

Nine Spooky Hikes for Fall

Washington TRAILS

A Publication of Washington Trails Association | wta.org

modern navigation

Volunteer Wilderness Rangers
Inspiring Young Hikers

Sep+Oct 2016

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NAT'L PUBLIC LANDS DAY
» SEPTEMBER 24TH

PITCH IN FOR TRAILS

We celebrate trails everyday at WTA, but September offers an exciting opportunity to take part in a nationwide celebration. **On September 24,** join us in being part of the nation's largest day of service for public lands: National Public Lands Day. We hope you can take part in this great opportunity to give back to the trails you love. No prior experience necessary.

Youth & Families at Soaring Eagle | Sammamish
Devil's Elbow w/ MSHI | Mount St. Helens
Heather Meadows | Mount Baker
Hemlock Trail w/ REI | Bellingham
Middle Fork Snoqualmie | North Bend
Lake Serene | Stevens Pass
Mount Townsend | Olympic Peninsula
Mount Spokane | Spokane
Sunrise | Mount Rainier

SIGN UP AT
wta.org/volunteer

Photo courtesy of REI





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.

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Trail Obsessed

When I moved to Washington half a lifetime ago, I had never owned hiking boots. A friend and I bought some guidebooks at REI and started checking out the easier trails. There was no WTA website to tell us about road closures or new trails, but we enjoyed the sights, the exercise and the time together.

It's gotten better every year. I've learned to appreciate more of the sights, I hike harder trails that give me more exercise, and I've built many deep friendships with the people I hike with. Hiking has connected me to our state and has also taken me to amazing places throughout the world, such as Machu Picchu last month.

Your story may be different. Maybe you were hiking as a toddler. Maybe you are just starting now. Maybe you prefer to trail run—or hike for solitude and meditation. Maybe you're training for Denali. All of these scenarios have one thing in common: trails. When I first started hiking, I didn't think about where trails came from, but then I noticed teams of people working hard and realized they were mostly volunteers. I discovered that the organization doing the work, Washington Trails Association, also had a really useful website. It took a few more years for me to realize the importance of WTA's advocacy and education work. All these activities support our different, personal connections with trails and the outdoors.

I'm excited to become president of the board at such a busy time for WTA. We're commemorating 50 years of service with ambitious goals for growth. Our fabulous executive director, Karen Daubert, has retired after five years, leaving us in the good hands of Rebecca Lavigne as interim executive, along with a superb management team and staff, while our board conducts a thorough search for our next leader.

We're all obsessed with trails—and the people who use them—for so many different, wonderful reasons. And we are committed to making the future of trails and WTA one we will continue to be proud of.

Bruce Burger

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Hike It!

Nine spooky fall hikes to spark your imagination » p.42

Cover: Technology is changing how we explore backcountry. Ultimately, your best piece of gear is your brain—know how to use the tools in your pack and always be mindful of your surroundings. Photo by Erik Haugen-Goodman.

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Tools of the Trail

Whether reviewing a new piece of gear or trying to find ways to improve how we share information on the website, we are always thinking about technology here at WTA. At the organizational level, technology plays a very important part in our mission to protect trails and make the outdoors accessible for everyone. We've recommitted to this effort as part of our strategic plan and are well on our way.

Digital spaces can connect people, whether you are looking for advice or new friends to hike with. WTA has improved our **My Backpack** resources to help you sign up as a volunteer or connect with other hikers. Thanks to some amazing volunteers, our **Trailblazer mobile app** continues to make it easier for you to research hikes and current trail conditions on the go.

As technology changes, so do the ethics and best practices for emerging tools. WTA is committed to fostering a dialogue around these challenges. How can you enhance your experience without impacting your fellow hikers? How can you share a photo from your favorite campsite on Instagram without it resulting in a sensitive place being loved to death? We appreciate the tension between better tools and unplugging in the backcountry and believe in the power of each of these options, but which way the scale tips is a very personal decision.

In the end, technology is just another tool, like a crosscut saw or a lighter: useful, but it must be handled with care. Here at WTA, we think better information results in better decision-making, offers more ways to connect with the hiking community and a stronger voice for trails. Technology is one of the best tools we have to get information out to the largest group of outdoor enthusiasts, but at the end of the day, many of us still seek the primitive solitude of the backcountry.

Happy hiking,



P.S. From switching out the mimeograph for a computer to implementing online Trip Reports, throughout our 50-year history, technology has helped WTA become more effective. In honor of our golden anniversary, we have included a commemorative booklet celebrating how far we have come as an organization. Please enjoy this small token of appreciation for helping us protect trails for half a century—it would not have been possible without the support of our members, volunteers and partners.

COMMUNITY

By Loren Drummond



Find Your Trail Crew

Three outdoor orgs that totally rock

Finding your hiking community is no easy task. You might stumble into a chance encounter that turns into a beautiful friendship. You might marry your perfect hiking partner. But for many of us, finding outdoor companions can be something of a challenge.

When most of the hikers you see on trail (or in public portrayals) don't reflect your race, gender, sexual orientation or cultural background, that challenge can be even harder. Enter the work of several amazing groups that have been deconstructing stereotypes about who uses trails—and organizing opportunities to explore public lands.

THE TRAIL POSSE

"Diversifying and demystifying the outdoors." That is one of the stated goals of The Trail Posse, a news venture started by Seattle-based journalist and WTA member Glenn Nelson. Much like WTA, The Trail Posse doesn't lead or organize hikes but shares stories and information aimed at empowering people of all races to explore the outdoors. trailposse.com

LATINO OUTDOORS

An inclusive Latino-led organization pioneered by José González, Latino Outdoors celebrates and showcases how conservation roots have been ingrained in Latino culture for generations. With a network of local ambassadors all over the

country (including here in the Northwest), the organization is a platform for sharing cultural connections and narratives that have been overlooked by the traditional outdoor movement. latinooutdoors.org

OUTDOOR AFRO

Started as a blog by Rue Mapp in 2009, Outdoor Afro has grown into a vibrant organization that connects African Americans with natural spaces and one another through recreational activities ranging from camping and hiking to birding and rafting. The organization has grown to support 60 local leaders who organize communities around the country, including Seattle, Tacoma and Portland. outdoorafro.com

A Tapestry of Trail Communities

Still looking for the right outdoor community to connect with?

