Gear Up for Summer With the 2016 Gear Guide

1 Washington 1 DAILS

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>> The New Alternative Medicine

Get Out More: Live 5 to 9

Hike Washington's Ghost Towns
10 Trails for Summer Wildflowers

May+Jun 2016



NAT'L TRAILS DAY

>> JUNE 4TH

PITCH IN FOR TRAILS

On June 4, join WTA on trails across the state and take part in the nation's largest celebration of trails: National Trails Day. Work with fellow WTA volunteers on one of WTA's special work parties and give back to the trails you love to hike.

WHITE CHUCK BENCH-DARRINGTON

MARTIN CREEK CONNECTOR - SKYKOMISH

MIDDLE FORK - NORTH BEND

RIDLEY CREEK - MOUNT BAKER

TRAPPER CREEK - MOUNT ADAMS

TIBBETT'S MARSH-COUGAR MOUNTAIN

WHITE RIVER - MOUNT RAINIER NP

ANTOINE PEAK - SPOKANE

SIGN UP AT wta.org/volunteer

Photo courtesy of REI



Karen Daubert / karen@wta.org



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:











Inspired by Members

he days are longer, the buds are blooming, and as the snow level rises, so does my excitement to start planning for the year's adventures. I know that many of you share in this enthusiasm, as we browse the latest trip reports and save summer trail ideas in our My Backpack accounts.

Recently, I received a note from Hunter Ventoza, an enthusiastic hiker and environmental journalism student at Central Washington University, who wrote: "As summer approaches, every post on [WTA's] website about preparedness for backpacking and camping season makes me happy inside! Through all you are doing, I see the personality of a friend who enjoys the outdoors just as I do. Your work inspires me to keep working hard and aspire toward my goals!"

I know how Hunter feels! I get a deep sense of joy every day as I hear stories from the trail, thanks to volunteers, members and supporters. And this inspires me to work harder-to connect more youth to the outdoors, to recover more lost trails and to connect more hikers to our growing community. In other words, to implement WTA's strategic plan! And it doesn't hurt that I am also inspired to meet my personal hiking goals as well.

Hunter's comment also makes me realize—and appreciate—how WTA's community has an impact on absolutely everything about hiking in Washington, from trip reporters providing inspiration, to advocates speaking out for funding for road access, to the wonderful volunteers helping to improve trail conditions. When I consider all that is required to make this possible, I am incredibly grateful for WTA's volunteers. You make it possible for hikers, young and old, new and experienced, to enjoy the outdoors.

Only with a growing community and greater support will WTA be able to reach our ambitious goals. So when you go hiking, I encourage you to take someone with you and introduce them to Washington's trails. When you return, encourage others by writing your own trip report. Give a membership to a hiker you know who can benefit from all that WTA has to offer. Even putting a WTA sticker on your vehicle encourages others to support trails by supporting WTA.

In these ways, you are ensuring that WTA remains innovative for the future—an inspirational goal we can all work toward together.















Features

Hiking: The New Alternative Medicine

Recent studies are proving what hikers already know—that getting outdoors is more than pretty scenery, it's good for you too. » p.14

Hiking to Live

Hear the inspiring stories of hikers and community groups that used hiking to help overcome adversity and health problems. » p.18

Living 5 to 9

Hiking isn't just for weekends. Learn how to plan after-work and midweek getaways to help improve your health and well-being. » p.24

Gear Up: 2016 Gear Guide

Get the rundown on some of the latest and greatest hiking and backpacking gear, selected by WT's editor and gear team. » p.34

COVER: Hikes like this 4,000-foot grinder to the top of Mount Dickerman offer more than just spectacular views. A good day on trail is also good for the body, good for the mind and good for the soul. Photo by Dave Lamb

WTA at Work

Outdoor Leadership: Connecting kids to nature » p.8 WTA named volunteer group of the year » p.9 Hikers oppose mining near Mount St. Helens » p.11

Trail News

Highlights from the 2016 legislative session » p.12 Mount Rainier changes 2016 permit system » p.13

Trail Mix

NW Weekend: Washington ghost towns » p.44 Bookshelf: Healthy inspiration » p.46 Camera Bag: New camera backpacks » p.47 Camp Kitchen: Best energy snacks » p.48

Hike It!

Spring is time for wildflowers! » p.50

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Good Guides

aybe it's the traditionalist in me, but I love guidebooks. Even with all the information available on the Internet, I still prefer sitting down at a table with a stack of guidebooks and maps to plan my adventures. And I've just added two new guides to my collection.

The first is **Day Hiking: Bend and Central Oregon** by Brittany Manwill. You may recognize Brittany's name from the many years she's been contributing to Washington Trails, or from founding her own energy bar company, Mazama Bar. In this new volume in Mountaineers Books' popular Day Hiking series, Brittany highlights 100 hiking trails in and around Oregon's central region, from a variety of stunning routes in the Three Sisters Wilderness, to the Crooked River National Grassland, to hidden gems in Oregon's Badlands. When you're ready to head south of Washington's border and get into the heart of Oregon's Cascade Range-and one of the best sections of the Pacific Crest Trail-grab a copy and head for Bend.

The other new book I've added to my library is less of a trail guide and more of an inspirational guide. In celebration of the National Park Service's centennial event, Joel Anderson and Nathan Anderson have produced 59 Illustrated National Parks. In addition to the history of the National Park Service and the stories behind some of America's most spectacular parks, the real highlight of this large coffee table volume is the vintage poster art created for each park. You should probably keep a notepad handy as you flip through this book's pages so you can list all of the parks you'd like to visit.

With summer quickly approaching, these new guides can help you plan hiking adventures this year, and in years to come.



Day Hiking: Bend and Central Oregon, by Brittany Manwill. \$18.95 at Mountaineersbooks.org.

59 Illustrated National Parks, by Joel Anderson and Nathan Anderson, \$49,99 at Andersondesigngroupstore.com.

Tuning In Out There

Contemplation in the great outdoors

Do you connect with something bigger when you hike? Do you grapple with the big questions or find a truer sense of yourself on trail? Is solitude a necessary component? Three hikers weigh in on the less-tangible facets of trail experiences.

Finding Peace on the PCT

Headed for Mica Lake on the Pacific Crest Trail, we marched quietly from sunrise to sunset, 22 miles up and down some of the most rugged terrain in the Cascades. Bound and determined to get there, we pressed our reserve and fortitude with heavy packs upon our backs. In that quiet, non-talking space, my husband and I noticed the buzz of the bees, the whisper of wind in the trees, trickles of water cascading over mountain stones. Colors popped around us. Blue skies, cottony clouds, green meadows, granite cliffs, yellow flowers and purple butterflies. Our senses zeroed in on nature's crisp qualities, where we communed with the sounds, smells, tastes, sights and sensations that only the solitude of the trail could provide. ~ Rashel Fitchett

Escaping to the Outdoors

I find that removing myself from the rat race helps me to let go of anxiety, stress and insomnia. In nature, I feel reconnected to what's important—relationships, my sense of self, the planet, my place among others and nature. In rediscovering this interconnectedness, I can physically breathe easier, my muscles unwind, my headaches go away. I stand taller and walk with more ease in my body, even when I'm huffing and puffing up a steep, difficult incline. I feel more grounded in the world, as if I belong here, in my small, insignificant way. ~ Stephanie Selmann

In the Arms of Nature

I hiked to the top of Mount Si for the first time the day after my father passed away. Ascending the trail step by step afforded me a chance to process my thoughts and say things I needed to say to my dad. Reaching the top filled me with a sense of peace, knowing that these mountains will be here long after we are gone. The jays that came and visited me as I sat on a rocky ledge reassured me that life goes on and that there is still time to connect with others and thrive. The next time I take to the top of Mount Si, I'll think of my dad and of the kindness nature showed to me that day. ~ Ben Jones

How do you tune in out there? Visit wta.org/perspectives.

Blast from the Past **=**

Folks from the early days of WTA shared their thoughts on WTA's 50th anniversary at the recent Founder's Day event.

[My mom] would be very proud that the organization continues without her. Even after all those times of her pushing it out of the nest and it flapping franticly and falling. She was really happy when it stayed aloft and flew by itself. And it is still flying.

~ Ann Marshall, founder's daugher

The organization has grown, and it continues to grow and exceed people's wildest dreams, but is still a place where Ann Marshall and Tom Lucas and people who have been involved at any point in time can still come and feel welcome and at home. [WTA] is just growing and finding ways to continue to be better.

~ Elizabeth Lunney, former executive dir.

I am delighted to wish WTA well on its 50th anniversary. We are starting out the next 50 years in a such different spot than where it started, but with a real sense of appreciation for what Louise did here.

~ Tom Lucas, first board president

DO YOU HIKE FOR BODY OR SOUL?

If I had to choose, it'd have to be soul. There's nothing like a good meditative hike to cleanse the mind and reduce

> Deborah Bernstein WTA member

Soul! Relax. connect with nature and reenergize my spirit.

> Lucia Cantu WTA member

The harder the hike, the more enjoyment I get from it. Fitness is my main goal, but through hard work my mind is refreshed.

> Erik Haugen-Goodman WTA staff

For my soul. It's like doing a walking meditation. But with blisters.

Susan Boehnlein

Both. Best way to get perspective, get in touch with gratitude for being alive and experience sheer joy and wonder.

Jane-Ellen Seymour WTA member

JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT WTA.ORG/SIGNPOST

TRAIL SMARTS

Where to Park Your Tent

No matter how well you know Leave No Trace principles, the decision about where to set up camp isn't always cut and dry. Are the camps in the photos below legit? Look closely, and read the captions to find out.



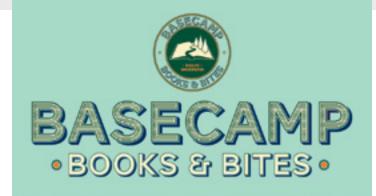
- **A)** Parking your tent on snow leaves very little impact behind. You'll just want to take measures to stay warm enough.
- **B)** Put your tent on bare dirt, sand or rock, especially at high elevations. These backpackers did a good job not crushing fragile vegetation.
- **C)** Tucking two tents close together into this very established coastal camp keeps impact—physical and visual—to a minimum.
- **D)** Very established camps near lakes or rivers are sometimes the toughest calls to make. It's generally better to use an established camp rather than create a new one—but be extra sure to keep fires, kitchen disposal and toilet activities 200+ feet away from the lake.

For more resources about choosing low-impact campsites, visit wta.org/trailsmarts.

Why do you think it's important for hikers to lend a hand maintaining trails?

When I'm on the trail, I'm reminded how small I am but also how much impact I can have. That impact can be made by doing things that may seem small, like one day's worth of trail work to make one trail a little nicer. Bit by bit we're making trails better, which, in turn, allows more people to get outside.

~ Julianna Hoza, WTA Youth Ambassador



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NEW TRAIL ALERT:

The Tursi Trail

Trails that link existing recreation areas are of great value, as they act to multiply the accessibility of hiking opportunities and benefit the communities that encompass them. WTA volunteers are hard at work on making one such project a reality-the Tursi Trail. This new route will meander through one of the most picturesque valleys on Fidalgo Island and will connect Deception Pass State Park to the Anacortes Community Forest Lands.

This new trail is the result of a collaborative effort between the Skagit Land Trust, Skagit County Parks and local landowners and will become a reality thanks in part to the hard work of WTA volunteers. Construction commenced this past winter, and volunteers have already made great progress after nearly a dozen work parties and 1,000 hours of service. Work on the Tursi Trail will continue through May, so consider joining WTA on Fidalgo Island to pitch in on this new trail project. For more information and to register for a work party-please visit wta.org/volunteer.



>> WTA DOLLARS 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

Connecting Kids to Nature

"My main goal was for my students to have an enjoyable experience in a national park."

This was a comment made by Don Miller, an English language learners services facilitator at Mount Rainier High School. After attending an Outdoor Leadership Training workshop to learn about planning and leading independent trips, Miller utilized WTA's gear library to outfit his group and received financial assistance to get his students from their school near SeaTac to Mount Rainier.

"The minute we pulled into the park, I knew [that] goal had been met," Miller recalls. "It was so great to see students playing and having fun with one another, regardless of whether they spoke the same language or not. The fact that they were all exchanging numbers at the end of the trip so they could share photos really showed me how these students may spend [school days] together but rarely get a chance to connect." Anecdotes like these sustain WTA's passion for engaging youth in outdoor activities and trail stewardship.

Research by the Children and Nature Network (children and nature.org) continues to document the trend of children's diminishing direct experience in the outdoors, while also exploring how nature plays a critical role in childhood development. And while much of the research that brought mainstream attention to this issue focused on the negative health and behavioral effects of childhood trending indoors, emerging studies indicate a connection between time outdoors and positive effects, even suggesting relief for specific ailments like ADHD.

Unfortunately, we also know that youth access to the outdoors is disproportionately reduced for underserved communities, which often face numerous barriers to nature-based play and activities—and WTA is working to counter that. Together with the Outdoors Empowered Network (outdoorsempowered.org), WTA is investing in Washington's youth by increasing equitable access to the outdoors and helping inspire the next generation of hikers, outdoor leaders and environmentalists.

You can help. Learn more, and spread the word, about WTA's resources for educators and youth program coordinators at wta.org/olt.



WTA Named Volunteer **Group of the Year**

Amber Forest. Joining in the celebration were WTA crew leaders from the

northwest region.

'ashington State Parks are among this state's most beloved destinations. They provide readily accessible outdoor recreation opportunities to communities in every corner of the state. Washington Trails Association volunteers have been integral in helping to maintain the hiking trails available in many parks and—in honor of their exceptional work—have been named Washington State Parks' Volunteer Group of the Year.

Volunteers in the northwestern corner of the state have put in a great deal of work at Larrabee State Park, inspiring park employees to nominate WTA for this award. "We really appreciate all of the hard work WTA has done for us here at Larrabee through the years," explains park ranger Amber Forest. "You have helped us maintain a high standard for our trail visitors. Thank you for your hard work and service to Washington State Parks!"

Volunteer efforts have certainly not been limited to Larrabee State Park; throughout the past 12 months WTA volunteers have worked at more than 10 state parks, including Mount Spokane, Dosewallips and Beacon Rock. In the process, they have logged more than 10,000 hours that provide direct benefits to trail users statewide. This honor is a welldeserved acknowledgment of how valuable WTA volunteers are to everyone who visits Washington State Parks.







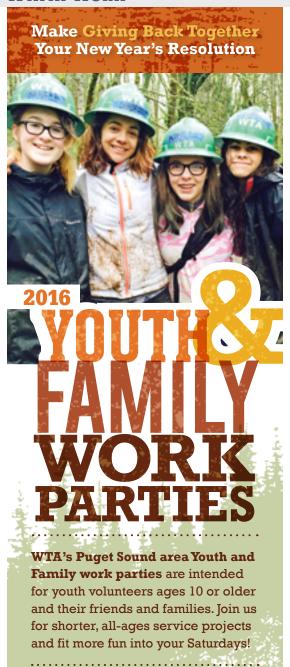
From the Fireside

Members of WTA's Fireside Circle recently gathered for a look ahead to the next 50 years of protecting and maintaining Washington's trails. WTA Board President Stephen Tan led a discussion about WTA's new Strategic Plan goals with special guests, Jon Snyder, the governor's policy advisor on outdoor recreation and economic development, Michelle Piñon, a regional coordinator at Latino Outdoors, and Rebecca Lavigne, WTA's trail program director.

TOP: Michelle Piñon and David Garcia (right), from Latino Outdoors, joined Joe Impecoven and Kristen Regain (center, left) from REI for a happy group shot.

MIDDLE: Washington's new outdoor economic and policy advisor, Jon Snyder (center), with WTA's executive director, Karen Daubert (right) and advocacy director, Andrea Imler.

LOWER: WTA board member Carol Bianquis with Boeing's Shyla Miller.



Spring 2016 **Dates:**

May 21: Grand Ridge

June 4: Cougar Mountain

July 9: Coming Soon!

All events are from 9am to 2pm



Volunteers Step Up for Lost Trails

Late last year, hikers submitted more than 700 stories from some of Washington's "lost trails." These experiences were submitted through a survey for WTA's Lost Trails campaign, a new project working to identify some of the trails in greatest need of repair. The survey also indicated that nearly 80 percent of respondents said trail conditions have made them think twice about continuing a hike within the last two years.

Trails get lost in all kinds of ways: storms and avalanches knock down trees; shrubbery and brambles take over trail surfaces; floods and high runoff take out critical bridges. Devastating wildfires and lack of trail funding also do their part to cause trails to be lost to hikers. And each challenge requires a different set of skills to fix or find the trail again.

