Mounts Baker, Shuksan and many more abound. This is a great turnaround point for those seeking a short day hike. Alternatively, a nearby camping area provides an easy backpacking destination. Head left (north) and climb the first knoll to reach it.

If you're seeking the full experience, wander south along the ridge, through wildflower meadows and toward Mount Baker. The trail rolls up and down, over high knolls to a junction marked by cairns at 3.5 miles. The way left loses some elevation through talus slopes and meadows for about a mile to the end of the trail. Camping here, near Deadhorse Creek, is a great way to spend the night stargazing. The way right continues to climb towards Chowder Ridge, ending atop a 6,563-foot knoll—Skyline Divide's highest point at 4.5 miles. This knoll offers another camp area and perhaps the best vantage point for stargazing.

TRAIL NOTE: Please respect the fragile meadows by only camping in established campsites. And remember: pack it in, pack it out!

DISTANCE: 9 miles // ELEVATION GAIN: 2,500 ft. // ELEVATION PEAK: 6,560 ft. MAP: Green Trails #13 // PERMIT: NW Forest Pass // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/skyline-divide

TRAILHEAD: From Bellingham, drive SR 542 east for 34 miles to the Glacier Public Service Center. Proceed another 0.8 mile to Glacier Creek Road (FR 39) and turn right, then make an immediate left on FR 37, signed for the Skyline Divide Trail. Continue for 12.9 miles to the trailhead. There are potholes and several blind turns, so drive carefully.

HIKE: Brandon Fralic & Rachel Wood // PHOTO: Chris Weber

HIKE IT: Starry Skies



Ptarmigan Ridge / MOUNT BAKER

Dayhikers and backpackers alike will marvel at the extraordinary views while walking along a mostly open ridge straight toward the imposing eastern face of Mount Baker.

The views are superb from the get-go, and they only get better as you traverse this ridgeline toward Washington's northernmost volcano. An overnight trip will afford you stellar sunrises and sunsets, and the high alpine environment away from city lights will have stargazers rejoicing.

Leaving the hustle and bustle of Artist Point behind, begin by following the Chain Lakes Trail as it heads west. In just under 0.25 mile, pass the turnoff for the Table Mountain Trail, and skirt around the base of the mountain's south side. The Chain Lakes and Ptarmigan Ridge Trails diverge at 1.1 miles; stay left at the junction. Crest a small ridge and drop a couple hundred feet to enter the desolate expanse of the tundralike ecosystem spread out before you.

Not too steeply, the talus bootpath heads upward again, cresting another ridgeline at just under 3 miles, and rounds the south side of a forested knob. From here, you can see the trail stretching before you as it gently ascends the ridge. Watch for the trail's namesake bird foraging along the path or mountain goats grazing in the grassy slopes as you make your way closer and closer to Komo Kulshan.

The trail gets narrower and steeper, then descends slightly before reaching Camp Kiser at 4.5 miles. This makes a nice turn-around point for day hikers. Backpackers can set up camp, bask in the sunset's warm glow and await the arrival of countless twinkling stars in the sky above.

DISTANCE: 9 miles // **ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,350 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 6,100 ft. MAP: Green Trails 13 & 14 // PERMIT: NW Forest Pass // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/ptarmigan-ridge

TRAILHEAD: From Bellingham, drive SR 542 east for 58 miles to the road's end at the Artist Point parking lot.

HIKE: Lindsay Leffelman // PHOTO: Delton Young

OOPS!

In the last issue of Washington Trails, the driving directions to the Railroad Grade Trail were listed incorrectly. The correct directions can be found on our website at wta.org/gohiking/hikes/





BUNDLE UP

Even in the summer, highelevation camp areas can get very cold on clear, starry nights. Pack extra layers, including a hat, gloves, thermals and a puffy jacket, so you can stay outside and enjoy the light show, sans shivers.

Fort Ebey / NORTH PUGET SOUND

Take the Bluff Trail out onto a grassy knoll high above Puget Sound, where oceanfront darkness offers some fantastic stargazing.

Fort Ebey is part of Ebey's National Historical Reserve and is open year-round from dawn to dusk and for camping from April 1 to November 1. The 3-mile Bluff Trail, part of the Pacific Northwest Trail, traverses a grassy knoll overlooking Puget Sound and offers nicely unobstructed views of the night sky. This is one of the best lowland places to get a view of the Milky Way without the need for a telescope or binoculars.