Have an interest, like bird watching or geocaching?

Hoping to find hiking buddies who share your schedule?

Check out (and add to) our list of organizations and hiking groups at wta.org/hikinggroups.

Photo by Michelle Piñon

WHAT DOES "HIKING UNPLUGGED" MEAN TO YOU?

Phone on airplane mode and just along for photos as on most of my hikes there is no cell service anyway. I carry a GPS for my map needs. Love to just listen to the great outdoors.

Julie Rzadzki, WTA member

I take a car full of kids hiking every two weeks just so they can have a full day of unplugged. I take photos but no games or social network allowed. The kids (4-9) love it.

Carob Bartholomew, hiker

My job means I'm always connected, always online. I rely on my mountain time being screen-free and out of touch.

Loren Drummond, WTA
Digital Content Manager

I wonder about people who hike with earbuds in and truck along to music. It's not for me, but who am I to say whether it enhances their outdoor experience? For me, that's the measure—does it enhance my experience in the woods?

Brad Shinn, WTA Fireside Circle member



Photo by Tami Frazier

Trail Smarts

Tips for Taking the Lead

Introducing someone to the trail is more than just a good deed.

It can renew your own sense of wonder. As your companions see their first lady ferns, bear tracks or views of a volcano emerging from behind a cloudbank, you see them with fresh eyes again too. But leading others—kids and adults alike—carries extra responsibility. Whether you are just taking a few friends out for the first time, rallying folks via a Meetup group or leading in a more official capacity, you have some extra work to do.

A) Build a thorough plan: There is no such thing as too much advance planning when you're responsible for others.

B) Set goals: When planning, consider what kind of experience you want your group to have. Is it a learning hike or just a few friends out for fun?

C) Limit group size: Unless you're planning your hike in a more urban park or forest, keep your group size relatively small (6–12 people), both for the sake of your group's experience and to minimize your impact on the land and other trail users.

D) Be considerate: If you aren't very familiar with the people you will be leading, consider—and try not to make assumptions about—what cultural and historical connections to nature individuals in your group may have.

E) Know your limits—and everyone else's: Design your trip for the least fit or experienced hiker, and check in regularly on the trail. Turning back if conditions aren't safe or if someone in your group is uncomfortable is always the right decision.

F) Set the social norms: From following Leave No Trace practices to keeping dogs leashed to practicing good right-of-way, all eyes are on you. Your actions may end up guiding the other hikers' behavior for years to come. Slowing your pace or taking lots of water breaks can also make less experienced hikers feel more comfortable.

G) Talk through hazards: Will jumping over loose rocks cause them to tumble down onto the trail below? Will making your destination mean you'll end up returning after dark? Always assess potentially dangerous activities and conditions, and discuss them with your group before acting. It helps new hikers learn. If you take a risk, it also helps ensure it's a calculated one.

For more information, visit wta.org/trailsmarts.

WTA Highlights



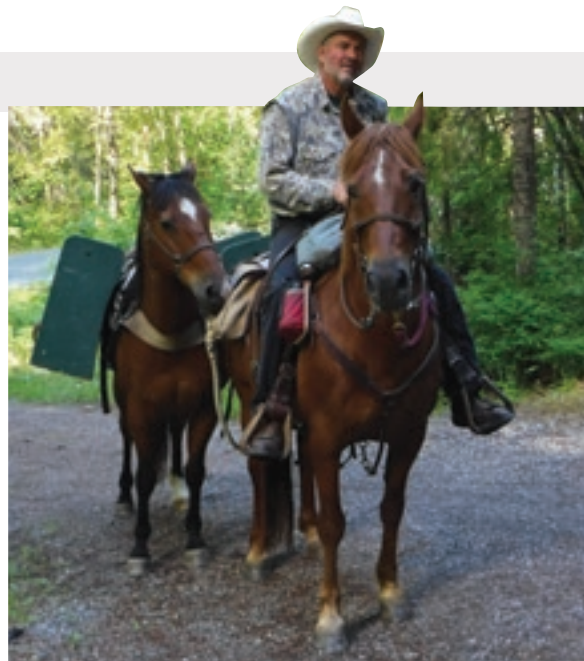
Members of WTA's Fireside Circle visited a youth crew on trail at Pete Lake with a surprise ice cream delivery. Photo by Kate Neville.



Cape Horn Conservancy and WTA volunteers celebrate the opening of the Oak View overlook on the Cape Horn Trail. Photo by Dan Trujillo and the Camas-Washougal Post-Record.



Thanks to everyone who helped us celebrate Washington Trails Day. Over the weekend, more than 650 hikers signed our petition urging Congress to adequately fund our public lands. Photo by Erik Haugen-Goodman.



WTA Volunteers and Back Country Horsemen at work on the North Fork Sullivan Trail.
Photos by Loren Drummond and Holly Weiler.



Lost Trails Found

Creating a sustainable future for the North Fork Sullivan Trail

With the help of WTA's passionate community of advocates and volunteers, we set a goal in 2015 to rehabilitate five "lost trails" by 2020. These are trails that are on the brink of becoming incredibly difficult to travel or—in some cases—are already completely inaccessible. This summer, volunteers began work on one of these lost trails, the North Fork Sullivan Trail, in the state's quiet northeastern corner.

Just a few hours north of Spokane, this world-class trail system has all the trappings of a haven for backpackers and day hikers alike. The path offers peaceful cedar groves, views of larches and aspen, occasional sightings of thrush and wrens and an afternoon snack of ripe huckleberries. The North Fork Sullivan also hosts a section of the proposed route for the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail. There's just one problem preventing anyone from getting out there: the bridge is out.

Before the trail crosses into the Salmo-Priest Wilderness and up to the high reaches of Crowell Ridge, hikers and horses must traverse a 60-foot-wide wetland. Over the years the bridge that made this possible became damaged and unsafe—essentially closing the trail.

Rebuilding the bridge would have been merely a temporary solution, one that would have needed to be repeated within 20 years. To create a sustainable solution to the problem, the Colville National Forest asked WTA to help remove the bridge. During a recent Backcountry Response Team trip, volunteers worked



If 54 percent of Washingtonians hike in the woods, does Congress hear it?

We're hiking Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., at the end of September.