Now that temperatures are warming and the backcountry is melting out, volunteers are preparing to head out to some of our featured lost trails for 2016. They will reopen the Klickitat Trail, clear the Boundary Trail in the Pasayten Wilderness and build a new bridge on the North Fork Sullivan Creek in the remote Salmo–Priest Wilderness. It is WTA's goal to rehabilitate five lost trails in Washington by 2020.

For more information on WTA's Lost Trails Found campaign, and to see how you can help rescue some of Washington's lost hiking gems, visit **wta.org/losttrails**.







Hikers Oppose Mining Near Mount St. Helens

OLYMPIA - The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recently closed public comment period on a proposal from Ascot Mining to conduct exploratory mining for gold, copper and other minerals near Mount St. Helens National Historic Monument. The project area is adjacent to Goat Mountain, one of southwest Washington's most popular hiking trails, as well as Green River and the Green River Horse Camp.

WTA asked hikers to tell the agency that hikers want protection for the area. More than 500 outdoor advocates sent letters opposing the project.

The Goat Mountain Trail offers a rare glimpse of the destruction of the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens and the verdant green of new plant life. Should mining operations begin, the landscape could be altered forever. It would also cause increased traffic on forest roads, noise and erosion.

"I have spent many pleasant days hiking, fishing and hunting in the upper Green River area. This area has a pristine scenic quality that should not be spoiled by a copper mine," wrote one advocate in opposition to the project. The U.S. Forest Service purchased the property in 1986 with funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the express purpose of conservation and recreation.

A nearly identical proposal was stopped by the federal district court in Portland, Oregon, in 2014 after BLM approved the project in 2012. After reviewing comments, Washington's BLM is expected to release a decision. A 45day comment period will follow the release of the decision.



Islands Need Love Too

Over two weekends in March and April, WTA crews worked on the Shinglemill Creek Trail on Vashon Island, repairing steps, brushing, fixing drainage and addressing problem areas. This was WTA's first time working on Vashon Island in 10 years and was a great success. While our work on the Shinglemill Creek Trail is complete, we hope to offer more island projects later in the summer, and potentially some volunteer vacations in the future.

It's a Wrap

Highlights from the 2016 legislative session

OLYMPIA - The 2016 state legislative session dragged out for an extended special session, but in the end the House and Senate compromised on supplemental operating and capital budgets that will hold Washington over until next year's 2017-2019 biennium budget planning. WTA had a number of legislative priorities in this year's session, from funding for the Teanaway Community Forest to improved protections for Washington's trails. Here's how WTA's advocacy efforts shook out this year.

Recreation Planning in Teanaway Community Forest

- What we worked for: Ensuring access to the Teanaway Community Forest through an operating budget request of \$471,000. The 50,000-acre forest was acquired in 2013 as Washington's first state community forest. This funding is critical for providing access and recreation opportunities for the forest.
- How it fared: The Teanaway Community Forest received \$236,000. The funding will help officials control access to the forest with signs, gates and locks, complete a trail inventory and begin work on a comprehensive recreation plan.

Combining the Discover Pass and NW Forest Pass

- What we worked for: Advocating for \$250,000 for the State Parks and Recreation Commission to coordinate with state and federal agencies on recommendations to improve access fee systems and for a contract to facilitate this process.
- **How it fared:** The \$250,000 was provided for the study.

Increasing Gas Tax Income Spent on Outdoor Rec

- What we worked for: An increase of spending authority for Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Activities (NOVA) funds. The 2015 state transportation budget included an increase in the percentage of funds collected through the state gas tax for the NOVA program, which provides valuable funding for hiking, biking, horseback riding and motorized recreation trails.
- **How it fared:** The spending authority was increased.

Protecting Trails and Access to Trailheads

- \$100,000 for weed control on the John Wayne Pioneer Trail
- \$50,000 for the Northwest Avalanche Center to continue being the eyes and ears of avalanche conditions in the state
- \$14.2 million for Washington State Parks and the maintenance and improvement of park facilities and equipment



Colville National Forest to Revise Forest Plan

SPOKANE – After several months' delay, the Colville National Forest released a draft revision to its forest plan earlier this spring. This is part of a multiyear planning effort to update and revise its official forest plan. The current forest plan was signed in 1988.

The National Forest Management Act of 1976 requires each national forest to have a management plan, and to periodically revise the plan to address new economic, social and resource conditions, and incorporate new scientific information. Revisions will guide the future of timber harvest, recreation and other activities in the forest, including trail repair. Recommendations for new wilderness area designation are also included in the plan. Wilderness designation is the highest level of protection that can be granted for America's public lands.

The Colville National Forest encompasses 1.1 million acres in northeastern Washington, including the Kettle River, Selkirk Mountains and the upper reaches of the Columbia River.

WTA is currently evaluating the draft plan before submitting comments. We will primarily consider whether new wilderness recommendations are adequate for protecting the landscape and trail experience and how trails are being prioritized for maintenance on the forest.

\$500 for 50

Make a special gift of \$500 to WTA this year in honor of our 50th anniversary and get your contribution matched dollar-for-dollar. Participate by June 31 for a special incentive. Visit wta.org/500match.



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- Snoqualmie Vineyards ♦ Stumptown Coffee

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.

Mount Rainier Changes Permit System for 2016

MOUNT RAINIER - Mount Rainier National Park has announced that it will be processing wilderness camping and climbing permits on a first come, first served basis for the 2016 hiking and climbing season. This includes permits for hiking the Wonderland Trail.

The park reported that the change in procedure comes as a result of a critical failure of the park's existing reservation system. The park has been working with the University of Washington Information School on developing a new online system to replace the mail-in and fax-based system of the past, but it is not scheduled to launch until 2017.

"All opportunities for wilderness camping in the park will be still be available, just on a walk-up basis," says park superintendent Randy King. "Visitors shouldn't let the lack of a permit reservation system keep them home. Park employees who staff the Wilderness Information Centers work hard to help people and can generally put together a permit for those who can be flexible."

The wilderness reservation system failure does not affect the ability to reserve campsites at Ohanapecosh and Cougar Rock Campgrounds, which are managed through the recreation.gov website.

How to secure a walk-up wilderness permit

- What to have ready when you talk to the ranger:
 - ☐ Your preferred itinerary (and backup plans)
 - ☐ The number of people hiking with you
 - ☐ An emergency contact phone number
 - ☐ Make, model and license number of your vehicle
- Permits must be obtained in person at the Longmire Wilderness Information Center (7:30 am to 5:00 pm), White River Wilderness Information Center (7:30 am to 5:00 pm) or the Carbon River Ranger Station (hours vary; call ahead).
- Permits can be obtained one day before your trip start date, or on the start date. There is no fee for a first come, first served permit.
- For multi-day trips with many camps (like the Wonderland Trail), have a few backup options in mind, in case one of your itineraries is already booked.

nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/wilderness-permit.htm.



Photo by Colleen Ponto



Man needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to the body and soul. ~ John Muir

As I come back from two days of ski patrol near Mount Rainier, I am physically tired but mentally refreshed. When I am outdoors my focus becomes solely the present moment and enjoying what is in front of me. The beauty and simplicity of nature gives me a sense of peace and relaxation that cannot be replicated. The inspiring words of John Muir ring through my head, that as much as we are ingrained in society, taking a break to enjoy nature gives us the strength to move forward.

Getting outside as a means for physical and mental health made its first impression on me as a youth in the Boy Scouts and has stayed with me ever since. I've carried these lessons with me into adulthood and my professional life as a personal trainer and health coach. As I work to help motivate and empower others, I've found that people are most themselves when out for a walk in the woods. Clearing away distractions and getting fresh air has enormous benefits for both body and mind, which makes getting outdoors both enjoyable and rewarding.

A healthy dose of playing outside can be achieved in a variety of forms, from a stroll in a local park to a long trail run to a WTA trail work party. No matter how you get outdoors, the benefits are a healthier and happier body and brain. There are also benefits to getting an aerobic workout, detaching from technology, having social time with friends and helping the community.

GET UP *GET OUT*

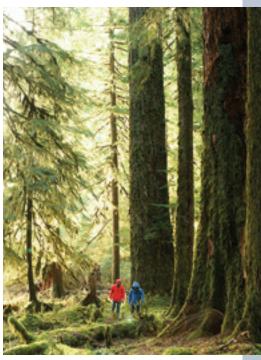
Physical activity is one of the most important things we can do for our health. Americans are slowly killing ourselves due to inactivity. With everything accessible at the touch of a button, our physical health is at risk. Combined with the lack of nutrition in convenience food and the ease of errands and work done from our cell

phones, the result is that we are essentially conditioning ourselves to stay inside and limit activity.

According to the Center for Disease Control, obesity is at an all-time high in the United States, with more than 40 percent of the population aged 40 to 59 having a body mass index (BMI) over 30. (BMI is used as a screening tool to monitor weight and obesity.) When BMI rises over 30, it enters the obese range and brings a higher likelihood of developing many health risks, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes. A recent study from the British Journal of Sports Medicine found that inactivity is now a higher risk factor for heart disease than smoking. These startling conclusions stress the importance of physical fitness as a means to improve our health and well-being.

Oftentimes, however, we know what is healthy and what we should do, but motivating ourselves to get started is the most challenging aspect. Creating a fun, convenient and sustainable way to get out is the key to making it a part of your life. The love of the outdoors can be a powerful way to keep exercise fun—with plenty of added benefits. Those of us who live in Washington often have a hard time getting enough vitamin D, especially during the winter months. Outdoor activity gives us a boost of vitamin D from the sun, which helps in calcium absorption and promotes a healthy immune system and strong bones. Plenty of studies are also showing that exercising in a natural environment (compared to indoor environments, such as gyms) has a positive effect on heart rate recovery, blood pressure and overall perceived exertion.

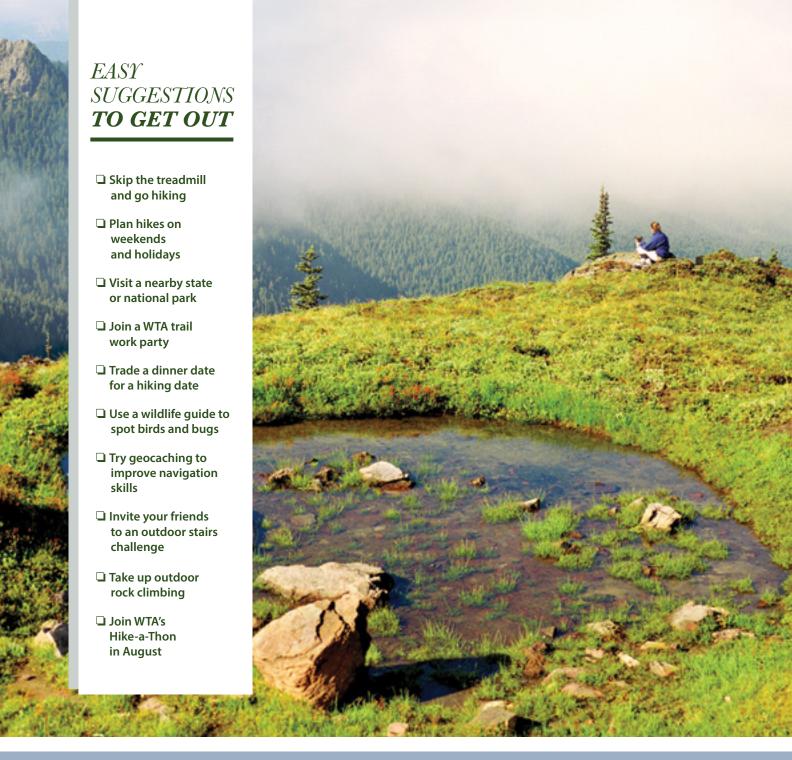
Beneficial activity does not require strenuous exercise. The benefits can be enjoyed with even moderate efforts. The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has been conducting tests on the physiological effects of Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing) and found that people who get outdoors have shown lower concentrations of cortisol



66 Nature restores our mental state the same way that food and water restore our physical bodies. 99 Photo by Edmund Lowe

(a stress hormone), lower pulse rates and lower blood pressure after brief walks in nature. Another study from the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health showed that lunchtime walks in nature help decrease heart rate during sleep, which allows for greater regeneration and reduced risk of cardiovascular disease.

Knowing your health is directly related to the choices you make should be a wake-up call to make yourself a priority and get moving. You can lower your blood pressure, cholesterol and risk for type 2 diabetes, as well as increase muscular and bone strength and control your weight, all while participating in enjoyable exercise. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends 20 to 60 minutes of physical activity at least three to five times per week. Physical activity should include a mix of aerobic, weight-bearing and flexibility exercises.



NATURE RX: **5 DAYS** (a) **30 MINUTES**

Your routine should include a combination of aerobic, weight-

Include natural objects while bench. For flexibility, remember



66 Exposing ourselves to nature will strengthen our bodies and clear our minds, as well as increase our self-esteem and focus and lower our stress and risk of depression. Photos by Andrew Park (opposite) and Ingrid Johnston (above)

NATURE FOR A CLEAR MIND

With the busyness of everyday life, it becomes increasingly difficult for us to take much-needed mental breaks. Over the last few decades there has been a rise in depression and anxiety and a decrease in mental focus among both adults and children. Local visits to our state parks are down in numbers, and research by Harvard is even showing that we spend more time in our cars than we do outdoors—but you can do something about it.

Nature restores our mental state the same way that food and water restore our physical bodies. The attention restoration theory suggests that the mind can become fatigued, thereby reducing concentration and focus. In their book, The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective, Rachel and Stephen Kaplan discuss this theory and assert that nature has positive characteristics that help to mitigate stress and restore mental function. Many new studies are starting to find similar results and are also linking outdoor activities to increased focus and reduced anxiety among children and adults. Dutch researchers have even found that those living near more green space have lower instances of depression and anxiety and these same individuals have a higher perceived level of their own health.

Another study by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, examined two age groups (4 to 5 and 7 to 8) and found that children improved their memory and attention span after a nature walk compared with an urban walk. The University of Michigan found that memory and attention improved by 20 percent after people spent an hour interacting with nature. These studies show the positive associations of combing nature and activity. Despite these benefits, the Journal of the American Medical Association revealed that only half of children go outside to walk or play at least once per day with either parent. This report is extremely significant, suggesting that we aren't making it a priority to get outside for ourselves—or our kids.

But we can take steps to improve. By heeding the messages found in this research about the importance of going outdoors, we can—and need to make sure it is an integral part of our lives. By exposing ourselves to nature, we will strengthen our bodies and clear our minds, with benefits including higher self-esteem, increased focus, lower depression risk and less stress.

YOUR OUTDOOR **PRESCRIPTION**

With all the mental and physical benefits of hiking and getting outdoors, you can easily develop your own nature prescription. This "eco-therapy" can have a profound effect on your mental and emotional state and improve your physical condition. All that's needed is a minimum of five minutes per day outdoors. Here are some suggestions:

PARENTS WITH CHILDREN

Establishing a positive association with the outdoors is important at a young age. Make it fun and easy for you and your little ones to get out. Ditch the Saturday morning cartoons to go hike a local trail make sure to bring snacks. Emphasize fun by picking areas that are interactive, such as waterfalls, lakes or caves, or focus on natural features like wildflowers, wildlife or bugs. Try one of these kid-friendly trails: Tradition Lake on Tiger Mountain, Sol Duc Falls in the Olympics, or the Ape Cave near Mount St. Helens. You can find more kid-friendly trails in WTA's hiking guide.

FULL-TIME WORKERS

A busy work schedule can make it challenging to get outside. Being cooped up in a stuffy office all day makes it all the more important to get out and decompress. Use breaks to walk around the block or stroll through a local park. Create a My Backpack account on WTA's hiking guide and design your own hiking to-do list. When the weekend arrives, all you have to do is pick a trail and go. For even more physical activity—and an opportunity to meet new friends and enjoy some outdoor camaraderie—join a WTA trail work party or a local Meetup group.

RETIREES

As we get older, it is even more important to get outside and stay active. Make yourself a priority and have fun getting outdoors. Depending on your schedule you may have some free time on weekdays—the best time for crowd-free trails! Those who are at least 62 years old are eligible for the lifetime National Park Service pass for access to many national and local outdoor recreation areas. There are also opportunities to take active leadership roles—and get outside—with organizations like WTA, The Mountaineers and the Mount Tahoma Trails Association.