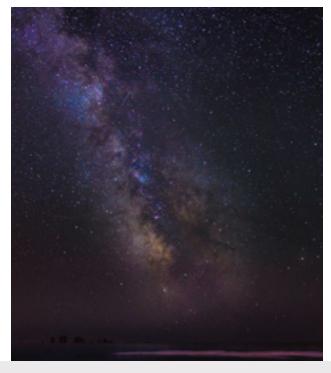
Summer is the best time for stargazing in the park by camping at one of the tent or RV sites (reservations recommended). From the campground, you can wander over to the Bluff Trail to take in the nighttime light show. Carry a flashlight to find your way, as there aren't any lights to help you along.

DISTANCE: 3.2 miles // **MAP:** Ebey's Landing map ELEVATION GAIN: 100 ft. // ELEVATION PEAK: 200 ft. PERMIT: Discover Pass // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/fort-ebey-state-park

TRAILHEAD: Travel to Whidbey Island, either via Hwy 20 at the north end or the Mukilteo Ferry at the south end. Proceed to the middle of the island to Libbey Rd and turn west. Continue 1 mile to Hill Valley Dr; turn left and follow signs to Fort Ebey.

HIKE: Mike Morrison // PHOTO: Archana Bahukudumbi



For stargazing at Fort Ebev. you need to visit between April 1 and November 1, when the park is open for camping. During the remainder of the year, the park closes at dusk.

TIPS FOR NIGHT PHOTOGS

You don't have to be a pro to capture amazing nighttime photos. All you need is a DSLR camera with adjustable settings and a sturdy tripod—a little coffee to help keep you awake into those wee hours helps too! Here are five tips from pro photog Dave Morrow to get you started.

FIND DARK SKIES. Finding a dark area to view the night sky is the first step. Try Olympic and Mount Rainier National Parks, Mount St. Helens and the North Cascades. You can also use the Blue Marble Light Pollution Map (blue-marble.de) to find a dark area that is close to you.

FIND CLEAR SKIES. You can use the National Weather Service weather charts (noaa.gov) to find cloud cover percentages for any location in the U.S. Usually cloud cover percentages between 0 and 60% will provide the best conditions to view the night sky, with 0% being the best.

SELECT GOOD EQUIPMENT. You'll need these three items to photograph the night sky:

- ► A camera with manual mode that can capture images in RAW format
- A wide-angle lens in the range of 10-30mm (out of 35mm/full frame).
- ► A sturdy tripod

FOCUS YOUR LENS AT NIGHT. Focus your camera for infinity (the farthest point on the horizon) during daytime, and mark that focus point on your lens. Return to this same focus point later at night for perfectly sharp photos. You can also focus on infinity at night by trial and error, but it takes practice.

5 EXPOSURE TIME, APERTURE AND ISO. Exposure time: Longer **Exposure time:** Longer exposure times pick up more light. Set an exposure for several seconds. If your photo is not bright enough, increase the exposure time incrementally until very small star trails appear. If you want to capture star trails, just set longer exposures.

Aperture: An aperture value of f/2.8 to f/4 will work very well for taking photos of the night sky, but f/2.8 is preferred. The goal here is to allow the most amount of light to hit your camera's sensor in the least amount of time, so wider (lower number under the f) is better.

ISO: Start with an ISO of 800 and increase it until your photo is bright enough. This will take some trial and error shots. Don't go overboard with ISO, as the higher the number, the more it will degrade your images. Try to match your photos to the scene you're looking at.

FINAL WORDS OF ADVICE

Play around with aperture, exposure and ISO until you are getting the shots you like. Each of these settings directly affects the others and the amount of light that hits your sensor, so a slight change could make all the difference in the number and brightness of the stars you'll see in your photos. After a few nights under the stars, you'll be an expert!

PERMITS REOUIRED

Camping is allowed only at designated locations and campsites within Royal Basin. From May 1 through September 30, reservations are also required. Campfires are not permitted above 3,500 feet, and bear canisters are required for food storage.

Royal Basin / OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

Take in vast night skies, as well as meadows, waterfalls and tarns at this stunning highcountry destination.