Show your support for trails at wta.org/losttrails.

to dismantle 90 feet of planks, saw up and disperse dozens of enormous cedar beams and haul tons of support rock into the forest, where it had originally been gathered.

"We pried [out] every nail, every length of rebar, to haul out with us," said Loren Drummond, WTA's digital content manager, who worked on and documented the trip.

Going forward, the Colville National Forest plans to reroute the trail away from the wetland to eliminate the need for hikers and equestrians to cross the water. The project is dependent on funding, but there is hope. While the trail probably won't open this season, the work of eight volunteers, some incredible pack support from Back Country Horsemen of Washington, and collaboration with the Pacific Northwest Trail Association left this lost trail one step closer to being found.

Watch a video about this project and get involved at wta.org/losttrails.

What a Difference 20 Years Makes

Bill Sunderland and Alyssa Kreider have deep roots with WTA. In June, we were honored when they made a commitment to WTA of \$50,000 over five years toward WTA's trail programs and the Greg Ball Trail Fund. We sat down with them to learn more about their history with WTA and what inspired them to make this generous gift. Here is an excerpt of the interview—for more, go to wta.org/signpost.

How did you first learn about WTA?

Bill: Since moving here for graduate school, I've been an enthusiastic hiker, backpacker and climber. In 1995 I picked up a copy of *Signpost* at the old REI. I was looking for volunteer opportunities and saw an ad for a work party. I gave it a try and I was hooked. Later I helped build WTA's website and online tools, like the trip report system.

Alyssa: I moved to Seattle to work at WTA as part of Mennonite Voluntary Service (a program similar to AmeriCorps). I had a phone interview with Greg Ball. He was so enthusiastic and talked about how he thought I would contribute. It was a great experience and I wound up staying on as a staff member. Bill and I met when Greg Ball paired us up to carpool to a work party!

WTA turns 50 this year. What changes have you observed since you've been involved?



Bill Sunderland and Alyssa Kreider

Bill: It's grown a lot. Greg always liked to talk about how when he started, WTA had 92 cents in the bank. Back then it was just Greg and Dan Nelson; everyone else was a volunteer. The scope of work has grown too. Greg was amazed the year we completed 4,000 hours of trail work. Would 8,000 hours be possible? It seemed out of reach. (WTA completed 144,000 hours of volunteer work in 2015.)

Alyssa: The technology has changed. For a long time we still had a phone hotline for people to sign up for work parties. Even after the website was up, we were still doing a lot of mailing and calling. It took time to adapt; we had to help some people learn how to use the new tools. Then suddenly more people were looking for information online. The average age of work party participants really dropped with web sign-ups. Younger people saw that joining a work party could be for them.

At the same time, some of the technology has not changed. We still use crosscut saws and pack horses for backcountry trail work! And those are traditions that will continue, thanks to the Wilderness Act.

Learn how you can support the Greg Ball Trail Fund wta.org/gregballtrailfund.



Intern Mara Orenstein and a youth volunteer clearing the Klickitat Trail. Photo by Jacob Mandell.

Youth Volunteers Help Bring a Lost Trail Back

The Klickitat Trail has been used by Native Americans for the past 2,000 years. In 2015, it made WTA's list of "Lost Trails." Our first-ever Youth Volunteer Vacation there provided an awesome week of fun, learning and limitless work. The crew of 13, led by blue hat Lauren Orenstein and interns Mara Vogeli and Owen Glass, made an impressive impact on the trail system starting at Hugo Lake. In total, the crew built a short reroute around a massive blowdown, brushed back a half mile of thick alder and salmonberry that were making the trail impassible and removed eight logs that were blocking the trail. The crew had a great week swimming at Chambers Lake, playing many fun games and dodging heavy mosquitoes. Thank you to this awesome group of trail stewards for helping WTA and the Gifford Pinchot National Forest to bring this trail back!

Learn more about WTA's Youth Volunteer Vacation program at wta.org/teens.



Happy backpacking workshop participants. Photo by Andrew Pringle.

Outdoor Leadership Training: *Backpacking*

One ... two ... three ... four. The sound of thunder filled the tent. The strong winds, heavy rain and bright lightning meant that it wasn't really necessary to use the "flash to bang" method to know that the thunderstorm was passing nearby, but the technique was discussed during one of that day's mini-workshops—so it seemed an apt time to test it out. Luckily, all of the participants on WTA's first Outdoor Leadership Training backpacking workshop, held this past July, were tucked into their sleeping bags, safely on the floor of North Cascades National Park's Thunder Creek Valley. And by the time coffee and oatmeal were being prepared ahead of another day of learning about planning and leading backcountry outings for youth groups, blue sky was poking out behind the mountain ridges.

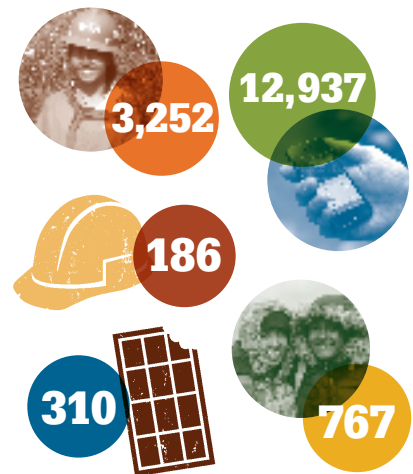
Getting teachers and youth program coordinators out into the wilderness was a milestone in rounding out the suite of WTA learning experiences (including hiking, snowshoeing and camping workshops) available to schools and community organizations that want to increase access to the outdoors for the youth they serve. The three-day backpacking workshop covered modern tools and best practices for leading safe, fun and low-impact backpacking trips for groups.

Some of the community trip leaders have gone on to plan their own backcountry outings. Others are building up to it with their groups, and some were looking to increase their confidence as outdoor leaders in order to facilitate other activities. When asked what was most useful about the experience, one participant reflected that "talking through all the complexities and describing how to take them on in a manageable way was amazing."

Interested in expanding your own outdoor leadership skills?
Learn more and sign up at wta.org/olt.

WTA DOLLARS AT WORK

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**



Volunteer Dick Axon. Photo by Steven Moore.

1,000 Days on Trail!

Congratulations to WTA volunteer Richard (Dick) Axon on his recent accomplishment. This summer, Dick reached an incredible milestone of 1,000 work parties with WTA! He is only the third volunteer in WTA history to reach this landmark and be inducted into WTA's Golden Rock Bar Club, joining Pete Dewell, who was honored in 2011, and Jim Springberg, who was honored in 2015.