When we think of our overall health, we need to remember that a little well-spent time in nature can provide many benefits and that reducing stress can increase overall happiness. From a brief walk at a local park to a multiday trip in the woods, we can all enjoy a breath of fresh air.◆





Kim Striber:

Hiking through a vestibular disorder

My name is Kim. I am an adventurer, a world traveler and an avid hiker—and I have a vestibular disorder.

I was raised in Washington. My love for the mountains and the wilderness was inspired at an early age by my father, an outdoor enthusiast. At the age of 16, I completed the Seattle Mountaineers basic climbing course and never looked back. Summiting Mount Rainier and other peaks in the Cascade Range with my father and brother was a highlight of my teen years. I have since raised a family, and my husband, children and I have loved hiking Washington's trails and exploring its wilderness.

In 2014, my pathway in life took a turn when I was diagnosed with a vestibular disorder. My challenges are balance, vision and processing. When I was diagnosed, I wanted to keep hiking, but I first needed to learn to navigate safely around my home, then my neighborhood—and then off I went.

The therapy I have used to retrain my brain and maximize vertical and life balance is hiking. I use a trekking pole or two to walk and hike. My trail in life is different than I ever anticipated, but the trek toward health and balance has been also beautiful and

You can't always choose your destination, but you can choose which trail you take.

freeing. My hope is that I am able to inform the public about vestibular disorders and that I will inspire and encourage all of us to keep moving.

Learn more about vestibular disorders and join Kim in her journey to health at trektobalance.com.

KIM'S TOP FIVE TIPS FOR HIKING WITH A VESTIBULAR DISORDER

(1) Wear the right boots.

It's important to wear good shoes that have ankle support and a durable sole. A sturdy platform promotes balance when every step counts.

(2) Use trekking poles.

Trekking poles increase stability. Though optional for most hikers, they are essential for those with vestibular disorders.

(3) Pack adequate hydration and food.

The energy requirements of the brain and body are increased when it becomes more challenging—and more work—to stay upright and on the trail while in motion.

(4) Take frequent breaks.

Hiking is a multisensory, stimulating activity that's excellent for brain retraining. Know your limits, take breaks, and allow the environment to calm you down. Stop, relax and enjoy. Also plan for additional rest the next day.

(5) Bring a friend.

A companion is an essential resource for safety and navigation. Those with vestibular disorders may have a limited ability to drive, so a ride to and from the trailhead is also really helpful. And because the ability to process conversation is diminished when your attention is focused on the uneven terrain of the trail, hiking with a friend who's aware of your challenges—and who's compassionate—is priceless.

Patti McCarthy hiked the **Pacific Crest Trail during her** fight against breast cancer.

PATTI'S TOP THREE TIPS FOR HIKING WITH CANCER

1 Plan on needing more time.

I had to remind myself, "This is not a race. If it takes me twice as long as usual to get up a hill, then it takes me twice as long."

(2) Have a supportive partner.

I couldn't have done any of this on my own. My husband was my rock. He also carried some of my stuff. Even though he had concerns about our going out, he recognized how important it was to my recovery.

(3) Know your physical limits.

It's probably a good idea to know your lab values and NOT go hiking if your blood counts are too low (a hard lesson I learned in Tehachapi).

Patti McCarthy:

Hiking through cancer

I am a wife, mother and nurse. I am a Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) section hiker. Now, I am also a cancer survivor. As a nurse, I have had plenty of patients with cancer, but nothing truly prepared me for having cancer myself.

It took 400 days of treatment from biopsy to final chemo treatment. I thought my days of hiking were on hold or gone. But eventually, I found the focus to deal with my cancer and its treatments. It was to continue the PCT.

Through surgeries, chemotherapy, radiation, multiple infections, a roller coaster of emotions and chemo brain, my husband and I hiked and hiked and hiked. It was my way of living my life, not cancer. Every cancer survivor's story is different. This is mine. I hope to inspire anyone sitting around thinking they can't hike a longdistance trail because of some obstacle.

Check out page 46 to learn more about Patti's book, Hiking Cancer: 400 Days of Cancer and How I Hiked Through It.

Hiking is a passion for me, and I would recommend anyone with an illness to find their passion and keep it lit. You need a focus to get your mind off the 24/7 nature of a serious illness. If hiking isn't your thing, any walk in nature is healing. Just seeing the beauty of any trail, smelling the flowers, hearing the birds—all help you to be present in the moment and not mired in the anxiety of illness.



Ingunn Markiewicz:

Hiking through depression

I became severely depressed when I was in college. I had to drop out since I wasn't able to get out of bed, let alone show up for my classes. I tried talk therapy, behavioral therapy, art therapy and antidepressants, but nothing really helped. I gained 80 pounds and spent most of my days in bed or on the couch.

Eventually my husband took a job in Washington, and we moved here. As much as I liked my new home state, I spiraled deeper and deeper into the depression. Looking back at how I felt during those dark days of our first winter here, I'm honestly surprised I made it.

The following summer, two and a half years after I dropped out of college, one of my husband's colleagues invited us to celebrate his birthday by camping on Shi Shi Beach. I didn't have any real hiking experience, which is such a shame since I grew up in Norway. And I truly don't know how I found the courage to step so far out

of my comfort zone, but I said yes to the trip.

I wore cotton from head to toe and too-tight shoes, so I spent the entire trip wet, cold and with painful blisters, but there among the sea stacks and the starfish and the anemones, I found a little piece of myself that had been missing for years. I was out there, out in the world, connecting with new friends, connecting with nature, connecting with myself. I was hooked from the start.

When I came home, I got online and started researching other hikes I wanted to do. The following summer, I was 30 pounds lighter and we were hiking every weekend. We slept in Park Butte Lookout, we backpacked through the Enchantments, we hiked off-trail to see Pea Soup Lake. I was excited and setting goals for myself. I had things to look forward to. It was quite a change from the year before. That was 8 years and thousands of trail miles ago. Hiking saved my life.

CHECK OUT INGUNN'S TRIP REPORTS (SMULTRINGUNN) WTA.ORG, OR ON HER WEBSITE AT TRAILSNAIL.COM.



These days, whenever I notice that I'm feeling grumpy, anxious or down, I know it's been too long since I've hit the trail and going for a hike always makes me feel back to normal. We have a daughter now, and I see a huge difference in her mood on the days when she's not able to spend much time exploring outside. I think it's an innate need in all of us humans, whether we realize it or not.

INGUNN'S TOP THREE TIPS FOR HIKING THROUGH DEPRESSION

(1) Get out there.

Telling yourself or someone else who is suffering from depression to "just get out there and do it" is futile, but I will say that I have never, ever regretted going on a hike. It makes me feel better every time. On the other hand, I have deeply regretted not going on hikes.

(2) Target the right experience. Consider what sort of social hiking

experience would be most helpful to you in this stage of your life. Would you enjoy hiking with a larger group and feeding off their energy? Or maybe getting away from all the noise and chatter and going solo? Choose what will make you feel the best.

Take photos.

I love to document my hikes with lots of photos. Looking at those photos helps me get through long, bleak winters and gets me excited about lighter times ahead.



Outdoor Afro:

Hiking to heal

It's not always an individual that seeks healing through hiking; sometimes it's an entire community.

That was the case in the fall and winter of 2014, when the contentious police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, sparked protests and spotlighted racial inequalities across the nation. On December 13, 2014, in the midst of all of the uncertainty and conflict, Outdoor Afro, a nonprofit dedicated to connecting African Americans with nature, turned to the outdoors for a different kind of release.

The idea was a simple one: get people together outside for a healing hike.

"There is connection between us as people—not specifically an ethnicity or race—and the outdoors," says Matthew Reese, leader of Outdoor Afro Seattle. "When you're outside, you feel at peace. You feel at ease. Nature heals."

Outdoor Afro chapters all over the country and people of all races were invited to participate. The Seattle chapter spent

the afternoon hiking at Discovery Park. The hike drew more people than anticipated.

"It was our largest event of the year," says Reese.

The healing nature of the hike went beyond physical rejuvenation. There was emotional connection and healing as well.

"Every Outdoor Afro event is started with a circle and ended with a circle," says Reese. "It's a way to get everyone connected and grounded and on the same page. The most powerful moment of the hike was the closing circle. We were able to hear how the hike affected people. People were encouraged and healed. They were excited that they were a part of it, to be able to move forward. Just seeing how the time spent in nature affected the individuals was the biggest takeaway for me."

Although Outdoor Afro hopes tragedy won't be the catalyst for their next hike in the near future, they're prepared to continue their healing work in the community, one hike at a time.◆

OUTDOOR AFRO

In 2009, Oakland resident Rue Mapp started a blog about her love of nature and her experience of being the only African American at many hiking and camping activities. Her writing resonated with a lot of other African Americans. The response was so great that in the years since its inception, the blog has morphed into a national organization that connects people of color with encouragement and opportunities to get outside. It now has a presence in more than 30 major cities across the country, including Seattle and Tacoma.

The Seattle chapter, started by Matthew Reese in 2014, has a regular community of members that get together for everything from hiking to fishing to snowboarding. All of the events are free and open to the public. Most events are suitable for beginners and are kid friendly. People of all races are encouraged to participate. You just need to respect the organization's mission of connecting African Americans with the outdoors. More information on Outdoor Afro can be found on its website, outdoorafro.com. Local events can be found by searching Meetup and Facebook for Outdoor Afro Seattle.



Have you used hiking to improve your health or help you through a major life challenge? We'd love to hear about your experience and tips at wta.org/perspectives.



Whether you are an individual with health issues or a community struggling with adversity, sometimes the best way to move forward is to literally and physically do just that. Walk a trail, wander a path. Your hike doesn't need to be long or strenuous to carry you in the right direction. Get out and enjoy the healing powers of nature. Just don't be surprised when hiking to live turns into living to hike.

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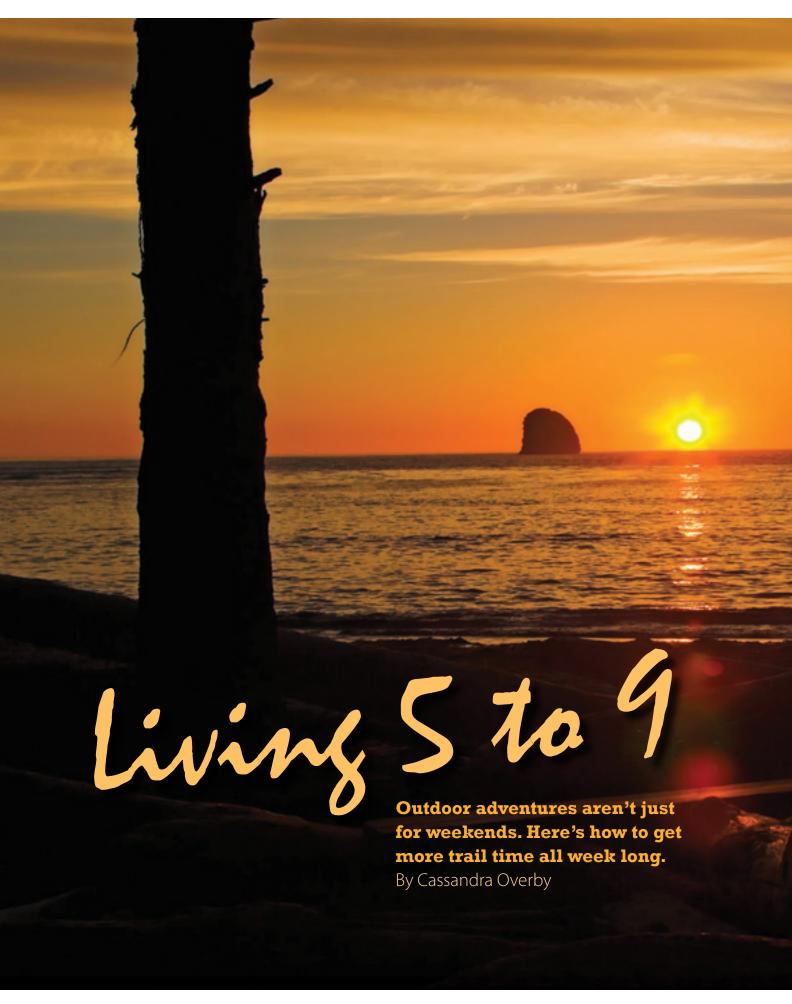


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"hy? For starters, each one contains 16 hours (typically, from 5pm to 9am) of untapped happiness potential. In a typical five-day work week, that's 80 hours—twice what the average person works in that same time period that can be used for hiking, picnicking, sleeping outside and whatever else floats your boat. It's also a magical time to get out on trail; popular paths that are packed with cars and people on the weekends tend to be all but deserted during the week, especially in the later hours after work. To top it all off, weeknights are just the right size to tackle your adventure bucket list. You know the one I'm talking about: the smaller adventures (what we're going to call microadventures) close to home that are often scrapped in

If you think weaving adventure into the fabric of your everyday life sounds wonderful—and daunting—don't worry. You don't need to get out every weeknight. Even embarking on one microadventure per week is enough to see results. And there are plenty of those: feeling more balanced, having something to look forward to during the week, and being physically and mentally stronger to tackle everything else in your busy life. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

favor of more involved and more distant

adventures on the weekend.

It's time to harness the power of the weeknight to make your life more extraordinary. To help you get started, we recently sat down with our most active staff members and prolific trip reporters—the people who inspire us with how often they get out on trail—to understand just what it takes to create a life chock-full of microadventures. Here's what they had to say.

efine vour own adventure. Not all microadventures are created equal, and the best one for you is the one that gets you excited. To some, a sweat-inducing weeknight hike sounds incredible. For others, the perfect microadventure might be a slow, delicious walk by a lake or a relaxing picnic in the back yard. It doesn't

matter what kind of adventure you choose, as long as you choose whatever makes you happy.

Do what energizes you. Go on a walk from your house. Don't buy into what other people consider an "outdoor experience." There will always be someone more extreme than you. ~ Meagan Mackenzie

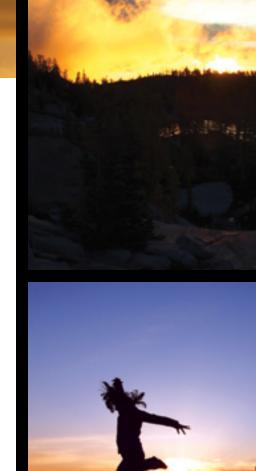
eep a list handy. To increase your chances of getting outside, brainstorm a list of possible adventures in advance. These should be planned around your starting location so you can minimize travel time and maximize daylight. Building your list should be fun—get creative! WTA's Hiking Guide and Hike Finder Map are great research tools. So are magazines, guidebooks and trip reports. Take notes on anything and everything that you think sounds interesting, do your research, and when you're ready to go out, you'll have no shortage of places to go.

Whenever I plan a hike I have a backup option in case a road is closed or trail conditions aren't favorable. This allows me to still get out and not waste time trying to come up with another idea.

~ Erik Haugen-Goodman

chedule it in. Once you know what kind of adventures you're up for, you can start estimating how much time you'll need to block off your calendar. The key is to choose specific times and dates. For most people, five hours is a good start. That includes enough time for a one-hour drive (each way) and a three-hour hike or other adventure. If you're lucky enough to have a flexible schedule at work, try coming in early so you can leave early as well. Regardless of what and when you schedule, treat your microadventures like sacred events and prioritize them accordingly.

A little secret for making sure that you go out is to tell people you're going on an adventure. Then they



Photos by Meagan MacKenzie

ask you about it. And so it's like, well, I told people I'm going, so I'd better get out there. ~ Jenny Lamharzi

on't be afraid to multitask. When it comes to getting outside during the week, combining your microadventures with other things on your to-do list, such as commuting or eating dinner, can open up hours of free time. If you are struggling to find time for weeknight fun, this is a great place to start.

Don't have time just to hike? Try getting your workout while hiking, or reconnecting with friends. Into photography? Do it while hiking. Bird watching? Do it while hiking.





Adventuring on trail in the evening is a great way to take in nature's light shows. Always bring the Ten Essentials and let someone know where you're going. Be cautious when adventuring in the dark. Choose wellestablished trails (with good signage) that you're familiar with, bring a good trail map or GPS and carry a head lamp.

Microadventure Ideas

- ☐ Go on a morning trail run.
- ☐ Hike commute to work.
- ☐ Spend your lunch urban geocaching.
- ☐ At work, host walking meetings.
- ☐ Instead of happy hours, lead networking
- ☐ Avoid an ugly commute by going to a park while waiting for traffic to clear.
- ☐ Take the train or bus anywhere (safe), get off and walk home.