Begin at the Dungeness River trailhead. The first mile wanders gently within national forest land, following the Dungeness River through stands of large Douglas-fir. At 1 mile, the trail forks to cross Royal Creek to the left or head towards Royal Basin to the right. Take the right fork, following Royal Creek to the national park boundary at 1.2 miles. From here the path veers away from the creek and begins the climb into the valley.

Steep at times, the trail crosses several avalanche chutes that are colored with wildflowers and offer views of the valley below and Graywolf Ridge overhead. Pass two camps located on the bank of

Royal Creek, and continue climbing for about 2 miles to arrive at the Lower Meadow campsites. Beyond a large meadow, cross Royal Creek and climb to reach the north end of Royal Lake at 7 miles.

Beside the lake, take in views of craggy Graywolf Ridge and surrounding peaks, such as Mount Deception and Mount Fricaba. Keep an eye out for Olympic marmots, as they frequent the area. Choose a campsite with a clear view of the sky and wait for your evening light show.

EXPLORE MORE: The trail continues beyond the lake to Shelter Rock, a massive chunk of pillow lava that formed when hot lava flowed into water and cooled rapidly. Near the boulder, you can also follow a trail that leads past the ranger station to view a 61-foot cascade on Royal Creek.

DISTANCE: 16 miles // ELEVATION GAIN: 2,650 ft. // ELEVATION PEAK: 5,700 ft. MAP: Green Trails 136 // PERMIT: NW Forest Pass // DOGS: Not permitted

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/royal-basin

TRAILHEAD: From US 101 near Sequim, drive west on Louella Rd. Turn left on Palo Alto Rd for 6 miles, then right on FR 2880 for 1.7 miles. Cross the river, then turn left on FR 2870 for 9 miles to the trailhead.

HIKE: Kelsie Donleycott // PHOTO: Trevor Anderson

For prime stargazing, make the 600-foot climb above Roval Lake to Upper Royal Basin, where camp can be made on bare ground or gravel, away from Imperial Tarn.





HIKE IT: Starry Skies





PACK EXTRA WATER

Oftentimes, getting up high enough for unobstructed stargazing means getting away from water sources. When you pack in, be sure to carry as much water as you need for the night and into the next day, if necessary.



Lake of the Angels / HOOD CANAL

Reach for the nighttime heavens on this challenging climb to an isolated alpine lake in the Mount Skokomish Wilderness.

Begin by following Boulder Creek up past Putvin's grave while enjoying occasional glimpses of Mount Pershing and Jefferson Ridge. After about 1.5 miles, find the remains of a forest road in front of a small registration station. Here, the trail enters the Mount Skokomish Wilderness and becomes rougher and steeper as it switchbacks ever-upward; breaks in the tree cover offer views of Mount Skokomish.

Eventually, the route enters subalpine meadows and passes the Pond of the False Prophet. Press onward to the Olympic National Park boundary and up the last series of switchbacks to the Valley of Heaven. Here, Lake of the Angels is gently cupped in a cirque between Mount Skokomish and Mount Stone. Expect to run into wildlife up here; mountain goats and marmots are common. Settle in and enjoy a little slice of heaven as the stars light up the sky overhead.

DISTANCE: 7 miles // **MAP:** Green Trails 167, 168 ELEVATION GAIN: 3,400 ft. // ELEVATION PEAK: 5,000 ft. PERMIT: None // DOGS: Not permitted

INFO: hikingwithmybrother.com/2011/09/lake-of-angelsvia-putvin-trail-813.html

TRAILHEAD: From I-5 in Olympia, drive north on US 101 for 49 miles to Hamma Hamma River Rd (FR 25). Turn left and proceed 12 miles to the trailhead, just beyond Boulder Creek. The last 5 miles of the road are rough and unpaved.

HIKE: Nate & Jer Barnes // PHOTO: Josh Meisels



Navaho Pass / TEANAWAY

Climb to close-up views of the Stuart Range under usually sunny skies with wide-open barrens for stargazing.

Lying on the extreme eastern edge of the Cascades, the Teanaway region is a great place for stargazing for its extensive serpentine barrens. The Stafford Creek Trail climbs moderately but consistently through conifer forest, gaining 1,900 feet in 4 miles to a junction with the Standup Creek Trail. Turn right and climb a long switchback through thinning forest to a lush meadow where nice campsites abound.