In 2003, Dick participated in his first work party at Mount Margaret and has been an active volunteer and member ever since. As an assistant crew leader and avid hiking enthusiast, Dick has traveled from Mount Adams to Mount Baker to volunteer with WTA on a variety of day work parties, Volunteer Vacations and Backcountry Response Teams. He brings his passion and enthusiasm to each event he attends and continuously goes out of his way to welcome new volunteers into our community. When asked if he had a favorite work party he's participated in, his response was: "It's just good to be out there every day. It's always the next one that's going to be the best."

Thank you to Dick and all of the folks who volunteer with us. We truly couldn't do it without you!



Take advantage of this great benefit offered by many companies, and maximize your contribution to the great work that WTA does! It's so easy!

—LIBERTY MUNSON, MICROSOFT

DOUBLE *your* IMPACT

Photo by Nicholas Travers

Companies in our state are so generous! Check out these amazing organizations that matched their employees' charitable giving and volunteer hours to WTA. Your incredible contributions totaled more than \$207,000 in support of trails in 2015. Thank you!

Adobe • Aetna Foundation • Alaska Airlines • Allstate The Giving Campaign • Altria Group Inc. • Amgen Foundation • Anchor Qea • Apple • Argo Group • AT&T • Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund • Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation • Bungie Foundation • Cambia • Chevron Matching Gift Program • Chubb & Son • Cornerstone Advisors • Costco Matching Gift Program • Dell Employee Engagement Fund • Expedia Gives Matching Gift Program • Expeditors International • F5 Networks • GE Foundation • Getty Images • GlaxoSmithKline • GMMB • Goldman Sachs • Google Seattle • Hatch • Hewlett-Packard Enterprise • Home Box Office Inc • Home Depot Foundation • Illinois Tool Works • JLL • Johnson & Johnson • JPMorgan Chase Foundation • KeyBank Foundation • Laird Norton Trust • Lexis Nexis • Medtronic • Microsoft • Milliman • Moz • Network for Good • Pacific Life Foundation • Phillips 66 • Portland General Electric • Portland General Electric Employee Giving Campaign • Precor Incorporated • Puget Sound Energy Foundation • Qualcomm Charitable Foundation • Quote Wizard • Riley & Nancy Pleas Family Foundation • Russell Investments • Salesforce Foundation • Shell Oil Company Foundation Matching Gift Program • Silicon Valley Community Foundation • Starbucks Coffee Company • Symetra • Tableau Foundation Employee Engagement Fund • Terex • Textron • The Boeing Company Gift Match Program • The Bullitt Foundation • The Clorox Company • The Community Foundation for Southwest Washington • The Standard • The Walt Disney Company Foundation • T-Mobile • Travelers Community Connections Matching Gifts • TripAdvisor LLC • UBS • UnitedHealth Group • US Bank Foundation Employee Matching Gift Program • Varian Partners in Giving Employee Engagement Fund • Verizon Foundation • VISA Giving Station • WhitePages, Inc. • Windward Environmental • Zonar Systems



Don't see your workplace on this list? Ask your HR team about your company's matching gift program. You have the power to make your gift go twice as far for trails this year! **Visit wta.org/workplace for more info.**



Big Quilcene River. Photo by Kelsie Donleycott.

Wild Olympics Act Receives Senate Hearing

In Washington, D.C., the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Protection Act received its first Senate hearing since the bill was originally introduced by Sen. Patty Murray and Rep. Derek Kilmer in 2014.

The bill was presented to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. If passed, the act would protect more than 126,000 acres of new wilderness—the first on Olympic National Forest in three decades. It would also provide the first-ever Wild and Scenic River designations on the Olympic Peninsula, providing lasting protection and ensuring critical access to area trails and recreation sites.

More than 550 local businesses, elected officials and organizations like WTA have signed on to support the legislation. As the public awaits news from Congress, REI, Patagonia and local recreation businesses are promoting visitation to the area with a free map that's available at Puget Sound-region REIs.

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Revises Motorized Plan

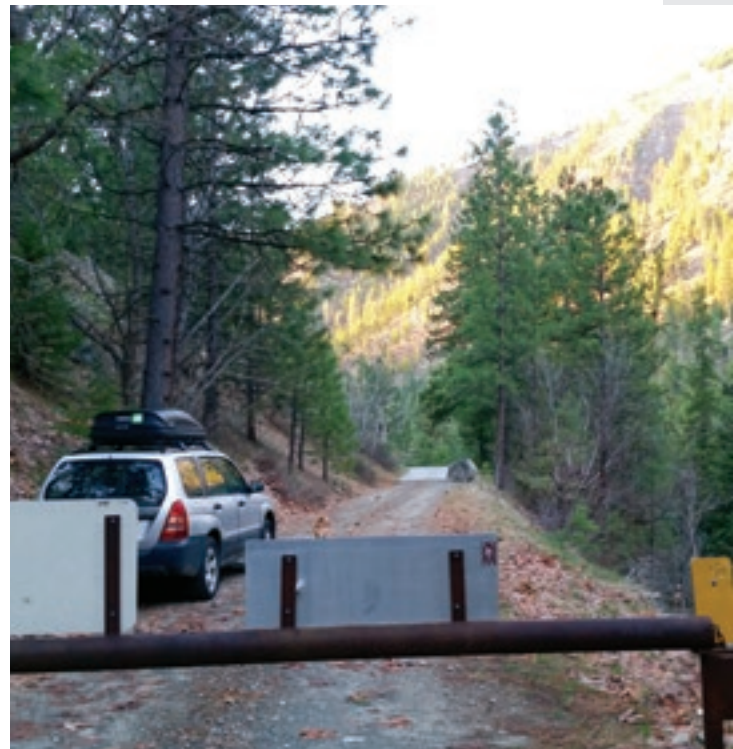
The Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest revised its official Motorized Travel Management Plan this summer.

The revision was a multiyear process that included listening to hikers, equestrians, bikers and other members of the recreation community about how they use roads and trails. The forest comprises 4 million acres of forestland that stretches from the Canadian border to the Goat Rocks Wilderness.

More than 25 years have passed since the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest last examined its motorized travel management.