- ☐ Go midweek camping.
- ☐ Take your backpacking stove to a local lake and cook a hot meal.
- ☐ Tackle an urban hiking book for your
- ☐ Celebrate the changing seasons with equinox hikes.
- ☐ Enjoy a full moon by hiking in the dark.

For even more ideas, check out Microadventures by Alastair Humphreys.

History? Geology? Meteorology? Botany? Do it while hiking.

~ Erik Morgenstern

De comfortable going **Dalone.** Trying to coordinate busy schedules with your friends, family and co-workers—or even finding a dog-friendly trail—can be the most daunting part of planning a microadventure. Eliminate that stress by getting comfortable with adventuring alone; you'll have more flexibility with how and when you get outside. If you're nervous about hiking alone, ease into things with trails that are popular with the midday crowd. Local, city and regional parks are all great options.

I've found that when you hike by yourself, you end up talking to people that you meet on the trail. People are very friendly and you're never totally alone. It's nice. I've *just decided that it's cool to go by YOUrself.* ~ Jenny Lamharzi

nack your gear in advance. If you only remember one tip about microadventures, it should be to always have your gear packed and ready. What to include? Start with the Ten Essentials and all of the clothes—and shoes—you'll need for your adventure. Since you'll (hopefully) be getting out rain or shine, light or dark, be sure to include rain gear and a good head lamp. There will be some last-minute additions to your bag, like snacks and water, but covering the bases of everything you need—and including a checklist for the last-minute items—can mean the difference between bailing on an adventure and getting out for an awesome night.

You really don't need much to enjoy an after-work hike. It doesn't need to be a complicated affair, and it's okay to not have the newest, fanciest hiking gear. Find the few pieces that work for you and use those. ~ Erik Morgenstern

'ary your trail adventures. Want to stay motivated over the long term? Then don't be afraid to mix things up by varying your trail experiences and adventures. There are all sorts of things you can play with: mileage, elevation, location. For a more drastic change, try a new activity. If you normally hike, sub in a bike ride. If you normally bike, borrow in-line skates for an evening. Another idea is to experience a trail you love in a completely different way by hiking it in the dark. By pushing your comfort zone and keeping your adventures fresh, there's no telling where your weeknights will take you.

Some of the coolest hiking experiences I've had have been hiking after dark. ~ Paul Kriloff

nce you've dreamed up and planned your microadventures, get out there and do them-whatever they are. Amble in a neighborhood park on a Monday; fire up your camp stove on a Wednesday; sleep in your own back yard every chance you get. Embrace just how extraordinary an ordinary Thursday can be—and use it to invent a new normal for yourself, one that focuses on the most important hours you're given in a week. It won't be long before you, too, will be at the top of Poo Poo Point on a Tuesday. I'll see you there.◆



About 10 years ago I went on my first Volunteer Vacation, on the remote Chelan Lakeshore Trail. The trail had been severely damaged and the Forest Service couldn't afford to clear the trees that had fallen across the trail. WTA volunteers used crosscut saws to help bring this nearly abandoned trail back to life. Today it's one of the most popular spring backpacking routes in the state. I'm signed up to volunteer on the trail again this year to help keep it in good shape. - Hall Pelton

HE HEART AN

BY REBECCA LAVIGNE & ELLIOTT SKOPIN

his year, Washington Trails Association celebrates 50 years of protecting trails. As we pause to reflect on these years of success, we must acknowledge that we would never have made it this far without the dedication of WTA's volunteers—the heart of our work.

From writing each issue of WTA's original Signpost publication to advocating for the protection of Washington's wild places, volunteers have been a driving force behind WTA's major contributions over the last five decades. Today, people who volunteer with WTA to build and maintain trails are the most visible and significant example of volunteerism within WTA—and within Washington's hiking community.

The founding of WTA's volunteer trail maintenance program was a turning point in the history of WTA—and of Washington's trails. It revitalized WTA from the ground up as hikers came together to build and maintain trails and has had an equally powerful impact on the lives of volunteers. But WTA's work is far from done, and our volunteer community continues to grow to meet the needs of Washington's trails into the future.

Forged From NEED

The role of WTA volunteers has evolved to serve Washington's hikers and address the most pressing issues facing our public lands. Each evolution has been driven by a desire to make Washington a better place to hike. Every new development has enabled new people to contribute energy and enthusiasm to our efforts.

From the 1960s through the 1980s, volunteers were driven by a passion born from boots on the ground. Hikers began speaking out for trails and supporting more wilderness protections in the Northwest. In the early 1990s, volunteerism entered a new era at WTA. As national forests in Washington struggled to keep trails maintained (due to insufficient funding), WTA found a new way to rally hikers to its cause.

Dan Nelson, then editor of Signpost, invited WTA's newly hired executive director Greg Ball to spend a day outside working with Volunteers of Outdoor Washington, one of the few organized groups engaging volunteers to maintain trails back then. Ball quickly recognized the value of inviting more hikers to roll up their sleeves and pitch in to help fix the trails themselves. The benefits would be better trail conditions for all hikers and a sense of stewardship in every individual who worked at maintaining a trail—in addition to fostering a community to support WTA's mission. Most importantly, the sweat equity built by volunteering would give hikers more legitimacy with public officials when advocating for trail access, trail funding and protection of the wildlands that trails run through.

After convincing the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie forest that volunteers could be put to good use, hikers charged into the forest with a new objective, bearing tools with weird

The crew leaders were so inviting and welcoming and the work I accomplished so satisfying, that I kept coming back.

names like Pulaski and McLeod. Early trail work involved cutting back overgrown vegetation, removing fallen trees and maintaining

tread. Over time, as WTA's crew leaders gained experience and demonstrated the quality of work that could be performed by volunteers, the work grew to include building bridges, rock walls, steps and drainage structures that would keep trails safe for hikers and sustainable for the environment. It wasn't long before WTA was called on to tackle the big job of constructing new trails.

"The crew leaders were so inviting and welcoming and the work I accomplished so satisfying, that I kept coming back," says Lezlie Cox, who discovered volunteering with WTA nearly 20 years ago. "I've done other volunteer work because I felt I should. Volunteering with WTA was something I did because I truly enjoyed it." Lezlie still enjoys volunteering on trail with WTA and recently joined the staff as WTA's office manager.

Then, as now, trail work was done one day at a time. WTA provided training, tools and encouragement so that regular folks, with no experience, could make a difference by the end of the day. Keep them safe and show them a good time, the thinking went, and maybe they would come back. And come back they did. Following WTA's first two trail work parties in 1993, the number of volunteers grew rapidly, as did requests from other federal, state and local agencies across Washington who wanted volunteer help for their trails too.

"WTA has accomplished so much over the years to transform our backcountry trail system," explains Tina Miller, volunteer coordinator for King County Parks. "WTA volunteers have probably worked on over more than miles of trails and have been responsible for construction of most of our new trails, since 2000. These trails have become a treasured resource for the 3 million people living

within an hour's drive from a King County Parks trailhead."

Those early work parties focused on local trail projects. By 1996, WTA began offering a new type of opportunity and trail support— Volunteer Vacations—that enabled people to spend a week at a time tending to more remote trails. A decade later, self-supported Backcountry Response Teams (BCRT) sprang up as a more flexible tool for completing projects beyond the reach of day work parties.

Trail work and stewardship efforts continued to grow in the mid-2000s when WTA began tapping the energy and enthusiasm of high school students through summertime Youth Volunteer Vacations. It wasn't long before youth were a regular presence on WTA work parties during the school year as well, many volunteering for service projects with schools or after-school programs. As schools increased their emphasis on community service, businesses followed suit and WTA began offering more work parties with corporate groups that wanted to spend a day volunteering outdoors.

More Than the Sum of Its PARTS

Active nearly every day of the year, rain or shine, WTA volunteers are hard to miss on trail. They build and maintain trails in Washington's three largest metro areas, in every corner of the state, and in many places in between. From students to professionals to retirees, volunteers represent a variety of backgrounds and communities statewide.

A Warm Welcome

Don Hammon didn't have a background in trail work when he started volunteering in 2009. He vividly remembers his first WTA work party on the South Fork Skokomish Trail. He was surprised by how welcoming, and how happy, everyone was—despite the pouring rain. That first trip led Hammon to join a tough but lifechanging three-day BCRT to help clear the Upper Big Quilcene Trail of downed trees. After that, Hammon was hooked.



If you've volunteered on a WTA work party or encountered one while hiking, you know firsthand the difference they can make. Other effects of their work may be harder to see.



A WTA work party removes downed trees, repairs sections of trail or builds a bridge to make it safer to cross a creek.



People enjoy a great hike! Someone submits a trip report at wta.org, inspiring others to hike and volunteer.



More volunteers and hikers get outside, maintaining and exploring trails in Washington.



A teen hiker is inspired to give back, joins a work party to earn credit for school, learns new skills and feels a sense of accomplishment.

Today you're likely to encounter him volunteering as a crew leader for BCRTs in the Olympics. "I work all day on a computer and phone. I work with people all over the world," says Hammon. "I love my work but volunteering for WTA provides me an opportunity to get outdoors. It provides me with a way to give back to my community, strengthen my body, play with great tools and work with some of the nicest hardworking people on the planet."

More Than Summer Vacation

Tzuria Falkenberg remembers her first experience with WTA on a Youth Volunteer Vacation in 2008. She camped and worked for a week in the fog and rain at Heather Meadows near Mount Baker. Devoting a week or two each summer to volunteering, she became the first high school student to earn a WTA hand saw in recognition of completing 50 days of trail work.

"The time I've spent on trail crews has made me more independent and self-directed, more confident and comfortable in the outdoors, more resourceful and more willing to push myself out of my comfort zone," says Falkenberg, now in college. Volunteering with WTA continues to be an important part of her life. "I look forward to spending a week or two on WTA crews every summer. The people I meet are adventurous, creative and smart. I get the opportunity to learn from others with decades of trail maintenance expertise."

Volunteers like Hammon and Falkenberg are among the more than 4,400 individuals who will volunteer on a WTA work party this year. Less visible are the people who help behind the scenes. WTA also enlists volunteers to maintain tool caches and work in the central packing facility; groups like the Back Country Horsemen of Washington offer support as well.

The spirit that motivated WTA's early volunteers to roll up their sleeves to make a difference is ever-present today. Ask a dedicated volunteer what they enjoy most about WTA work parties and the first thing you'll hear about is the impact they make by working together. "It's how you get the job done with all these people with all different kinds of backgrounds and with all kinds of experience," explains Hammon. "It's just incredible what we can do."

Gearing Up to Go BIG

Even with the help of thousands of incredible volunteers, caring for Washington's trails and wild places is a job that's never done. As long as the rain falls, the wind blows and feet pound the tread, trails will need maintenance. As public agencies continue to struggle with limited resources to manage our trails and public lands, volunteerism has a bigger role to play than ever in trail stewardship—and WTA volunteers are poised to make an even bigger impact in the years ahead. With as many as 900,000 new hikers expected in our state by 2040*, WTA and our volunteers will be needed more than ever.

If WTA's first 50 years of volunteerism are any indication, Washington's trails will be in good hands far into the future. You're invited to join us. No prior experience is necessary, and WTA provides all the training and tools you need to make a difference on your very first day. For more information on how you can make a difference, visit wta.org/volunteer.

*According to recent state studies and census information, Washington's population is projected to increase by 1.8 million by 2040. Applying this increase to the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office's most recent State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, which reports that 51 percent of residents hike for recreation, this translates into as many as 900,000 new hikers in the

Since WTA's first work party in 1993, volunteers have put in 1.5 million hours of hard work and delivered \$31 million in donated labor to build, maintain or preserve 600 trails across Washington. More than 26,000 individuals have contributed. This year WTA expects to lead more than 1,000 work parties across the state—more than ever before. No other state in the nation has a volunteer community stewarding trails at this scale, especially with such passion and commitment.



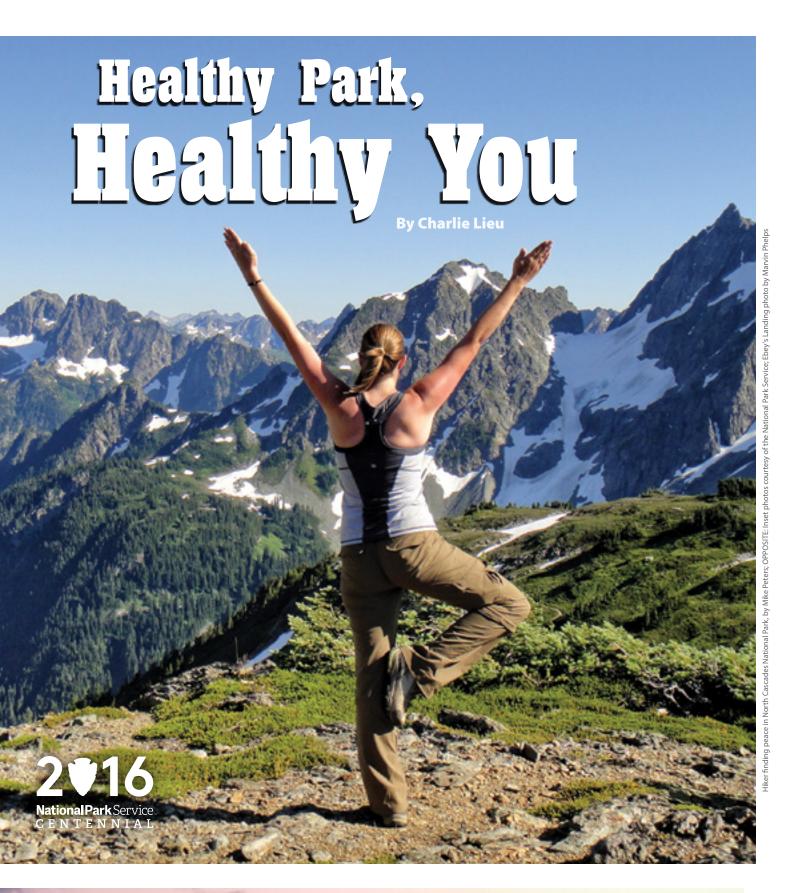
Trail crews talk about how volunteers can't do it alone and how public lands need more funding for recreation.



Hikers and volunteers come together in Olympia to rally for more funding to support trails.



More funding for recreation and public lands. More trails benefit everyone who hikes and contributes to Washington's recreation-powered economy.





arks build mental health and wellbeing. They are associated with reduced symptoms of stress and depression, as well as improved attention, self-discipline, social ties and quality of life.

- Howard Frumkin, Dean, University of Washington School of Public Health

It's Monday morning, and the doctors at Providence Seaside Hospital are seeing their first patients of the week. After taking vitals and assessing test results for a patient complaining of stress and high blood pressure, a doctor might scribble out a prescription. But this prescription doesn't come in a bottle. It's for hiking in a national park. Sound unusual? This is the latest example of how innovative healthcare providers are changing how patients can remedy health issues through participation in the Prescription to Play program (also known as Park Rx).

The program is part of the Healthy Parks, Healthy People initiative, launched by the National Park Service in 2013. The program expanded as part of the Park Services's centennial celebration, with the goal of leveraging parks to build healthier communities. The program links local healthcare providers with national parks to provide prescriptions for park visits, access information and even free admission for patients. Doctors from partner organizations are also taking an active part in their patients' outdoor treatment in parks by leading hikes and promoting healthy habits.

"The vision," says Scott Tucker, superintendent of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Park, "is to get people out and touch a piece of American history while forming active, healthy habits."

Although unconventional treatments like hiking and park visits are unusual, the park prescription movement is gaining popularity among healthcare providers. It helps that science is finally proving what outdoor enthusiasts have always intuitively understood: the healing power of nature. According to Dr. Kathleen Wolf at University of Washington's College of the Environment, "More than 100 studies have shown that relaxation and stress reduction are significant benefits associated with spending time in green areas."

It's something that doctors—and their patients—are starting to see firsthand here in the Pacific Northwest as the program kicks off in Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site and Olympic National Park.

Dr. Dominique Greco, a member of the executive team at Providence Seaside, was very interested when Tucker introduced the Park Rx concept. "We are keenly aware of the importance of exercise for our patients' total health and well-being," says Dr. Greco. "To give them a prescription to play is an added component that may inspire those who may not exercise on a regular basis. I look forward to seeing my patients out in the community as they pursue these healthy transformations."

Today, more than ever, we need the healing and inspirational power of parks because healthy people build healthy communities, which ultimately lead back to healthy parks. It's a self-perpetuating circle of goodness that we can all get behind one hike and one national park prescription at a time.