For stellar stargazing, follow the trail to the right, around the meadow, and climb briefly through forest to a broad serpentine barren. Walk up the barren to a junction with the County Line Trail and continue straight up to Navaho Pass and an in-yourface view of the Stuart Range. Choose a campsite and enjoy views of Navaho and Earl Peaks, the Stuarts and down the Stafford Creek valley. When darkness falls, lie back on your sleeping pad and gaze up at a wide, unobstructed sky full of stars.

DISTANCE: 11 miles // **MAP:** Green Trails 209 **ELEVATION GAIN: 3,000 ft. // ELEVATION PEAK: 6,000 ft.** PERMIT: NW Forest Pass // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/navaho-pass

TRAILHEAD: From Hwy 970, turn west on Teanaway River Rd for 13 miles to 29 Pines Campground. Turn right on FR 9737 for 1.3 miles, then right on FR 9703 for 2.5 miles to the Stafford Creek trailhead.

HIKE: David Hagen // PHOTO: Daniel Zilcsak



Nannie Peak / GOAT ROCKS

Head to the site of a former fire lookout for expansive sunset views, then wait for darkness to enjoy a star-spangled night sky before heading back to camp.

It's possible to do this loop as a day hike, but if you can snag one of the few campsites near Sheep Lake, you'll be glad you extended the trip. Hike this one clockwise, to ensure you'll have a face full of views the whole way 'round.

Begin on the Nannie Ridge Trail and climb through cool forest. About 1.5 miles in, the forest becomes interspersed with clearings and the grade becomes steeper. Luckily, switchbacks help ease the upward movement, until the 3-mile mark atop Nannie Peak. This is the site of the former fire lookout with 360-degree views of the surrounding volcanic peaks, with Mount Rainier to the north and Mounts Adams and St. Helens to the south.

Your campsite (if there's one open) is at Sheep Lake, 1.4 miles further on, at a junction with the Pacific Crest Trail. There are other sites about a 0.5 mile down the PCT if Sheep Lake is full. The trail between Nannie Peak and Sheep Lake follows a ridgeline for much of the way, so step carefully, especially on your return trip in the dark. The next day, head south on the PCT, past meadows and quiet ponds, to the Walupt Creek Trail. Turn right and continue 3.5 miles back to the trailhead at Walupt Lake.

DISTANCE: 12 miles // **MAP:** Green Trails 335 **ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,800 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 5,800 ft. PERMIT: NW Forest Pass // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: http://www.wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/walupt-creek-

TRAILHEAD: Drive 2 miles west of Packwood on Hwy 12, then turn south onto FR 21. Proceed 19 miles down this rough, unpaved road, then make a left onto FR 2160, signed for the Walupt Lake Campground. Drive 5 miles down this road, to the campground near Walupt Lake.

HIKE: Anna Roth // PHOTO: Thomas Bancroft

GEOLOGIC SHOWCASE

Towering behind Dusty Lake, an 800-foottall coulee, lined with geometricallyassembled basalt columns, creates a dramatic backdrop behind the brilliant bluegreen lake.



Dusty Lake / WENATCHEE

Quincy Basin's unique combination of deep canyons, tall mesas, potholes and coulees creates a geological scene that is majestic when the sun sets and even better when the intense starry sky comes out.

Begin by walking on the jeep road that leads toward the Ancient Lakes, but head southeast when given the chance to go toward Dusty Lake. The trail is wide and is composed of bright red dirt, flanked by branchy and fragrant sagebrush and bluebunch wheatgrass. Take notice of the desert birds, such as red-winged blackbirds, mergansers and teals. There are also resident snakes in the area that enjoy the shade provided by the bushes.

After 1.6 miles, veer left at a fork to ascend to the Dusty Lake basin. The area surrounding the lake is flat with few bushes, so there are ample camping spots. Pitch your tent—sans fly—as the nighttime star show is glorious and expansive, and you can enjoy it from the comfort of your sleeping bag.

DISTANCE: 6 miles // **MAP:** USGS: Wenatchee ELEVATION GAIN: 200 ft. // ELEVATION PEAK: 1,000 ft. PERMIT: Discover Pass // DOGS: Not permitted

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/dusty-lake

TRAILHEAD: From I-90, take exit 149 for George, then turn left on SR 281 for 5.6 miles toward Quincy. Turn left onto White Trail Rd for 7.8 miles, then left on Road 9-NW. Continue 5.9 miles to the trailhead at road's end.