The new Motorized Travel Management Plan states which roads and trails will be open to motorized use (everything from passenger cars to ATVs and dirt bikes), making it a critical issue for trail users of all stripes.

Currently, motorized vehicles are allowed anywhere within the national forest where they're not specifically prohibited. Under the proposed plan, motorized vehicles will be prohibited, except in areas where they're specifically allowed. The plan is under review and, once finalized, will be the roadmap by which the forest manages motorized travel for decades to come.



Seasonal road closure in the Lower Mad River Valley on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. Photo by Loren Drummond.

Make Memories



2016

YOUTH & FAMILY WORK PARTIES

WTAs Puget Sound-area Youth and Family work parties are intended for youth volunteers ages ten or older and their friends and families. Join us for shorter, all-ages service projects and fit more fun into your Saturdays!

Fall 2016 Dates:

Sept 24: Soaring Eagle, Sammamish

Oct 15: Soaring Eagle, Sammamish

Nov 19: City of Seattle park

All events are from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Find locations
and sign up at
**wta.org/
volunteer**

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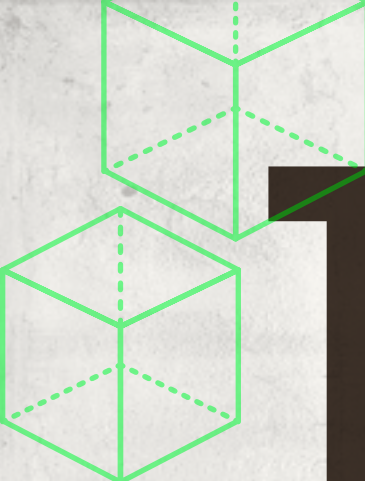


Alpine - \$1,000-\$2,499

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To find out how your company can support WTA's work for trails,
call us at (206) 508-6849.





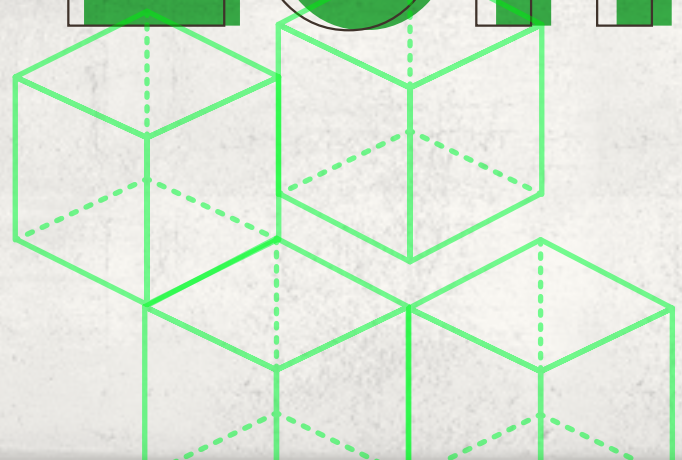
THE

**Screens and apps
can be a help or a
hindrance on the
trail—it depends
on your view.**

NATURE

OF

TECH



BY ERIK HAUGEN-GOODMAN

For many hikers and backpackers, escaping into the woods isn't just an excuse to get exercise, recreate with friends or family or see incredible sights—it's also a way to unplug from daily life. Hiking this way harkens back to a simpler time, before digital devices ruled the world. There's a certain romanticism that swirls around roughing it on trail without the help of modern technology.

Increasingly, the digital tools available to us offer opportunities to be safer, learn more about the areas we're exploring and track our mileage—it isn't all selfie sticks and Instagram filters. Technology is a tool that we can choose to use or not use on the trail—and how each hiker chooses to experience the outdoors is a personal choice.

Many hikers have their experience heightened by bringing technology with them into the wild. Digital maps are ►



Mobile apps are a great resource for learning more about what you are seeing on trail, but don't forget to look up from your screen so you can truly experience what is around you.

Photo by Erik Haugen-Goodman

becoming increasingly popular, and activity-tracking apps like Strava help athletes log their hikes, runs and climbs. GPS watches can track routes, deliver real-time barometric pressure data and show your current altitude, making it easier to find your position on a map, whether that map is paper or pixels. Eugene Gavrilyuk, an avid trail runner and hiker, says that he uses a GPS watch to document his activities. "I do it to keep a record of where I've been and what I've done as a sort of journal."

Tracking apps like Strava can also serve as a way to meet like-minded athletes or hikers. As your activities are uploaded, "Flybys" allow you to see if other athletes are near you on your route and add them as a contact in the app. You can also view segments of trail and compete for fastest times. Apps like this help build a sense of community amongst hikers, cyclists and runners who upload their activities, and athletes can help motivate each other by commenting or giving kudos.

Technology can also make hiking safer. Personal locators and avalanche beacons are tools that can help stranded and injured hikers get the emergency help they need. Earlier in the year I was able to take part in a training simulation put on by emergency responders and search and rescue in Issaquah. Having never taken part in a training of that kind, I found it incredible how technology was being used to track a missing hiker. Using



The ability to pull up a map at any time and track my progress in relation to the plans that I've made is reassuring.

—EUGENE GAVRILYUK,
HIKER AND RUNNER

cellular phone towers and a last known location of the hiker's phone signal, the team was able to triangulate her position and find her in less than hour. Their mobile command unit was full of blinking lights and readouts that made it appear as if I was in a futuristic spaceship. While that was just a training simulation, it gave me a glimpse of the power technology has to save lives.

Technology advancements apply to nondigital tools as well. Backcountry stoves limit impact and wildfire potential, and backpack designs have changed to give hikers more comfort over long distances. Hikers no longer have to suffer through carrying a heavy canvas Trapper Nelson backpack up a mountain. Waterproofing has also improved by leaps and bounds, and materials are more breathable and durable.

The possibilities for improvement in safety and comfort are limitless, but reliance on these devices can also be detrimental. One of the biggest concerns with an overreliance on technology is that it will fail us when we need it most.

Batteries die, GPS signals get lost and digital compasses can lose their way. In fact, many parks, such as Grand Canyon National Park and others, post warnings saying that cell phone service may be limited or nonexistent once you leave the parking lot.