DID YOU KNOW:

- Lewis and Clark National Historical Park contains the site of Fort Clatsop, which was named after a local Indian tribe and housed the Lewis and Clark expedition party during the winter of 1805-1806.
- Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve was once home to a large Chinese community that farmed Ebey's Prairie between the 1880s and 1920s and made significant contributions to the economy of Whidbey Island.
- Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve is the only cave in the national park system with a direct link to the ocean. The stream that comes out of the cave is a tributary to a watershed that empties into the Pacific Ocean.



LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL **HISTORICAL PARK** allows visitors to follow in the footsteps and discover the dramatic stories of America's most famous explorers. The rich heritage of the native people, lush rainforests and coastal vistas come alive through a variety of activities and interpretive programs.

INFO: nps.gov/lewi



EBEY'S LANDING NATIONAL HISTORICAL RESERVE preserves the historical, agricultural and cultural traditions of Native, European and Asian Americans while offering spectacular opportunities for recreation amidst stunning landscape at the gateway to Puget Sound. The park showcases the area's rich farmland and promising seaports that lured American pioneers to Ebey's Landing.

INFO: nps.gov/ebla



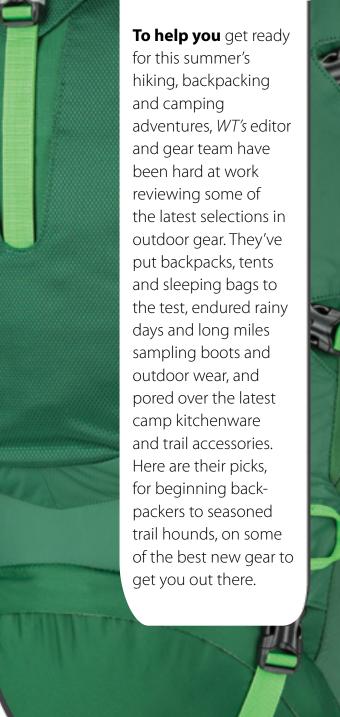
OREGON CAVES NATIONAL **MONUMENT AND PRESERVE** is nestled deep inside the Siskiyou Mountains. Its caves were formed when rainwater from the ancient forest above dissolved the marble below. While the caves are the primary attraction, the park is also home to Mount Elijah, the tallest mountain in southwest Oregon.

INFO: nps.gov/orca











wta.org/gearguide

trails while you gear up!

gear through WTA, you get great new gear for hiking and

camping, and WTA receives a commission on sales, which helps fund WTA's programs. That's a win-win! Visit WTA's online gear guide, and support

ccessories

Petzl Tikka RXP Headlamp

Are you tired of always replacing the batteries in your headlamp? Now you can forget the batteries and reduce e-waste with the rechargeable Tikka RXP. This superbright headlamp (215 lumens!) charges up using a convenient USB cable that you can use at home or

in your car. It also features a unique smart sensor that adjusts the beam and brightness as needed. \$100



BioLite PowerLight Mini

This new LED gizmo by BioLite can operate as a lantern, flashlight or bike light, providing up to 52 hours of light and multiple flash modes depending on what kind of illumination you need. Small but sturdy, the multi-use PowerLight Mini has a clip that doubles as a kickstand. You can even use its battery to recharge devices. We found it was able to charge a dead iPhone to about 50%. \$45



Balega Blister-Resist Socks

Blisters are one of hiking's biggest annoyances. Luckily, we avoided those nasty irritations when we tested Balega's Blister-Resist socks from their Natural Fiber Performance line. Popular among runners for a while now, these socks are perfect for hikers. The blend of South African mohair and Drynamix fabric prevents friction, wicks moisture and keeps feet cool. \$18



Leki Micro Vario Trekking Poles

We loved these ultralight, compact, folding poles. The carbon shafts and adjustment lock provided stability on rough terrain, the ergonomic foam grips were exceptionally comfortable and accommodated a range of hand holds, and the strap was comfortable and adjusted easily. The push-button release mechanism allowed for quick and easy assembly and breakdown. \$200



Sea to Summit Ultralight Mat

In our testing, this no-fuss pad was by far the easiest to inflate, deflate and roll up. It strikes a nice balance between comfort and weight and, taking up minimal pack space, is a summer backpacker's dream. The pad works best in combination with the Pump Dry Sack, which doubles as a waterproof pack liner for clothes and gear. It also inflates the pad quickly and with minimal effort. \$130



Therm-a-Rest Ouadra Chair

There's just something about kicking back in a comfy chair in camp and watching the clouds blow by—and here's just the compact chair to do it in. Just pop open the sturdy casing—which is actually the chair's legs—quickly assemble, and you're ready for some relaxing time. Sturdy enough to support up to 300 pounds, you won't have to worry about this one tipping over on you. \$120

LOAD UP. When it comes to loading up for your next adventure on trail or in camp, you need more than just a tent and sleeping bag. Of course, you need your Ten Essentials, but having a few extra creature comforts can often make a good trip great. Here's a selection of some of our favorite new items worth packing along on your next journey outdoors.



TOP PICK: Luminoodle

The Luminoodle is a 5-foot-long, flexible, waterproof, USB-powered LED strip that provides 180 lumens spread over 26 lights. It includes a strap system, embedded magnets and a utility loop that allow it to be attached to or hung from almost anything. The Luminoodle and battery pack weigh only 8 ounces and fit into a small bag about the size of a baseball. Use can even use it in the bag to diffuse the light to simulate a lantern, still putting off an impressive amount of brightness. We found it equally effective in a campsite as we did at home during an extended power outage! \$20-\$40

Daypacks

PACK UP. Whether you're looking to upgrade your own gear or introduce a friend to the joys of hiking and backpacking, there's no better place to start than with a great backpack. Lucky for you, we have recommendations that will work for everyone, from handy grab-and-go daypacks to technical backpacking systems for going the distance.



TOP PICK: Osprey Manta AG 36

Osprey has taken their amazing Antigravity mesh harness system (introduced in 2015 with the Atmos and Aura big pack line, resulting in numerous innovation awards and a WT editor's choice nod) and incorporated it into their Manta (men's) and Mira (women's) daypack series. Now you can enjoy remarkable body-hugging comfort and support with a smaller load on dayhikes and rides. Plus, it's loaded with features that both hikers and mountain bikers will love—we sure did! \$175

Platypus Siouxon AM 10

This compact daypack is great for grab-and-go urban hikes and shorter days on trail. Small in size but big in features, it holds a 3-liter bladder in its own compartment, offers a relatively roomy main compartment and has a handful of small mesh interior pockets for organizing all of your essentials. There are even a few zippered outer pockets for easy access to your phone and snacks. \$140



Columbia Trail Elite 22

If you're looking for a compact daypack that's just as good for short dayhikes as it is for long trail runs or rugged mountain bike rides, look no further. This lightweight pack is heavy on features, including gear loops, a hydration bladder compartment, an integrated rain fly and enough pockets to let you keep all your essentials organized and easily accessible. \$130



High Sierra Lenok 22

Whether you're pounding the trail on two feet or two tires, this crossover hydration pack is loaded with all the features you need to keep you going—and then some! The Airflow mesh harness and shoulder straps will keep you cool, and tons of pockets will keep your gear, tools and accessories organized. A favorite feature is the stowable mesh outer pocket, ideal for bike helmets or wet gear. \$80



Gregory Salvo 24

Similar to the women's Sula (below), the Salvo is designed around a large main compartment that lets you stuff your gear and hit the trail. Plenty of smaller pockets in the top, on the sides and on the waist belt let you organize your snacks and other small items, and a hydration bladder (not included) sleeve offers further benefit. The slickest feature is the sunglasses loop on the shoulder strap. \$115



Gregory Sula 28

If you like to hike with a larger daypack—or you need one because of cold and rainy conditions and the layers they entail—this no-frills bag has plenty of room for whatever you want to bring along. There are two large compartments that work great for clothing and bulky snacks. Need to stow your smaller items? The zippered interior pockets and dual hipbelt pockets have got you covered. \$130



Bergans Helium 40

At 40 liters, the alpine-styled Helium walks the line between extra-roomy daypack and ultralight overnight backpack. Short on frills, it features a unique two-way center zipper that allows you to fully open the main compartment for easy access to all of your gear. Large, deep side pockets let you stash bottles and other items, and the removable lid lets you keep essentials easily accessible. \$170



Backpacks



Gregory Wander 50

For introducing the youngsters to the adventure of backpacking, this uncomplicated youth bag is ideal for easy overnight trips. With one main top-fill compartment (there's no separate sleeping bag area), it's great for last-minute trips when not everything needs to be hyper-organized. Bonus: It was one of the most comfortable packs we tested—even for adults. \$180



Mountain Hardwear Ozonic 50

Fully waterproof, this pack was made for the Northwest and sports some unique features, including a quick-release reversible lid (with two pockets!) and an offset hipbelt buckle. Outside of the seam-sealed, three-layer Outdry main compartment, two stretchy side pockets, dual hipbelt pockets and a large front pocket let you keep essentials and rain gear accessible. \$230



High Sierra Karadon 55

This attractive, entry-level backpack has all of the pockets and zippers you need to quickly access everything from your sleeping bag to your water purifier. Just unzip the front of the pack, and everything in your bag is right there—no unpacking needed. Want to attach your hiking poles and other accessories? Look no further than the tethers on the outside of the bag. \$200



Bergans Trollhetta 55

Available in both men's and women's models, this sleek top-loader offers superior load stability by incorporating a flexible, ventilated harness system and several adjustment features to achieve the perfect fit. The front U-zip panel provides easy access to your entire pack load without digging around, and a variety of pockets and gear loops help keep your essentials accessible. \$270



Thule Versant 60

With enough bells and whistles to delight even the most hardcore backpacker, this attention-grabbing pack offers so much more than its colorful exterior. Favorite features include a rain cover that incorporates a waterproof bottom liner for a fully weatherproof pack and handy, click-in waist belt attachments like a roll-top compartment or a water bottle sleeve. The top lid also converts into a sling pack. \$260



REI Traverse 70

When you're looking to go the distance with a big load, this is the pack for you. The Traverse employs Uplift Compression load adjusters and an ActivMotion hipbelt to keep both you and your cargo balanced over any kind of terrain, while the mesh back panel and shoulder straps keep you ventilated and cool. Plus, the lid converts to a daypack for quick and easy side trips. \$240



TOP PICK: Gregory Baltoro GZ 75

Last year, the Baltoro was a WT editor's pick for being one of the best long-distance packs available. Ever the innovator, Gregory found a way to make the Baltoro even better—by smartly incorporating a Goal Zero Nomad 7 solar panel and Flip 10 battery into the pack's lid. No more fussing with loose charging units and heavy battery packs. Just flip open the lid, plug in your camera, phone or GPS, and charge as you hike. It's a little heavier (just over 6 pounds for the medium size), but all the favorite features are still here: bottle holster, rain cover, U-zip front panel and the handy Sidekick summit pack/hydration sleeve. This pack will have you itching to go farther for longer. \$430

Selection Tips

- ☐ CHOOSE THE RIGHT SIZE: Packs usually come in small, medium and large sizes, based on torso length. Choose a pack size that fits your height and rests comfortably on your hips.
- ☐ TAKE A TEST DRIVE: Fill the pack with weight and wear it around the store. If it's comfortable, you're all set. If something feels off, ask for help from a store employee who can help with strap and load adjustments.
- ☐ **CHOOSE WISELY:** Select a pack for the kind of hiking you plan to do. Make sure it is roomy enough to carry your Ten Essentials and other gear and has features you will actually use—without overdoing it.

SET UP. A tent is your home away from home on outdoor adventures. It should protect you from the elements, provide comfortable living space and include the features you value. We took a few of the newest and coolest for a spin.

Selection Tips

- ☐ **PRIMARY USE:** Backpackers should prioritize weight and packability; car campers should focus on floor space.
- ☐ TRY IT OUT: Test how easy it is to get in and out, and sample the floor space; ask to try setting it up.
- ☐ FOCUS ON FEATURES: Look for useful and accessible storage space, weather protection and good ventilation.



TOP PICK:

Sierra Designs Nightwatch 2

At 4.5 pounds, the new Nightwatch isn't ultralight, but it offers features that make the extra weight worthwhile. This sturdy three-season tent provides a solid shelter even when the ground or snow won't allow staking. It's roomy for a 2-person tent, with a large front door for easy entry and exit and generous storage space. The rain fly is integrated with the tent and offers superior rain protection and great ventilation. The retractable design allows three configurations that range from full fly coverage to full night view. \$240

NEMO Meta LE2

Ounce-counters, this is the tent for you. Weighing only 2.3 pounds, compact and surprisingly spacious, this tent provides two side doors, large vestibules and sets up using two trekking poles (not included). Because it lacks an integrated pole structure, it requires securely staked guylines and feels less sturdy in nasty weather but makes a good choice for going light and fast. \$330



MSR Hubba Hubba NX2

This lightweight (3.5 pounds), freestanding 3-season tent features two large side doors that make entry and exit easy and provide access to generous vestibule storage space. The adjustable fly optimizes ventilation, and a fly gutter keeps rain away from the side doors and vestibules. Also available in the 3-person Mutha Hubba NX and 4-person Papa Hubba NX models. \$400-\$600



Mountain Hardwear Ghost UL2

A highlight at 2015's Outdoor Retailer show, this ultralight tent gives new meaning to the term, "light as a ghost." Weighing in at just over 2 pounds, this freestanding, 3-season shelter will definitely not weigh you down. The inside offers a comfortable living space while the outside has a large vestibule for gear storage. When the weather goes south, the seam-sealed construction will keep you high and dry. \$450



Big Agnes Krumholtz UL2 mtnGLO

This 3-season tent offers better-than-average interior space, weighs only 3.2 pounds and comes with an integrated Goal Zero solar panel. Setup is easy, and we loved the side doors and generous gear vestibules. The solar panel powers a fan, interior LED lights and a rechargeable battery for charging your devices—all designed to function with the tent. \$650



Hilleberg Niak 2

Hilleberg has been making durable, high-quality tents for over 40 years, and the new 3-season Niak displays that quality craftsmanship thoughtful. At 3.8 pounds, it was the most stable tent we tested, even without staking. Setup is easy and fast, a plus in bad weather. The floor space is snug for two large adults, and there is only one entrance and vestibule, but we love this tent. \$730



Kirkham's Highline 8

This 4-season canvas beast is as stormproof and durable as they come and will keep a large group dry and comfortable under any conditions. It offers 140 square feet of floorspace, a 6.7-foot ceiling and space for up to eight adults—or two cots, a small table and chairs. At 78 pounds, setup is challenging and requires two people, but it sure makes car camping an extravagant experience. \$750



Sleeping



Eddie Bauer Flying Squirrel 40

This bag is really not a bag at all, but a zipperless, contoured comforter designed to envelop the sleeper. While its design and thermal rating limit its use to warmer weather, this down bag is incredibly lightweight and compact. This allows for easy temperature regulation on summer nights when you'd otherwise be messing with zippers trying to get cool in a more traditional bag. \$300



Mountain Hardwear Lamina Z Spark

Here is a perfect bag for entry-level campers and backpackers. The synthetic insulation and water-repellent shell make it ideal for the Northwest's soggy weather. By using thermallymapped insulation where you need it most—feet and core—it keeps you warm and eliminates cold spots. While not as light as comparable down bags, it stashes nicely in its included compression sack to help minimize load bulk. \$160



Big Agnes Boot Jack 25

This cozy mummy-style, water-repellent down sleeping bag delivers a nice balance of weight, thermal value and price. It has an integrated pad sleeve, a nicely designed contoured hood with a draw cord and lock and exterior loops for hang drying or storage. Despite the mummy design, this bag is not overly constricting and allowed enough movement for a comfortable night's sleep. \$190



NEMO Fusion 20

The thoughtful design of this 3-season bag deserves careful consideration from anyone who backpacks year-round. Its unique spoon shape optimizes comfort by providing room at the elbows and knees—perfect for side sleepers. Stretch stitching in the waist helps to reduce unnecessary volume and conserve heat, yet allows for unrestricted movement. It also features a water-repellent outer layer. \$260



Feathered Friends Egret Nano 20

Sometimes women end up hauling around more than they need, simply because their gear was designed for men. Not anymore, with this women-specific mummy bag. The Egret is available in two lengths, both featuring a less-restricting trapezoidal footbox. We loved the extra mid-body space and additional down fill around the feet, neither of which impeded the bag's compactibility. \$410



Big Agnes Summit Park 15

Comfy, warm and roomy, this bag has a semi-rectangular shape creates a pleasant sleeping experience for those who don't like feeling confined by a mummy bag. Features include a full pad sleeve, water-repellent down insulation and double zippers that allow entry from either side. Lightweight and compressible, the temperature rating is sufficient for late-season and winter backpacking trips. \$350



TOP PICK: Sierra Designs Frontcountry Bed

The appropriately named Frontcountry Bed is exceptionally comfortable and luxuriously roomy. Design features include a hands-free foot vent that is easily engaged with your feet to help adjust temperature, a hood large enough to accommodate a standard-sized pillow, a fully insulated bottom to enhance warmth and comfort, and adjustable pad sleeves. The temperature rating is sufficient for most Northwest nights, and while this bag is heavier than most backpackers will want, it's our first choice for comfort and car camping. \$130

ZIP UP. The tent keeps you dry, but the sleeping bag is what keeps you comfortable, especially on those cold Northwest nights. If there's one piece of equipment you want to choose carefully, this is it. Here are a few of our favorites.