HIKE: Kristen Sapowicz // PHOTO: John Porter

North Kettle Crest / COLVILLE

With 12 named peaks along a route that starts and stays high, hikers can expect big views, no crowds and excellent stargazing.

This National Recreation Trail contours around 11 peaks and goes directly over the summit of the 12th and highest, Copper Butte, along its 29-mile length. With easy access at either end, it's possible to do this as a point-to-point with a shuttle vehicle or go for an out-and-back of varied distance from either trailhead. Along the route are several easy, off-trail scrambles with good vistas from their summits.

For an easy campsite with unobstructed stargazing potential, camp at Copper Butte. At 7,140 feet, it's the highest peak on the crest and the sixth tallest in Eastern Washington. For a campsite with water nearby, opt instead for the old sheepherder camp near the intersection with the Jungle Hill Trail, where a piped spring pours ice-cold water into a shallow pool. The spacious camp area is tucked in the trees, but good stargazing can be found just uphill.

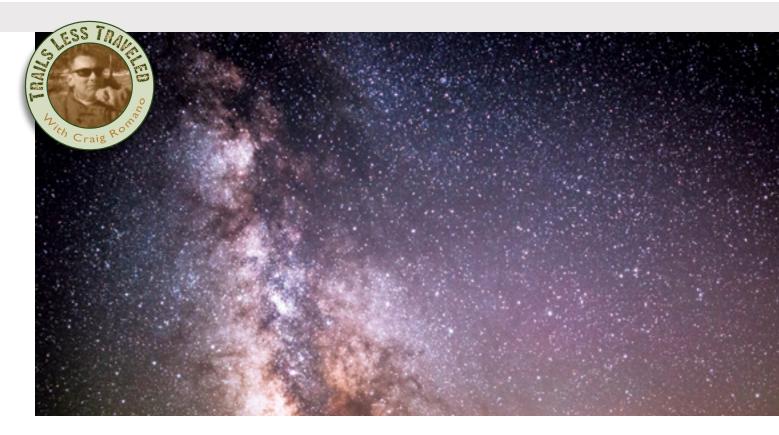
DISTANCE: Up to 29 miles // **MAP:** USGS: Sherman Peak **ELEV. GAIN:** Up to 5,200 ft. // **ELEV. PEAK:** 7,140 ft. PERMIT: None // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/kettle-crest-north

TRAILHEAD: From Kettle Falls, cross the Columbia River and drive west on Hwy 20 to reach the southern trailhead at Sherman Pass. Or, proceed north on US 395, then east on Deer Creek/Boulder Creek Rd for the northern trailhead.

HIKE: Holly Weiler





Crowell Ridge / SALMO-PRIEST

Roam one of the loneliest high-ridge trails in Washington to an idyllic campsite at the edge of a wide meadow. Then let the cosmos blow you away.

Start by following an old skid road, reaching the Salmo-Priest Wilderness at 0.6 mile. Steadily ascending, traverse slopes that were ravaged in the past by fires—now covered with bear grass, dazzling wildflowers, berry patches, feisty new growth and silvery snags. At 1.7 miles, crest Crowell Ridge and continue west along the 6,000-foot-plus high divide between the Sullivan River and Slate Creek Drainages.

The trail follows an up-and-down course over and around knolls and to and from saddles. At 3.9 miles come to a junction with the North Fork Sullivan Creek Trail and a fading spur path. The old spur can be followed 0.3 mile across open slopes to the remains of an old fire lookout (elev. 6,860 feet) and one of the best views from Crowell Ridge. Consider camping here (no water). Then watch the stars twinkle over the lonely Selkirk Mountains, including Gypsy Peak, the highest summit in Eastern Washington.

The next day, follow the Crowell Ridge Trail farther west on another up-and-down romp. At 7.2 miles reach the trail's western trailhead on FR 245, an extremely rough 4x4 road that sees very few travelers. If you still have energy before returning, walk 0.5 mile up the gated road to the fire lookout on 6,483-foot Sullivan Mountain for excellent views of the Pend Oreille Valley, the Abercrombie-Hooknose ridge and a sea of peaks flowing into B.C. and Idaho.