Technology shouldn't be seen as something that necessarily hinders the hiking experience. Rather, it's a tool that hikers can choose to use or not. It's up to individual hikers to determine the role they want technology to play in their outdoor experience. If you don't enjoy staring at a screen while you're hiking, turn off the phone. If you don't want to be distracted from the sounds of nature, take off the headphones. If someone else is using technology that's impacting your experience, have a polite talk with them. One of the Leave No Trace principles is to be considerate of other visitors, and that means ensuring that everyone can enjoy nature without interruption.

For Stephanie Shin, a Seattle resident and hiker, the motivation to get out on trail lies in removing herself from the sounds and sights of city life. "If I've made the effort to get away from the city, I don't want to use my phone while I'm in nature. I want to enjoy the quiet, and I don't like it when other hikers impose their technology choices on me in the wild, like loud music." As more technology works its way onto trails, a careful balance needs to be considered between enjoying the hike as you see fit and ensuring that others can also do the same without distraction.

Modern technology can do some pretty incredible things. Your phone can play the role of map, compass, trailhead navigator, camera and emergency radio. It can help you identify plants and animals, track your progress on the trail and tell you how many steps you've taken. Ultimately, that data is there at your fingertips, but whether your fingers reach for the power button is entirely up to you. ■



DIGITAL BOOST ON THE PCT

We asked Karen Wang, a WTA volunteer thru-hiking the Pacific Crest Trail this year, to weigh in on how technology factors in on a major, modern thru-hike. Here's some of what she said:

- » **Though we do carry paper maps**, having a GPS helps us know exactly what mileage we're at, and we can see where we are if we go off trail.
- » **Ridges are usually where we can get a cell phone signal.** Why are we so hungry for service? Usually because we're out for five-plus days and we really need to contact people from home to coordinate resupply boxes. It's very hard to arrange resupply when I can't update friends on when or where my arrival dates are.
- » **Texting other hikers your location is helpful**, both to see where they're at or to ask them about sections of trail they just went through.
- » **We use a water report in Google Docs** on our phones to check where water sources are. We have to pull it out every few miles to see where to stop next and how many liters to carry until the next reliable source.
- » **Doing all of our internet errands** on a phone is tedious, but it's the only way to pay bills, order gear and do blog updates.

Photo by Jenny Linquist

**TURN OFF,
TUNE IN**

- » **There are health benefits to unplugging and enjoying nature.** A recent study released by PNAS, a scientific journal, has shown that a 90-minute hike in nature can improve mental health and brain functioning. When volunteers were split into two groups, one that hiked in nature and another that hiked in an urban setting, the study showed that those who hiked in nature saw reductions in negative rumination, a type of thinking that focuses on repetitive, self-doubting thoughts. The urban setting group saw no measurable difference in brain activity.

**What you need to
know about charting
your course with
digital tools**

★ **BY STEVE McCLURE**

modern navigation *ESSENTIALS*

Gone are the days when we showed up at the trailhead, map and compass in pocket, and believed we were at the cutting edge of wilderness navigation. The modern backcountry navigator now relies on **five tools to travel and return home safely:** map, altimeter, compass, cell phone GPS and personal locator beacon (PLB).

Technology can allow more confidence and safety in our backcountry wanderings—but it is different from using analog tools. For one, digital gear requires a bit more prep work at home.

TRIP PREPARATION

In addition to researching on **WTA.org**, downloading beta to the WTA Trailblazer app and reading our favorite guidebooks from Mountaineers Books, we have homework. We need to download the right digital maps, critical waypoints and perhaps a few tracks to our cell phone app, make sure our cell phone is fully charged (an extra battery pack is a great idea) and, as always, have a good topographic map of the area we're visiting.



MAPS

We now have two kinds of maps: physical and digital. Physical maps still synthesize vast amounts of data about a region in a format that is convenient for planning and navigation. Physical maps need no batteries and aren't easily broken. But physical maps printed at home are often not waterproof, and all physical maps have one overwhelming problem—they lack a "you are here" marker. Digital maps can be downloaded from the internet (often for free) to cell phone or tablet GPS apps or (for those that like a challenge) to dedicated GPS units. When a physical map is not available, a digital map can be used—carefully—as the primary map.

Free online resources allow for the creation, download and printing of custom detailed topographic maps and satellite images. For the United States, maps produced by the U.S. Geological Survey are still the gold standard for topography and are all freely available online. While they can be downloaded, laboriously, one by one at USGS.gov, it is far easier to use seamless, zoomable, customizable and shadeable versions from free online services, including CalTopo.com, Gmap4.com or GaiaGPS.com.

In addition, there is a quiet mapping revolution happening: GPS nerds are mapping the entire world on OpenStreetMap.org (OSM), a collaborative project inspired by Wikipedia. From the side streets of India to the back alleys of Marrakesh to trails in the Cascades, OSM often has the most up-to-date information on trails and roads

worldwide. It is freely available through many map apps and services.

The advantages of digital maps, in addition to the overwhelming benefit of noting your precise location, include the ability to zoom, quickly determine the coordinates of map features and easily use a variety of map types such as USGS, U.S. Forest Service, OSM, Natural Resources Canada topographical maps and satellite imagery.

The disadvantages include small screens and the potential for fragile battery-driven electronics to leave the party in a difficult situation. The use of protective cases, chargers, additional batteries and (especially) redundant devices can help mitigate these disadvantages. Simply printing and protecting a hard copy is great insurance against electronic failure. ►

★ A NOTE ABOUT TRADITIONAL NAVIGATION

Using the complex skills of traditional navigation can bring a deep sense of satisfaction. More importantly, finding your way in the backcountry with map, altimeter and compass requires a situational awareness that only comes from keen observation and a visceral feel for the landscape.

The modern backcountry navigator must fight the tendency to become a passive observer of the tiny screen with a loss of situational awareness that can lead to a less rich experience and bad decisions about risk.

TOOLS

Altimeter. Hikers have long understood the importance of altimeters for navigation in the mountains. With a topographic map, simply knowing the elevation solves half the navigation puzzle. It will intersect with a second scrap of data, such as the trail travelled or an identifiable ridge or stream, making it easier for hikers to pinpoint where they are.

The analog altimeters of old, with their Swiss-jeweled movements, were price prohibitive. Today's altimeter is a sliver of silicon, typically in a watch, but also available in a dedicated GPS device or cell phone app. Accurate altimeter watches are available for under \$40, and cell phone apps are available for free.