Selection Tips

- ☐ TRY IT OUT: Match your sleeping style with the bag's design and fit. Mummy bags are more efficient, but traditional bags give you more room to roll around. It should be comfortable—make sure you love it.
- ☐ PRIORITIZE ESSENTIALS: Select a temperature rating to match the lowest temperature you expect to encounter; a water-resistant shell will protect you against condensation and a wet tent floor.

Kitchen

COOK UP. Hikers know food is important. A long day can turn a mild-mannered person into a ravenous monster rivaling a bear waking up from hibernation. To prevent such episodes, make cooking easy. These new products feature something for every camp kitchen.

Selection Tips

- ☐ CANISTER STOVES: These small stoves are easy to use and ideal for 3-season use; fuel comes in compact, disposable canisters.
- ☐ WHITE GAS STOVES: These stoves are more technical to operate and use refillable fuel canisters; best for winter hiking and high elevations.
- ☐ INTEGRATED SYSTEMS: These compact, self-contained units are best for backpackers who just need to boil water quickly for prepackaged meals.
- ☐ **TABLETOP STOVES:** These larger stoves serve car campers and basecampers who want more versatility to create a variety of meal options.



TOP PICK:

Sea to Summit X-Set 11

Outdoor cooksets are typically lightweight but almost never compact. Enter the X-Set. Sea to Summit brilliantly paired collapsible silicone walls with hard-anodized aluminum bottoms to create a real game-changer to the backcountry chef's kitchen. It all packs down to the size of a small plate to save space in your pack. With a competitive boil time and two collapsible mugs, it's a handy set for preparing freeze-dried meals. \$65

Klean Kanteen Insulated Bottle

Commuter cups are great for keeping your coffee hot on your way to the trailhead but not so great once you start walking. Trade up to this insulated 16-ounce bottle, and you can take your coffee (or soup) on the trail with you. It keeps its contents hot for hours, perfect for frosty mornings on trail or chilly nights in camp. Add a Cafe Cap (sold separately) for convenient drinking anywhere. \$33



Ursack Bear Bag

When it comes to multiday trips into the backcountry, your food is as good as gold—and you don't want to share it with the local inhabitants. A WT editor's favorite, the lightweight, bulletproof Ursack will keep your food supply safe from hungry critters without adding the bulk and weight of heavy food canisters. Available in 650- and 920-cubic-inch sizes. \$70-\$90



Esbit Coffee Maker

Coffee connoisseurs are always looking to enhance their backcountry cup o' joe. Great for a sunrise hike, this compact coffee maker has an integrated solid-fuel stove and perks out a "moka-pot" style brew. The solid fuel pods (required) are lightweight, making it a convenient option for coffee without a stove. We found that dark espresso roasts work best, \$50



GSI Pinnacle Stove

Ultralighters looking for a compact stove that works with existing gear should check out this new canister stove from GSI. We loved the simple design, which folds down nicely into a pouch the size of a deck of cards. This tiny powerhouse pairs nicely with GSI's updated cookware systems, which now feature interior space for perfectly nesting the stove inside. \$50



MSR Windburner Stove

Integrated boil-system stoves are awesome for solo hikers and backpackers, and this is one of the best. The Windburner's radiant burner boils a liter of water in just 4.5 minutes—much faster than regular stoves. When tested in super windy conditions, it still performed efficiently—we never even had to relight it! It packs together so nicely that your 4-ounce fuel canister can slip right into the pot. \$130



Camp Chef Explorer Stove

If you're setting up basecamp at a campground and don't require something ultra-portable, consider the luxury of this oversized, two-burner cook station with a three-sided windscreen. We loved its sturdiness, and rock-star chefs are sure to admire the generous cooking space and counterlevel height. You can expand your gourmet camp menu by adding the Cast Iron Griddle (sold separately). \$150







TOP PICK: Patagonia Houdini

Our favorite new coat for sprinkles and mild winds, the Houdini is a lightweight multitasker as nimble as its name. At just 3.5 ounces, the Houdini makes your other "lightweight" raincoats feel like bulky old-school fisherman anoraks and it packs down smaller than a tennis ball. This featherlight layer proved surprisingly windproof and waterresistant, featuring a conveniently adjustable hood. Stuff this one in your pocket and be on your way. \$99

SUIT UP. Outdoor brands continue to redesign clothing to improve ontrail performance while finding new uses for time-tested natural fibers. Whether you're looking for spiffy new designs or innovative new fabrics, here are a few of our latest favorites.

Selection Tips

- ☐ **COMFORT:** Comfort is key. Try on the garment before purchasing, and trust your first impression.
- ☐ PACKABILITY: Pick lightweight fabrics that compact nicely; look for jackets that stuff into their own pockets.
- ☐ **RESISTS ODORS:** Clothes that smell rank after a few miles won't cut it; pick fabrics with antibacterial properties that wick moisture and have good ventilation.

Columbia Titan Peak Shirt

This lightweight shirt features roll-up sleeves and a handy combination of three different Omni technologies to keep you cool and comfortable through summer. "Hot zone" venting maximizes breathability, while the full coverage design provides UPF 50 sun protection. We found that even when you push these features to their limit, the antimicrobial fabric keeps odors at bay. \$100



Bambool Baselayers

Baselayers aren't usually exciting, but Bambool blew us away. Soft, stretchy and comfortable, the bamboo and merino blend kept us dry on early-spring hikes. Antibacterial properties resist odors, making them ideal for multiday adventures. Tops are woven tightly enough to wear all on their own, and the 3/4-length bottoms pair well for full coverage. \$60-\$75



Purple Rain Adventure Skirt

Add some flair to your hiking wardrobe with this lightweight outdoor skirt featuring a stretchy waistband and quick-drying fabric. Both beautiful and functional, it transitions from trail to town seamlessly and has proven popular with long-distance thru-hikers. Purple Rain also makes a unisex kilt that quickly converts to shorts. All products are handmade in southern Oregon. \$60



Patagonia Venga Rock Pant

For long miles on the trail, comfort is key. These stretchy midweight climbing pants are just as comfortable on dayhikes and backpacks as they are scrambling up a rock face, and a handy thigh pocket keeps your phone within reach. The breathable fabric keeps you nice and cool over the distance, and the casual style lets you go from trail to town without needing a change. \$80



Feathered Friends EOS Jacket

Nothing's better than zipping yourself into a comfy down jacket on a chilly night. The fluffy but lightweight EOS Hooded Jacket boasts 900-fill goose down and waterresistant fabric, which kept our testers super warm during cold hikes. Plus, Feather Friends' products are made in Seattle and feature down certified by the Responsible Down Standard, \$290



Mountain Hardwear Micro Thermostatic Hybrid Jacket

A favorite of WT's editor, this ultralight jacket is good for hiking in any season. The Thermal.Q Elite keeps you toasty warm on chilly outings and makes a perfect insulating midlayer when paired with a rain shell or technical hard shell. When not in use, just stuff it in its own pocket pouch. Add this to your Ten Essentials and you're good to go. \$155



Footwear

Columbia Conspiracy Titanium

For great versatile hiking shoes, check out this lightweight low-top. With its waterproof construction and athletic looks, this shoe is perfect for everything from muddy day hikes to drizzly urban romps. It's also armed with a hightraction rubber outsole for maximum adherence on slippery rocks and wet pavement. It was one of the most comfortable shoes we tested, \$135

Garmont Trail Beast GTX

From short dayhikes to short overnight backpacks, this light hiker is sturdy enough to take on just about any trail. The low-top profile allows you to stay nimble over a variety of terrain, while the Vibram MegaGrip tread stays grippy on wet, dry and loose trail surfaces. When the trail gets soggy, or the weather turns, the breathable Gore-Tex liner keeps your feet nice and dry. \$170

Oboz Pika Low

The Pika was designed to be like its namesake—cuddly, yet entirely capable of thriving on exposed slopes. Constructed of a single piece of mesh that's minimally seamed and lined, it cradles feet and feels like the hiking equivalent of cozy slippers—but is also a heavy-duty walker that boasts tons of support and traction. Just don't jump in any puddles, as it's not waterproof. \$120

Lowa Tiago GTX

WT's editor swears by his Lowas, and the Tiago is no exception. This midweight—yet surprisingly light and agile—boot offers superior comfort and support for those that like a little more in their trail footwear. Underneath the athletic leather upper, a breathable Gore-Tex liner keeps your feet dry while the rugged Multicross tread easily tackles even the roughest terrain. \$175

La Sportiva Trango Trek GTX

If you like the greater ankle stability of a high-top hiking boot and need a shoe that will hold up well on even the most intense backpacking trip, look no further. We loved how tough—and lightweight—this boot was, with its high-end Vibram soles that gripped anything and everything. The shoe was surprisingly breathable too, and didn't overheat during intense hikes. \$220

Scarpa R-evolution GTX

For a heavy hiker or midweight trekker, this sturdy boot will get you where you want to go. On the outside, the suede upper and beefy tread protect your feet over any terrain. On the inside, a combination of stretchy Schoeller lining and

> memory foam conform to your feet for the ultimate in fit and comfort. Throw in a Gore-Tex liner and you're ready to hike, anywhere, anytime. \$240

LACE UP. Spring is a perfect time to upgrade your hiking boots. Break in new boots with short local ambles and long urban hikes as the weather improves. We narrowed down the choices for you.

Selection Tips

☐ TRY BEFORE YOU BUY: When you're trying on hiking shoes, walk around the store in them while you shop. Don't forget to walk up and down an incline to simulate trail walking.

☐ **SIZE MATTERS:** Make sure your toes don't touch the front of the boot, and anticipate your feet will swell slightly during long hikes, so size up a half-size to avoid discomfort.

☐ CHOOSE WISELY: For long-distance hiking, consider choosing a pair of high-top boots—they offer more ankle support and can help you avoid turning tired feet into twisted ankles.



TOP PICK: Vasque Inhaler II

How can a hiking boot be made of mesh and be waterproof? Well, Vasque figured it out last year with the Inhaler, a warm weather boot which earned a WT editor's pick for being ridiculously lightweight yet dependable. This year, the Inhaler II carries the mantle forward—and yes, it's even better. Now even more breathable with its redesigned mesh upper and ventilation ports, on top of its already reliable Vibram Pneumatic sole, you'll want to wear these boots year-round. \$160

Ghost Towns

Exploring History in Your Hiking Boots

istory cannot only be read in books; it can be experienced in the landscape. Throughout Washington state, forgotten townsites, abandoned mining camps and other locations rich in historic significance are waiting to be discovered. So grab your boots, hit the trail and see where and when your journey takes you.



FRANKLIN GHOST TOWN

Established in the 1880s, the town of Franklin, and its associated Oregon Improvement Company coal mine have a storied and historically significant past. When local coal miners staged a strike in 1891, mine owners recruited African American miners from all over the country and brought them to Franklin, making it the first racially integrated town in Washington. Franklin was also the site of one of Washington state's worst mine disasters. On August 24, 1894, 37 miners suffocated after a suspicious fire broke out in a mine shaft. By 1919, coal mining near Franklin had all but ceased. With no jobs to sustain them, most of Franklin's residents abandoned the town.

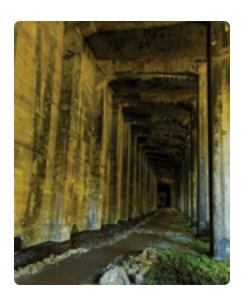
Some remnants of Franklin's past can still be found at the abandoned townsite today. Nature is quickly reclaiming the site, but you can catch glimpses of the town's prosperous past as you explore the now quiet and peaceful landscape.

TOUR HERE The Black Diamond Historical Society offers guided tours of the Franklin town site. Check out blackdiamondmuseum.org or call (253) 852-6763 for more information.

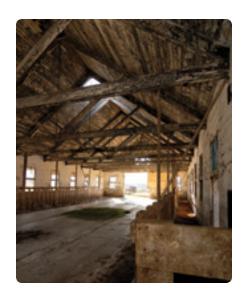
HIKE HERE Your journey to the townsite begins by following a gentle old railroad grade along the Green River near Black Diamond. It's an easy walk up to a large coal cart bearing the town's name. Nearby you can see the main mineshaft, now safely sealed with a grate to prevent you from falling more than 1,000 feet to the bottom. Follow the narrow footpath beyond to discover the powerhouse foundation, cemetery and more.

GET THERE From WA 169 in Black Diamond, go east on Lawson St. Lawson becomes Franklin Howard Rd and then SE Green River Gorge Rd. Franklin townsite access will be on the right just before you reach the Green River Gorge Bridge.

INFO exploringhistoryinyourhikingboots.com/ franklin-wa-usa







WELLINGTON GHOST TOWN

Wellington was founded in 1893 at the west portal of the Cascade Tunnel along the Great Northern Railway. On March 10, 1910, the town's train depot became the site of the deadliest avalanche in U.S. history. The avalanche struck the depot during the night, sweeping a mail train and a passenger train about 150 feet downhill into the Tye River valley; 96 people were killed. In October of 1910, Wellington was quietly renamed Tye to ease the fears of travelers who would forever associate the name Wellington with this tragic event.

Tye become obsolete and was abandoned in 1929 when the second Cascade Tunnel was completed. Today you can visit the townsite and explore the giant snow sheds that were built after the Wellington avalanche to protect trains from future occurrences. Numerous interpretive signs will guide you along the way as you explore this tragic piece of American history.

EAT HERE Nearby **Stevens Pass Ski Resort** and Bike Park has three summer options. T-Bar Market, Cascadian Kitchen and Bull's Tooth Pub and Eatery provide everything from trail snacks to full meals.

HIKE HERE To reach the Wellington townsite you will follow the original path of the Great Northern Railway along what is now the eastern portion of the Iron Goat Trail near Stevens Pass. Head east on the trail from the parking lot to see old concrete foundations and the west entrance to the original Cascade Tunnel. Walk west from the parking lot to enter the snow sheds and reach the site of the 1910 avalanche.

GET THERE Just west of Stevens Pass Ski Area on I-5, turn north onto Tye Rd (also known as the Old Cascade Highway). Follow the rough pavement for about 3.5 miles and then turn right into the Iron Goat Trail parking lot.

INFO exploringhistoryinyourhikingboots.com/ iron-goat-wellington-wa-usa

BORDEAUX GHOST TOWN

Bordeaux was one of the longest-lived logging company towns in the Pacific Northwest. In 1900, Thomas and Russell Bordeaux, two owners of the Mason Logging Company, established the town for their employees. By 1903, the town had a post office, sawmill, shingle mill, hotel, houses, a school and at least one general store. Oxen and machines called donkey engines dragged felled trees to the railroad lines to be transported to the town for milling. The resulting lumber and shingles were then shipped via railroad to market.

Eventually the timber ran out, and the Bordeaux mill was closed in 1941, leading to the town's demise. A thorough exploration of the area reveals its hidden secrets and gives you glimpses into what Bordeaux's glory days were like.

EAT HERE For a little more history and a bite to eat, head to nearby downtown Olympia, with a variety of pubs and restaurants to choose from.

HIKE HERE The Bordeaux townsite is accessed from Bordeaux Rd SW. Among the trees stands an old concrete bank vault that used to be part of the hotel. Look near Mima Creek to find interesting relics and partial structures, including the remains of the town's old powerhouse.

GET THERE From I-5, take exit 95 for WA 121 north to Littlerock. Turn left onto Mima Rd SW then right onto Bordeaux Rd SW. Proceed about 2 miles and park alongside the road.