DISTANCE: 6.4 miles // **ELEVATION GAIN:** 2,300 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 3,200 ft. MAP: Green Trails 199: Mount Tebo // PERMIT: NW Forest Pass // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: 100 Classic Hikes: Washington (Mountaineers Books), by Craig Romano

TRAILHEAD: From Metaline Falls, drive 2 miles north on SR 31, then right on Road 9345 for 4.7 miles. Next, turn left on FR 22 and continue 6 miles, then left onto FR 2220. After 1.5 miles turn left onto FR 221 and continue 4.6 miles. Then bear right onto Spur 200 and continue 6.5 (rough at times) miles to the trailhead. Note: FR 200 is closed 8/15-11/30 for wildlife management.

HIKE: Craig Romano // PHOTO: Jack Nichols

This remote corner of Washington is home to the few known grizzly bears that inhabit the state. It is imperative that you hike and camp bear-aware in this area and know how to respond properly if you have a bear encounter.



ASHLAND LAKES

The power of a trip report

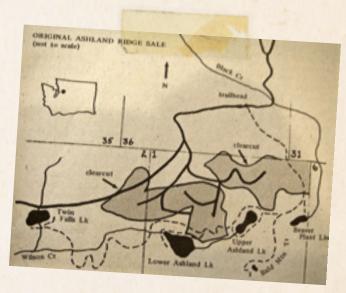
In 1973, Signposter Ruth Ittner's trip report about little-known Ashland Lakes, accessed by a rough fisherman's path, inspired Louise Marshall to visit the area. It then became one of her favorite places to visit.

In the early 1970s, volunteers for the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) built a trail along Bald Mountain Ridge above Spada Lake in the Sultan-Pilchuck Recreation Area. In 1976, a trail to Cutthroat Lakes, and trails connecting Beaver Plant, upper and lower Ashland and Twin Falls lakes were built. Fire-rings were installed for camping, and a primitive trail was roughed in to connect these trails to Bald Mountain Ridge.

Then, in 1980, DNR announced plans for the Ashland Ridge timber sale. This required more roads and a bridge spanning upper Twin Falls, which would reach within 200 feet of the lakes and destroy much of the trail system. Outraged by this proposal, Marshall prompted Signposters to voice their concerns about the project by writing letters and attending DNR hearings. Marshall's argument that recreation has value, as any other resource does, was a tough argument—but it worked. DNR canceled the original timber sale, later planning a sale that avoided damage to the lakes and trail. But this protection was not permanent.

The beauty of Ashland Lakes and its ecosystem, as well as Signposters' advocacy work, is far-reaching. Brock Evans, then vice president for national environmental issues at the National Audubon Society in Washington, D.C., submitted a letter to the editor for the June 1982 edition of Signpost, in which he thanked Signpost for what it had done on behalf of Ashland Lakes. In his letter, Evans recalls, "Walk[ing], enchanted, through that lovely gentle valley to the Lakes ..." He continues, "Reading [the Signpost article] brought it all back again, and I guess my first reaction was one of amazement that the forest was still there at all. And secondly, of gratitude for what you are doing to keep the trail intact."

In 1987, the state authorized DNR to protect special areas for scientific research and monitoring, environmental education and public access. The Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA) program was developed for that purpose. In 1991, the Mount Pilchuck NRCA was created (now Morningstar NRCA), which included the Beaver Plant and Ashland Lakes areas. In



Map of the original Timber Ridge timber sale proposal, as published in Signpost in 1980. Through the combined efforts of trail advocates, the sale was averted and the Ashland Lakes were saved.

a June 16, 1991, article in the Everett Herald, DNR environmental planner Joe Potter says of the Mount Pilchuck NRCA, "There are stands of old-growth cedar [that] show no disturbance, even from fire, since the glaciers were through here." A quote by Signpost's then-editor, Ann Marshall, is reminiscent of Louise Marshall's 1980 argument: "It's a good idea to recognize that these lands have value other than a dollar figure."

Marshall's argument for recreation as a resource has grown through the years and is a proven argument currently used in advocacy efforts for public lands. Thanks to a 43-year-old hike description in Signpost magazine, hikers can continue to enjoy the tremendous old-growth forest at Beaver Plant and Ashland lakes.

This is the power of a trip report. ◆

NORTHWEST EXPOSURE



Curtis Glacier, Mount Shuksan Photo by Vaqas Malik

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