Cell phone GPS. Equipped with a good cell phone app (we like Gaia GPS for both Android and iOS) and downloaded maps, cell phones are now the gold standard in backcountry GPS navigation, overshadowing dedicated GPS (Garmin-type) devices. Cell phone towers are only needed for making calls and downloading data—but not for navigation! Far from cell towers or signals, the GPS chip at the heart of the modern cell phone continues to operate, showing hikers precisely where they are on downloaded maps. Though the ruggedness of dedicated GPS devices might be more appropriate in harsh conditions, they are expensive, with additionally pricey maps, and cumbersome to use.

But cell phones are fragile, battery-driven devices—hikers must take care to use a protective case, carry a backup power source and, ideally, have redundant devices within the party.

A variety of techniques can be used to minimize the power drain on a cell phone's battery. First, put the cell phone into airplane mode. Then, dim the screen, shut off background apps and leave the phone off except while actively navigating.



Personal locator beacons (PLBs).

Historically, backcountry travelers have needed to be completely self-reliant. That ethic should dominate the thinking of those entering the wilderness. But when, despite good tools, preparation and training, life becomes threatened, most would welcome help from emergency responders.

An outgrowth of the international satellite-based search-and-rescue system for aviation and maritime uses, PLBs were introduced in 2003 for those away from normal emergency services on land. These systems determine your coordinates using GPS and transmit them through international government satellites to the appropriate emergency responders. There is no subscription fee for these units but their use is limited to emergencies.

Since 2008, there have been several commercial PLBs on the market. These devices also determine your position using GPS and then send a message out using commercial satellite networks. Some units allow for short, preset nonemergency text messages to be sent (for example, "Camping here tonight"), and some allow free-form text messages to be sent. Some units allow for two-way texting, and some, such as the DeLorme inReach Explorer, are also full GPS navigation devices. These more functional units require subscription fees for services.

PLBs have saved many lives and should be strongly considered by all backcountry travelers.

ROOM FOR ALL

Equipping ourselves with, and knowing how to use, these five navigational tools—a good map, altimeter, cell phone GPS app, PLB and a trusty old compass—can safely get us into, and back from, the wild backcountry places of Washington that we cherish. They help give us confidence and security to explore. And with such newfound confidence to engage in the ultimate scavenger hunt for primitive beauty and solitude, we can spread and dilute the impact of our passing. We just may find there is room for us all! ■

★ **STEVE MCCLURE** is active with The Mountaineers as a member of the board, co-chair of the Intense Basic Climbing course and instructor for scrambling and navigation. Steve just finished rewriting the camping, clothing and gear sections of upcoming ninth edition of *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*. This includes a facelift of the beloved Ten Essentials. [More on the updated Ten Essentials in 2017.]



Photos courtesy Jessica Alvarado, Mani Dhami, Amanda Green, Parikshat Sharma, Angelo Crouse, Rachael Knudson



*Thank
you!*

Thank you so much to our amazing Hike-a-Thon community for coming out in full force for our 50th anniversary and 13th annual Hike-a-Thon. As of mid-August, 465 participants have hiked more than 7,100 miles and raised more than \$82,000 for WTA!



465 participants • 7,100+ miles • \$82,000 raised for WTA

These volunteers help keep the U.S. Forest Service running—and you can do the same. *By Cassandra Overby*

WILDERNESS RANGERS

It's 11 a.m. and wilderness ranger **Cindy Perry** is in the parking lot of the **Snow Lake Trail**, a short drive off the Interstate 90 corridor and just inside the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. As she tightens her backpack straps and readies her radio, her ranger uniform and badge act as beacons. It isn't long before all of the hikers in the parking lot begin to flock to her side. There's a family with two small boys aiming to hike as far as they can before the little ones' legs tire out, a couple of young professionals intent on making it to the lake and a foreign couple that wants a good photo opportunity. Everyone, it seems, has questions. Perry patiently answers all of them in turn. Yes, there's snow at the lake. No, you can't use your Discover Pass at the trailhead. Yes, they can charge your credit card if you forgot cash.

It seems like Perry might never make it to the actual trail. She grins. "This is what it's like to be a wilderness ranger," she says. "Some days you really don't make it out of the parking lot." Finally, the crowd eases up and Perry makes her way to the trailhead, checking the bathroom for supplies and restocking wilderness permits on the way. In front of her is a trek through some of the most beautiful land in the nation—and many more questions from hikers.

It's all in a day's work. Except it's not work at all. Perry isn't paid to answer hiker questions, check toilet paper or restock permits. She does it all for free as a Forest Service volunteer.

She's not alone. Nationally, more than 2.8 million people have donated their time to the U.S. Forest Service since 1972. On Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, one of the most active units in the entire nation, 42 people are currently engaged in summer volunteer work. In 2015 alone, these impressive local volunteers, who range in age from 22 to 78 and are by day software engineers, massage therapists and retirees, donated 7,574 hours of their own time to serve as hiker helpers and forest advocates.

It's a big job. In the summer, wilderness rangers improve road signage, check wilderness permits on trail, maintain fire lookouts and serve as roving information stations. In the winter, they lead interpretive snowshoe hikes on winter ecology, photography and avalanche safety. All year long, they help keep the Forest Service running.

While wilderness rangers come from all walks of life and serve in a variety of ways, they do have one thing in common: there isn't anywhere else they'd rather be. Their personal stories show why—and might just convince you to join them.

CINDY PERRY: RECONNECTING WITH THE OUTDOORS

It was almost a given that Cindy Perry, 62, grew up outdoors. She was one of seven kids in a family that lived a block away from the Columbia River. At first, the prompting to go outside came from a mom who was always shooing the kids out of the house. But it didn't take long before Perry caught the outdoor recreation bug and was hunting and fishing with her dad and backpacking with her friends.

And then life happened. As Perry got married and had kids, she stopped spending so much time outside. It wasn't until her last kid went off to college and she was faced with an empty house that she suddenly realized how much she missed the outdoors.

"I didn't realize it until the kids left: I want to go outside," she says. "I saw this snowshoeing thing at Snoqualmie Pass. It was the best deal in town—a 90-minute walk for \$10. And they provided snowshoes! I cannot tell you how much fun it was."



Cindy Perry found work-life balance when she became a Wilderness Ranger for the Forest Service. Photo by Cassandra Overby.