INFO exploringhistoryinyourhikingboots.com/ bordeaux-wa-usa

NORTHERN STATE REC. AREA

Established in 1909, the Northern State Mental Hospital was once the largest facility for mentally ill people in Washington state. Renowned architects Saunders and Lawton designed the hospital's buildings, and the sons of New York City Central Park designer Frederick Law Olmstead designed the area's landscape. Northern State was a self-sustaining, therapeutic colony that included numerous facilities and a 700-acre farm. During the 1950s, about 2,700 patients lived at the facility.

Northern State Mental Hospital closed its doors in 1976 after the state Legislature cut off funding. A few of the hospital buildings are still being used for job corps projects and drug rehabilitation, but much of the former property is now part of the Northern State Recreation Area.

EAT HERE Head into nearby, historic **Sedro** Woolley for a taste of local flavor at one of the many restaurants on Metcalf Street.

HIKE HERE Northern State Recreation Area has an extensive trail system that wanders through open pastures, around several structures and to the old cemetery, which is the resting place of at least 1,500 former patients. Some still-active buildings are off limits to the public.

GET THERE From Hwy 20, turn north onto Helmick Rd. Drive 0.3 mile and then turn left into the Northern State Recreation Area parking lot.

INFO exploringhistoryinyourhikingboots.com/ northern-state-hospital-wa-usa

PLEASE RESPECT HISTORIC SITES: While visiting a ghost town or other historic site, it may be tempting to grab a cool old bottle or rusty hunk of metal, but please don't do it. Once an artifact is removed from its place in history, it just becomes a piece of junk. Eventually it will collect dust on a shelf or end up in a drawer. Next stop: landfill. Plus, if you remove an artifact, no one else gets to enjoy that singular piece of history. Please leave artifacts where they lie. Take only photographs and memories when you leave.

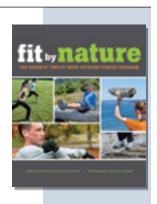
By Cassandra Overby

Inspired by Health

This issue's bookshelf has been inspired by health and by our quest to use hiking as the ultimate healer. When it comes to getting healthy, reading and walking really do go hand in hand. That's because these books can help you increase your fitness level, show you how to make hiking a habit and encourage you in your quest to hike through adversity. So before you head outside, grab a book and curl up in a cozy spot. Here's to your healthiest hiking season yet.

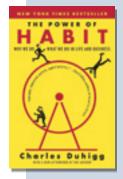
Fit by Nature by John Colver with M. Nicole Nazzaro

If you're looking for a way to increase your fitness level and endurance without increasing your time in the gym, look no further than Fit by Nature. This simple and beefy guide, which comes chock-full of colorful photos, provides a progressive 12-week outdoor training program that will have you running neighborhood stairs, jumping over logs and working out in your own back yard. Also covered: smart nutrition and injury prevention, goal setting and measurable milestones to track your progress. Once you learn the core exercises of the book, you may just give up the gym for good.



The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg

Feeling inspired by the "Living 5 to 9" article on page 24 but don't think you have the time or capacity for more adventure in your life? Check out the New York Times bestseller The Power of Habit. In it, Charles Duhigg demystifies why we do what we do and how we can build better, more fulfilling lives one habit at a time. Tip: Getting outside for your first weeknight adventure is hard. But do it again—and then again—and soon you won't even have to think about it. Even hiking can become a habit.



Hiking Cancer by Patti McCarthy with Lynn Shapiro

Chances are, you know someone who has cancer. If that person is also a hiker, inspire them with Hiking Cancer: 400 Days of Cancer and How I Hiked Through It. This raw and honest book contains journal entries from McCarthy's motivating quest to continue hiking the PCT during her treatment. It's also a great resource for other cancer patients who want to hike for physical—and emotional—healing. The book includes information on section hiking the PCT and preparing for the trail. But where it really shines is showing just how important it is to follow your passion, even if you're also fighting to stay alive.







Camera Packs

When it comes to capturing the best images, it's our DSLRs (and mirrorless cameras) that do most of the heavy lifting. Or rather, we do! And that's why we need good camera packs to help us haul big cameras to the big scenes.

LowePro Photo Sport BP AW II Similar to its long name, this compact outdoor workhorse is long on features. In addition to the padded lumbar camera compartment, it has six other storage areas for loads of easy access to keys, wallet, snacks, etc. It is also has a dedicated space for a 2-liter hydration bladder, a real plus for staying hydrated while hiking, biking and skiing. The Photo Sport is available in two sizes; the 200 model is better for small DSLR and mirrorless cameras, while the larger 300 model is better for full-size DSLRs. \$170-\$200

Mountainsmith Spectrum This sleek 12-liter pack is more for urban and adventure travel than long-distance trail hiking. Designed by outdoor photographer Andy Mann, it has a clean-lined, minimalist sensibility. As such, there are no ice axe loops, daisy chains or tensioners—but that's the point. Its side laptop compartment easily fits a 15-inch laptop. The lumbar camera compartment is pretty snug for a full-frame DSLR but ideal for smaller camera models. The Spectrum also has two larger cousins, the Borealis and Parallax, for more storage options. \$120

Manfrotto Off Road 30 This 30-liter pack is a high-capacity, comfortable outdoor backpack. There's no laptop compartment here (by design!) but plenty of adaptable storage space, hipbelt and side pockets, daisy chains, straps and tensioners. The spacious, padded lumbar camera compartment comfortably fits a full-frame DSLR and two extra lenses. The pack even has a few tripod mounting options. What's more, the Off Road can be used sans camera compartment as a nicely versatile small backpack. \$200

Mindshift Backlight 26 A Think Tank company, MindShift has reimagined the photo pack for outdoors and travel. The pack starts with lots of general storage, including slots for both laptop and tablet, and a bomber tripod mount. But it really ups its game with its photo gear storage and accessibility; the top-tobottom camera compartment easily holds a DSLR, five extra lenses and a flash. And by rotating the pack 180 degrees at its hipbelt, this raft of photo gear is easily accessible in front, without taking the pack off! \$250

Choosing the Right Pack

So many packs, so little time. Where to start? Start with the brands reviewed here. They're some of the best in the business. When nailing down your selection, ask yourself:

Does the camera pack ...

... FIT YOU? Look for comfortable and/or ergonomic shoulder straps and an elastic sternum strap that expands with your breathing. Also make sure the hipbelt fits uber-well, especially if you'll be carrying a

... FIT YOUR PHOTO GEAR? If possible, bring your camera, lens(es), tripod and accessories to a well-outfitted camera shop. Inhabit the place and try all the permutations you can with different packs.

... FIT YOUR OTHER GEAR? Got room for the Ten Essentials? Need a dedicated slot for a hydration reservoir or laptop/tablet? Look for the convenience of a top pocket for keys, fob and wallet and hipbelt pouches for snacks.

... FIT YOUR ACTIVITIES? Need a compact pack for kinetic outdoor sports or a larger one for carrying an extra lens or two ... or five? The wilderness or the metropolis ... or both? In the end, you'll probably choose more than one.

TRAIL MIX: Camp Kitchen



Energy Snacks

Because of their nutrient-dense profile and quick calories, energy bars are a staple in every hiker's pack. There's definitely no shortage of options on the market, and we all have our favorites, but here are a few you may not have tried—plus a simple recipe to make your own.

GOMACRO ENERGY BARS Isn't it a bummer when you finally find a bar you like, but you get bored with the flavor after just a few hikes? That's not likely to happen with GoMacro Bars. These chewy energy bars come in 11 flavors, ranging from breakfast-worthy Morning Harvest, with apples and walnuts, to dessertlike Protein Paradise, with cashews and caramel. Five varieties are also high-protein. Some flavors available at REI; all flavors available at gomacro.com. \$3.50

BOUNCE ENERGY BALLS Bars are great, but balls are just plain fun. These round energy balls were originally made for kiddos, but adults have wound up loving them too. Made in Bend, Oregon, these little guys have between 8 and 12 grams of protein and come in four tasty flavors. Try the Coconut & Macadamia Protein Bliss ball with cranberry and whey protein for a delightfully tropical late morning snack. They also have a gluten- and dairy-free ball— Superberry Vitality Burst—for those with dietary restrictions. Available at REI. \$2.50

GREENBELLY ENERGY BARS These hefty energy bars weigh in just under 5.5 ounces—much higher than the typical bar. However, these fellas provide 640 calories, 22 grams of fat, 100 grams of carbs, and 17 grams of protein per package! Formulated for a meal replacement, each package has two bars in a zip-top closure, making eating-as-you-go an easy option. The texture is similar to a cereal bar, so if you've ever wished your energy bar was a Rice Crispy Treat, this may be the bar for you. Available at greenbelly.co. \$7

D.I.Y. COFFEE-COCOA ENERGY BITES Nutrient dense and tasty, this cocoa, coffee and hazelnut combo makes a perfect on-trail snack—and is pretty dang decadent.

- ♦ 1/3 cup rolled oats
- ♦ 6 oz. date paste
- ♦ 2 tbsp. honey
- ♦ 3/4 cup roasted hazelnuts

- ♦ 4 tbsp. cocoa powder ♦ 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- pinch of sea salt
- ♦ 1 tsp. coffee extract

Grind oats in a food processor until powdered, then add remaining ingredients. Process until dough sticks together and is well incorporated, then press into a rimmed pan. Chill in the fridge, then cut into bite-size pieces or roll into balls. Store in fridge until ready to use.

More Energy

There's much more to energy snacks than just bars. You'll also find gels and gummies, as well as products that provide that other kind of energy—caffeine. Quick calories and caffeine can both boost the body during exercise and hiking. Try one of these portable pick-me-ups.

HONEY STINGER PROTEIN CHEWS In

addition to quick carbs and electrolytes for energy, Honey Stinger's new gummy

line provides 5 grams of natural protein to assist with recovery, as well as calcium and vitamin C. The raspberry flavor tastes like candy! \$2.50



GU ROCTANE ULTRA ENDURANCE GEL

A favorite among runners, energy gels are awesome for hikers too. GU's Roctane line kicks it up a notch with amino acids, sodium and electrolytes to prevent lactic-acid buildup. Some flavors contain caffeine too. \$2.50



NUUN ENERGY HYDRATION TABLETS

Drinking NUUN won't provide calories, but offers plenty of electrolytes and caffeine. Just drop a tablet into 16 ounces of water, dissolve then chug. Dehydration impacts energy too, so this is another solid option for the trail. \$7



VOKE ENERGY TABLETS Here's a quick jolt of caffeine whenever you need it. Each tab has the same amount of caffeine as a strong cup of tea-about 77mg. With no sugar, artificial colors or flavors, this is a booster you can

feel good about. \$7



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There's a sense of expansiveness on top of Steamboat Rock that I love, with its fields of wildflowers and a mix of geologic features from both the ice age glaciers and the great floods. ~ DAVID HAGEN



COULEE COUNTRY

Want more to do on your visit to central Washington's Channeled Scablands? Check out these other nearby natural attractions: Lake Lenore Caves, Dry Falls Heritage Area and Northrup Canyon. Just bring plenty of sunscreen.



The trail to the top of Steamboat Rock has loose rock on the steep section through the cliffs and one short pitch where you'll likely need to use your hands for balance. This trail is not recommended for young children or small dogs.



Steamhoat Rock / GRAND COULEE

Climb a steep trail to a plateau of lush, pristine shrub-steppe with panoramic views over Banks Lake, across the Columbia Basin and out to the North Cascades.

Steamboat Rock sits at the north end of the Grand Coulee in the waters of Banks Lake like a giant stone ship left behind by the ice age floods. And since no one has ever gotten a cow up here, the summit plateau is pristine shrub-steppe, lush with grasses and wildflowers. The trail to the top climbs gently for 0.4 mile through fields of balsamroot to the base of the rock, then steepens as it climbs up a cleft in the cliffs. A bit beyond here the trail splits, where either fork will take you to the summit plateau.

Once on top, you'll find vast rolling meadows of wildflowers punctuated by low buttes. You'll also see some clusters of large erratics deposited by ice age glaciers. You can make a loop either way around the perimeter of the plateau, and take in expansive views out to the Columbia Basin, up and down the Grand Coulee and west to the North Cascades. Or you can just wander at will through the interior meadows. The soil is thin along the perimeter, and here you'll find the typical lithosol wildflowers: bitterroot, desert buckwheat, cushion daisy, etc. The interior has deeper soils that harbor masses of lupine, phlox, larkspur and western groundsel, to name just a few. You'll also likely spot the small herd of deer that lives up here. Once you've soaked in the views and reveled in the wildflowers as long as time allows, make your way carefully back down the trail to your car.

DISTANCE: 4 miles // ELEVATION GAIN: 650 ft. // ELEVATION PEAK: 2.250 ft. MAP: DNR Banks Lake // PERMIT: Discover Pass // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: www.wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/steamboat-rock

TRAILHEAD: From I-90, north of Vantage, take SR 283 north to Soap Lake. At the next junction, proceed north on SR 17 for 20 miles to Hwy 2. Turn east and drive 4.2 miles to the next junction continue another 15.5 miles north on SR 155 to Steamboat Rock State Park. The campground and trailhead is 0.5 mile beyond the park entrance.

HIKE & PHOTOS: David Hagen



Copper Butte via Marcus Trail/OKANOGAN HIGHLANDS

Of the several ways to reach this lofty peak, none is as beautiful as the Marcus Trail. By way of this lightly traveled path, you'll traverse some of the most prolific alpine meadows within the Kettle River Range.

The trail starts by following an old road through ponderosa pines, western larches and Douglas-firs before entering a large area that succumbed to fire in the early 1990s. Climbing on a dusty path (thanks to ranging cattle), reach Copper Butte Spring at 2.2 miles, where cow paths diverge everywhere. The trail you want heads left, uphill and away from the spring. It soon reenters forest for a short ways, then comes to Copper Butte Spring and breaks back out into meadows.

Now savor one of the supreme meadow hikes in the Kettles. For over a mile, traverse the sun-kissed southwestern slopes of Copper Butte, delighting in wonderful westward views and outstanding

floral shows that include bistorts, lupines, yarrows, roses, golden peas, asters, buttercups, buckwheat, harebells, locoweed, bluebells, paintbrush and more. At 3.4 miles, reach the Kettle Crest Trail in a high forested saddle. Now turn left and hike north 1.4 easy miles through cool lodgepole pine forest, pocket meadows and corridors of lupine, lousewort and paintbrush, to the broad 7,140-foot summit of Copper Butte. Once home to a fire lookout, all that remains is a rusty bed frame. Wander around the butte for horizon-spanning views west to the Cascades and east to Idaho's Selkirks, south to Mount Spokane and north to British Columbia's Rossland Range.

DISTANCE: 9.6 miles // **ELEVATION GAIN:** 2,340 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 7,140 ft. MAP: USGS Copper Butte // PERMIT: None // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: Day Hiking Eastern Washington by Craig Romano, Mountaineers Books

TRAILHEAD: From SR 21, east of Republic, turn right onto Old Kettle Falls Rd for 2.4 miles, then left on County Road 287 for 0.8 mile. Turn right onto Hatchery Rd and continue 0.6 mile, bearing right onto FR 2152 for 3.3 miles. Bear left onto FR 2040 for 5.2 miles, then right onto FR Spur 250 for a final 1.5 miles to the trailhead in a small clearing.

HIKE & PHOTO: Craig Romano

HIKERS' HAPPY HOUR

After working up a sweat on this sunny ridge romp, drop into the **Republic** Brewing Co. (on Clark Ave) for a frosty pint of craft-made beer. cider or soda.





FIND THIS **FLOWER**

Near Sawtooth Ridge, in 1826, naturalist David Douglas made the discovery of North America's first known

wild peony.

Watch for its low blooms of mauve tinged with yellow hiding among the showier flowers along this route.

Sawtooth Ridge / BLUE MOUNTAINS

This flower-lined trail with big views will make you wonder if the Blue Mountains earned their name from the carpets of larkspur along the route.

This pleasant ridge romp works well as either a dayhike or an overnight backpack. The trail starts high and gradually descends, remaining in the forest for the early miles, then breaking out onto the high Sawtooth Ridge with fantastic views of the surrounding countryside. The wilderness here is so untrammeled that the trail begins to disappear into the underbrush after the first 3 easy miles.

Use map and compass to continue, and when in doubt remain on the ridgetop. At approximately the 4-mile mark, a green-and-white sign on a large tree marks the boundary between Washington and Oregon, a good turnaround spot. According to Forest Service maps, the trail continues another 10 miles to the Wenaha River, but on the ground this trail may prove too difficult to locate.

DISTANCE: 8 miles // **MAP:** USGS Godman Spring **ELEVATION GAIN:** 500 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 5,500 ft. PERMIT: None // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: http://www.wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/sawtoothridge-blue-mtns

TRAILHEAD: From Dayton, drive south on North Touchet Rd (FR 64) toward Bluewood Ski Area. Bear right and continue on FR 64, bypassing the ski area, then left on FR 46. Continue 3.7 miles to a right on FR 420, which ends at the trailhead in 0.2 mile.

HIKE: Holly Weiler // PHOTO: Luke Bakken

Easy Pass/North Cascades

Spectacular 360-degree views and wildflowers galore cap off the steep and sometimes rough trek up Easy Pass, a true gem of the North Cascades.

You will certainly question the name of this trail soon after starting, but early prospectors did, in fact, find this path to be the easiest way across Ragged Ridge. Rest assured that the views from the pass make all the sweat and effort worth it.

Start by entering thick forest and crossing Granite Creek on a sturdy bridge, then begin the neverending climb toward the pass. Ascending through forest of hemlock and cedar with dainty queen's cup and vanilla-leaf in the understory, the trail parallels and crosses Easy Pass Creek before the trees give way to rocky avalanche chutes. From here on, shade is in limited supply, so be prepared. Continue up through talus slopes, rockslides and perhaps lingering snowfields. Enjoy the cheerful yellow asters lining the way. As soon as the pass is gained, all pain will be forgotten. Heather dominates the park-like pass, and larches frame the awe-inspiring landscape sprawling before you.

DISTANCE: 7 miles // **MAP:** Green Trails 49 ELEVATION GAIN: 2,800 ft. // ELEVATION PEAK: 6,500 ft. PERMIT: None // DOGS: Leashed

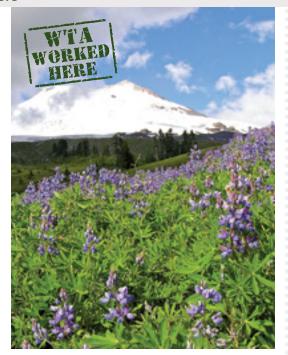
INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/easy-pass

TRAILHEAD: From Burlington, drive 90 miles east on SR 20; from Winthrop, drive 41 miles west on SR 20. The trailhead is located between mile markers 151 and 152.

HIKE: Lindsay Leffelman // PHOTO: Nina Tang



On Sawtooth Ridge, watch for the spur trail to Burnt Flat and Lady Camp at an unmarked intersection at approximately the 3-mile mark. The camp is nearly a mile off the main trail. Nearby, Lady Spring is difficult to locate and may dry up later in the summer, so hike here at the height of wildflower season for the best chance of finding sufficient water





This popular route for summiting Mount Baker is also a brilliant summer wildflower hiking destination.

The first 2.4 miles to Railroad Grade follow the Park Butte Trail, which crosses Sulphur Creek into colorful Schreibers Meadow. Lined with heather and wildflowers, the first mile is easy and passes in and out of forest, offering occasional glimpses of Koma Kulshan: the "Great White Watcher."

At 2 miles, the forest opens up to yet another wildflower-strewn meadow, Morovitz. At 2.4 miles, reach the Park Butte and Railroad Grade junction. Turn right and head up the stone steps, passing a few backcountry campsites and a side trail to a small tarn. At 3 miles, reach Railroad Grade at the edge of a glacial moraine. Peer over the steep edge at a glacier-fed creek below. Depending on snow levels, you may be able to hike 0.5 mile or more up the grade. At 3.5 miles is High Camp, a good turnaround point. The trail deteriorates from here and becomes a steep climbers' path.

DISTANCE: 7 miles // **MAP:** Green Trails 45 ELEVATION GAIN: 2,000 ft. // ELEVATION PEAK: 6,000 ft. PERMIT: NW Forest Pass // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/railroad-grade

TRAILHEAD: From I-5, take exit 258 onto Airport Dr. Turn left on Bennett Dr and make a slight left onto Marine Dr in just over a mile. Find the trailhead at Little Squalicum Park.

HIKE: Brandon Fralic // PHOTO: Wendell Beavers



Cedar Creek / NORTH CASCADES

Make a short and gradual climb though fields of flowers to a quaint two-tier waterfall.

As you start up the Cedar Creek Trail you may notice that the trees are more sparse on the east side of the Cascades, so more sun hits the forest floor, allowing bouquets of broadleaf lupine, yellow arnica and red paintbrush to proliferate. This also attracts a variety of butterflies. It's not uncommon to spot wildlife along this trail as well, especially in the meadows, where you might find black-tailed deer.

As you gradually ascend toward the falls, take time to look behind you, to the north, for glimpses of Goat Peak towering high above the town of Mazama. With binoculars, or good peepers, you may be able to see the fire lookout on the peak. Depending on the season and snowmelt, the waterfall may be gushing or just pleasantly streaming. Sit and stay awhile for lunch or a snack while you enjoy the falls. Use caution when exploring around the falls, as there are some steep drop-offs near the edges. When ready, return by the same route.

DISTANCE: 3.5 miles // **MAP:** Green Trails 50 **ELEVATION GAIN:** 500 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 3,550 ft. PERMIT: NW Forest Pass // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/cedar-creek

TRAILHEAD: From Burlington, drive 115 miles east on SR 20; from Winthrop, drive 17 miles west on SR 20. Turn south on FR 200 for 0.8 mile to the trailhead.

HIKE: Mike Morrison // PHOTO: Mark Foltz

KNNW **REFORE** YOU GO

In most years, high-elevation trails such

as Railroad Grade are

snow-covered until midsummer. Check trip reports on

wta.org before departing, and always prepare for inclement

weather.



Grand Park / MOLINT RAINIER

The classic approach (via Sunrise) to this sea of meadows and wildflowers at the base of Mount Rainier is long and tough, putting Grand Park out of reach for most casual dayhikers. Instead, try this "back door" approach via Lake Eleanor to enjoy this stunning destination.

The hike begins just off FR 7360, following a bootpath along the edge of Eleanor Creek. The trail enters a mixed forest and begins a moderate climb toward Lake Eleanor. Within 0.5 mile, you will cross into Mount Rainier National Park and in another mile arrive at the lakeside. There are a few campsites around Lake Eleanor that provide nice views of the lake and a pleasant place for a snack, though most hikers will be eager to push on to the meadowlands ahead.

From the lake, the trail steepens and climbs through larger stands of hemlock and fir. The moderate climb is broken up by short wanderings through progressively larger meadows. Push onward and upward to the wide expanses of Grand Park. Often filled with wildflowers during the spring and summer months, the miles-long grassland can seem to be awash in color from the moment you arrive. Resist the temptation to linger at the edges and continue on to the meadow's high point for outstanding views of The Mountain. Find a comfortable spot to settle in and soak up the panorama. If you're hungry for more, you can continue all the way through Grand Park's meadows to connect with the North Loop Trail and the Wonderland Trail.

DISTANCE: 8.5 miles // ELEVATION GAIN: 1,100 ft. // ELEVATION PEAK: 5.630 ft. MAP: Green Trails 270: Mount Rainier East // PERMIT: None // DOGS: Not permitted

INFO: hikingwithmybrother.com/2013/08/grand-park-backdoor-via-lake-eleanor.html

TRAILHEAD: From Enumclaw, drive east on SR 410 for 25 miles. Turn right (west) on FR 73 for 9 miles alongside, then crossing over, Huckleberry Creek. Continue on FR 7360 for 1 mile to the crossing at Eleanor Creek and park on the roadside.

HIKE: Nate & Jer Barnes // PHOTO: Christine Foro

f The trail emerges from thick forest into a vast sea of green brimming with wildflowers, while the snowy slopes of Mount Rainier rise above it all. A product of the mountain's active past, the meadows have a unique and secluded feeling to them, as if you have stumbled onto a hidden treasure.

~ NATE BARNES



SHARE THE TRAIL

The Ape Canyon Trail is popular with mountain bikers, who like to start at Windy Ridge and ride southward (downhill) across the plains. Be watchful for bikers, and step aside when you see them rapidly

approaching.

Ape Canyon / MOUNT ST. HELENS

Climb through dense old-growth forest to a barren cinder plateau that bursts with wildflowers and unobstructed views.

The lower portion of the trail to Ape Canyon starts parallel to a wide lahar flow and climbs through one of the only remaining swaths of old-growth forest on Mount St. Helens, thick with Douglas-, silver and noble firs. After climbing for a few miles, the trail emerges from the forest onto a wide volcanic plain that offers jaw-dropping panoramas in all directions. The glaciated St. Helens resides directly in front of you, with clear views of Mounts Adams and Rainier in the distance.

After a short distance, the trail comes to the precipitous edge of the trail's namesake rock formation, named after a possible Sasquatch sighting in 1924. Continue across the plains, where wildflowers and lava bombs adorn the landscape. The trail ends at the Loowit Trail but you can increase your mileage by continuing northward on the Plains of Abraham Trail for even more stunning views.

DISTANCE: 11 miles // MAP: Green Trails 364 ELEVATION GAIN: 1,400 ft. // ELEVATION PEAK: 2,800 ft. PERMIT: NW Forest Pass // DOGS: Not permitted

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/ape-canyon

TRAILHEAD: From Woodland, take Lewis River Rd (SR 503) east for 32 miles. Continue east on FR 90 for 3.2 miles. Veer left onto FR 83 and proceed 11.2 miles to the trailhead.

HIKE: Kristen Sapowicz // PHOTO: Mike Kipp



Bluff Mountain / YACOLT BURN AREA

Open views and rocky slopes are the perfect backdrop for a spring wildflower explosion on this southwest Washington trail.

Due to the Yacolt Burn of 1902, the terrain in this area is open, rocky and filled with wildflowers, giving the impression you are in a high alpine area. As you set out, the first 3 miles are old roadbed but it continues as hiking trail, diving into a saddle before climbing up the ridge to Bluff Mountain and Little Baldy and beyond to Silver Star Mountain.

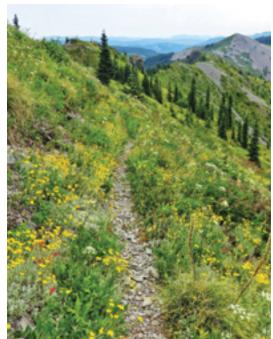
In addition to views of Mount Hood and the Columbia River, the trail is lined with a litany of wildflowers: paintbrush, Columbia lilies and columbines are just a few to be seen. Huckleberries are ever-present, should you find yourself on the trail in the right season. The Bluff Mountain Trail is part of the proposed Chinook Trail, a 300-mile loop circling the rim of the Columbia River Gorge.

DISTANCE: 12 miles // **MAP:** Green Trails 396, 428 ELEVATION GAIN: 890 ft. // ELEVATION PEAK: 4,390 ft. PERMIT: None // DOGS: Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/bluff-mountain

TRAILHEAD: From I-5 in Vancouver, take SR 500 northeast for 2.2 miles; continue north on SR 503 for 12.5 miles. Turn right on Rock Creek Rd for 0.3 mile, then right on 152nd Ave for 1.2 miles. Veer left on Lucia Falls Rd for 7 miles, then right on Sunset Falls Rd for 7.3 miles. Turn right on FR 41 and proceed 8.7 miles to the trailhead. High-clearance vehicles are recommended for this road.

HIKE: Ryan Schreiner // PHOTO: Deryl Yunck









Church Creek / OLYMPIC PENINSULA

With wildflowers at your feet, wander among old-growth giants on this off-the-beaten-path trail on the southeastern side of the Olympics.

Abandoned and almost forgotten, the Church Creek Trail was adopted and reopened by the Olympia Mountaineers, allowing hikers continued access to this multi-use trail in the southern portion of Olympic National Forest. From the trailhead, the path immediately enters a forest of impressive silver fir, red cedar and Douglas-fir, where lush mosses and lichens grow underfoot. Huckleberries and ferns line the trail, as do a wide variety of wildflowers: avalanche and fawn lilies, queen's cup, trilliums, columbine and bear grass. Church Creek, though clearly heard, remains out of sight in a deep ravine.

By way of switchbacks, the trail climbs steeply toward the South Fork Skokomish and Wynoochee Rivers' divide. As you cross a series of streams, look for marsh-marigolds, shootingstars, pioneer violets and fairyslippers. At about 1.5 miles, reach a decommissioned road and follow until the route rejoins the trail. The climb resumes and after about 0.5 mile arrives at the 3,200foot divide. Near the crest, a massive western hemlock stands guard.

Beyond the sentinel hemlock, the trail rapidly descends through silver fir and western hemlock. Beyond a cascading waterfall, the trail makes a few sweeping switchbacks and emerges at the northernmost and largest of the five Satsop Lakes. A trail wanders along the lake, passing through thick swaths of willow and salmonberry, and continues to FR 2372.

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: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/church-creek

TRAILHEAD: From Shelton, take US 101 north for 7 miles. Turn left onto Skokomish Valley Rd for 8 miles, then continue on FR 23 for another 8 miles. Veer right onto FR 2361 for 3 miles, then left on FR 2361-600 to the trailhead.

HIKE & CREEK PHOTO: Kelsie Donleycott // FLOWER PHOTOS: Janine Griggs & Marty Witt

MAKE IT A **WEEKEND TRIP**

Spend a full weekend exploring the trails of the southeastern Olympics. Set up camp at Staircase, near Lake Cushman, then hike around Mount Ellinor, the North Fork Skokomish River, and the Black and White Lakes.



rom Mount Ellinor; photo by Ed Hund

LEARNING TO GET ALONG

The value of good communication

efore the Internet, websites, blogs and social media, hikers and land managers lacked opportunities to communicate with each other. When hiking and backpacking surged in the late 1960s, the U.S. Forest Service found itself under increasing pressure to manage the land to accommodate hikers—a dramatic and challenging shift in focus when its primary purpose had been managing forestry. The change brought confusion, misperception, misinterpretation and misunderstandings about land management, as rumors were rampant, and the chasm of skepticism widened between hikers and the Forest Service.

The introduction of Signpost opened the line of communication between hikers and agencies, and though it almost folded several times in its early years, it eventually became recognized as an effective channel for hikers and managers to converse. To encourage engagement with the hiking community, land managers were sent complimentary issues. The Snoqualmie National Forest showed its appreciation for the newsletter in 1969, by being the first agency to purchase a subscription for each of its ranger districts, bringing the number of subscribers to 325.

Signposters contributed articles about ethics, gear, backpacking food, safety, nature and how-tos. Agency staff wrote letters to the editor clarifying misunderstandings, dispelling rumors and providing gentle reminders about backcountry ethics. They also provided updates about new trailheads, new signs, tips on driving safely during active logging activity and public meetings. Through this communication, hikers and land managers found a means to work together for mutual interests.

Bernie Smith, of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest's Darrington District, was quick to adopt this new line of communication. Though popular with hikers, the Darrington District was managed primarily for logging. Recreation management was a mystery to the district, and Smith's title reflected that: "My business card said, 'Other Resources Assistant,'" he said in a recent interview.

Of the large staff then at Darrington, a town humming with loggers, Smith recalls, "There was fire, timber and silviculture. I was fish, biology, wilderness and trails. It was a pretty lonely life for a sole recreation person!"

When Louise Marshall approached Smith in 1975 about a Signpost-sponsored work party, he jumped at the chance. Several Signposters joined Marshall and Smith for a day of work on the Boulder River Trail, where they helped deconstruct aging and rotting forest shelters. Smith enjoyed working with the volunteers, "It was an opportunity to connect with hikers. I learned what they like and what they don't like."

Signpost, and the fledgling WTA, made a big impact on Smith. After retirement from the Forest Service in the 1980s, Smith served on WTA's board of directors. ◆



Bernie Smith (left), the "other resources assistant" for Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, on the Boulder River (then called Boulder Creek) work party with WTA in 1975. Photo by Rick Ells.

NORTHWEST EXPOSURE



Heliotrope Ridge
Photo by Edmund Lowe

Summer brings wildflowers to Washington's trails. Get inspired by more Northwest Exposure photo contest entries at **wta.org/gallery**.

We're celebrating our 50TH
ANNIVERSARY by sharing our favorite places with you!

HIKEthe

FLAGSHIP STORE IN SEATTLE where six experts will showcase 50 miles of their favorite trails. Race to find your next great adventure in 7 minute segments before being whisked off to the next expert. You'll leave this marathon of trail info inspired for summer.

Meet other hikers, have fun, and enjoy

Meet other hikers, have fun, and enjoy refreshments from Bellevue Brewing!

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RSVP and get more info: WTA.ORG/HIKETHESTATE

Photos by Sarah Reed and Jack Moskovita