Perry enjoyed herself so much on the snowshoe outing that she told all of her friends about it and accompanied them on their own outings. She went on 10 snowshoe hikes over two years. She even got to know the volunteer rangers who led the hikes, and eventually they asked if she'd be interested in joining their ranks.

"I knew I wanted to be outside more, and I was looking for a safe way to do it," she says. "It seemed like a good opportunity. Plus, I knew making a contribution would make me feel good."

Despite a work schedule that hovered around 60 hours on a good week, Perry started volunteering with the Forest Service the next summer. Her main task was to educate hikers on wilderness regulations, from keeping dogs on leash to having campfires only in designated locations to filling out the free wilderness permits at the trailhead—all while hiking some of the most incredible trails in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. It was everything she hoped it would be.

"As a wilderness ranger, I have been able to get outside a lot—and safely," she says. "Safety is stressed so much in our program. We always have our radios and great backup, not just from the dispatch service but also from our peers and volunteer coordinator."

In addition to enabling Perry to reconnect with the outdoors, being a wilderness ranger came with an unexpected perk.

"It really helped me balance my life," she says. "It evened out my office job. When I would drive up to

the mountains, I'd feel my stress and tension just melting away."

That was six years ago. Perry is now retired and spends upward of 700 hours each year as a wilderness ranger for both the summer and winter volunteer programs of Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Her favorite part of volunteering is connecting with hikers and encouraging them to enjoy the outdoors in not only a safe but responsible manner.

"I had a great interaction with a hiker this past winter," she says. "She came up to me on a snowshoe trip and said, 'I met you last summer when I was hiking and my dog wasn't on leash. The way you told me what I was doing wrong and how to correct it meant a lot to me.' It was so positive."

CHRIS FELSTAD: GETTING OUTSIDE MORE REGULARLY

Chris Felstad, 32, was no stranger to volunteer work when he became a wilderness ranger four years ago. The outdoors-oriented Amazon employee was already deeply involved with the Snoqualmie Volunteer Fire Department and Kittitas County Search and Rescue, but he wanted an additional volunteer role that would commit him to getting outside on a more regular basis.

"At the time, I was hiking a lot and using wilderness as a form of therapy to get rid of stress," he says. "But I wanted something that would force me to get out there even more often, to go deeper into some of our least used areas. And I wanted to give back while doing it."

Felstad is one of the faster long-distance hikers of the group, so he typically gets assigned longer, more remote trails that need a volunteer's attention. On a typical day, he does everything from checking supplies at trailhead bathrooms to putting out illegal campfires to packing out litter that's been left at backcountry campsites. Occasionally, he even helps staff the Granite Mountain Lookout Tower.

In a typical season, Felstad is one of the most active volunteers at Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. It's a win-win, because the volunteer program has helped him meet his goal of getting outside more regularly.

"I try to get out there every Saturday and Sunday," he says. "It doesn't always happen, but that's what I aim for."

As with Perry, one of Felstad's favorite things about volunteering with the Forest Service, ►

AT A GLANCE

Who: Anyone over the age of 18

What: Hiker education, trash pickup, road signage, woodworking, snowshoeing, fire lookout maintenance and more

When: Summer and winter

Where: Most national forests in Washington and many around the nation

How: Visit the website, fs.fed.us/working-with-us/volunteers

besides getting outside more regularly, is interacting with hikers. He especially loves answering their questions.

"There are always lots of questions about the general area," he says. "Everything from 'What is that peak?' to 'What's the name of that flower?' to 'How much farther?' Sometimes it's amazing how many questions there are in a day. And that's one reason I like [volunteering]. There are definitely people with a lot of questions out there, and it's great to be able to answer those questions and educate them."

It's something Felstad has gotten to do more and more of in the four years he's been a wilderness ranger.

"Hiking, especially in Western Washington, has become so popular in the past few years," he says. "It's phenomenal how many people are out there hiking. The amount of people seems like it increases every year. On a recent Saturday when I was at Granite Mountain, 220 people visited the inside of the tower. That doesn't count the ones who stayed outside."

This influx of hikers is one of the reasons Felstad continues to volunteer.

"There is a need for wilderness rangers out here, to help answer questions and make sure people are following the rules and help out if anything happens," he says. "Wilderness rangers are needed now more than ever."

GET INVOLVED

Regardless of what goal you'd like to achieve in nature, whether it's reconnecting with the outdoors or getting outside more regularly, becoming a wilderness ranger can be a great way to give back while you recreate.

The process to get on board isn't difficult. All it takes is a short online application and a two-day orientation that's held every spring. All volunteers start in the summer (May-October). After completing your first summer season, you can volunteer for the winter recreation program as well. The minimum commitment is only eight days per season—and for the most part, you can choose which days those are.

"The great thing with the Forest Service is that if you get busy and you don't have a lot of time, that's okay," Felstad says. "It's okay if you don't come out for a couple of months. If you can come out every single weekend, that's okay too. Whether you can give one day out of the month or every weekend, every little bit helps."

It also adds up. In 2015 alone, the 7,574 hours that volunteers donated to Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest saved the Forest Service \$174,202—and that was just along Interstate 90 and Highway 410. Nationally, since 1972, volunteers have saved the Forest Service \$1.4 billion. But it's not just money that volunteers are helping to save—it's also trails.

"There are many areas that wouldn't be covered by a staff member of the forest service if it weren't for volunteers," says Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Volunteer Coordinator Marta Sheridan. "If the volunteers weren't out there, we'd lose a lot of trails."

Learn more and help save trails yourself at fs.fed.us/working-with-us/volunteers. ■

Chris Felstad is one of the most active volunteers at Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Photo by Chris Felstad.



HELP A (VOLUNTEER) RANGER OUT

- » **Always fill out your free wilderness permit** and have it prominently displayed on your backpack (or potentially face a \$125 fine). The permit helps forest officials know who's hiking which trails and where to allocate funding.
- » **Double bag your dog poop and hike it out** in your backpack. Leaving it on trail—even if you intend to come back for it—is littering.
- » **If you have any questions, speak up!** Wilderness rangers are a great resource, and they're happy to help.

BRIAN & DEBBY PETERMAN

“Trails and the outdoors are important to us—and we want our kids and grandkids to be able to enjoy them, too.”

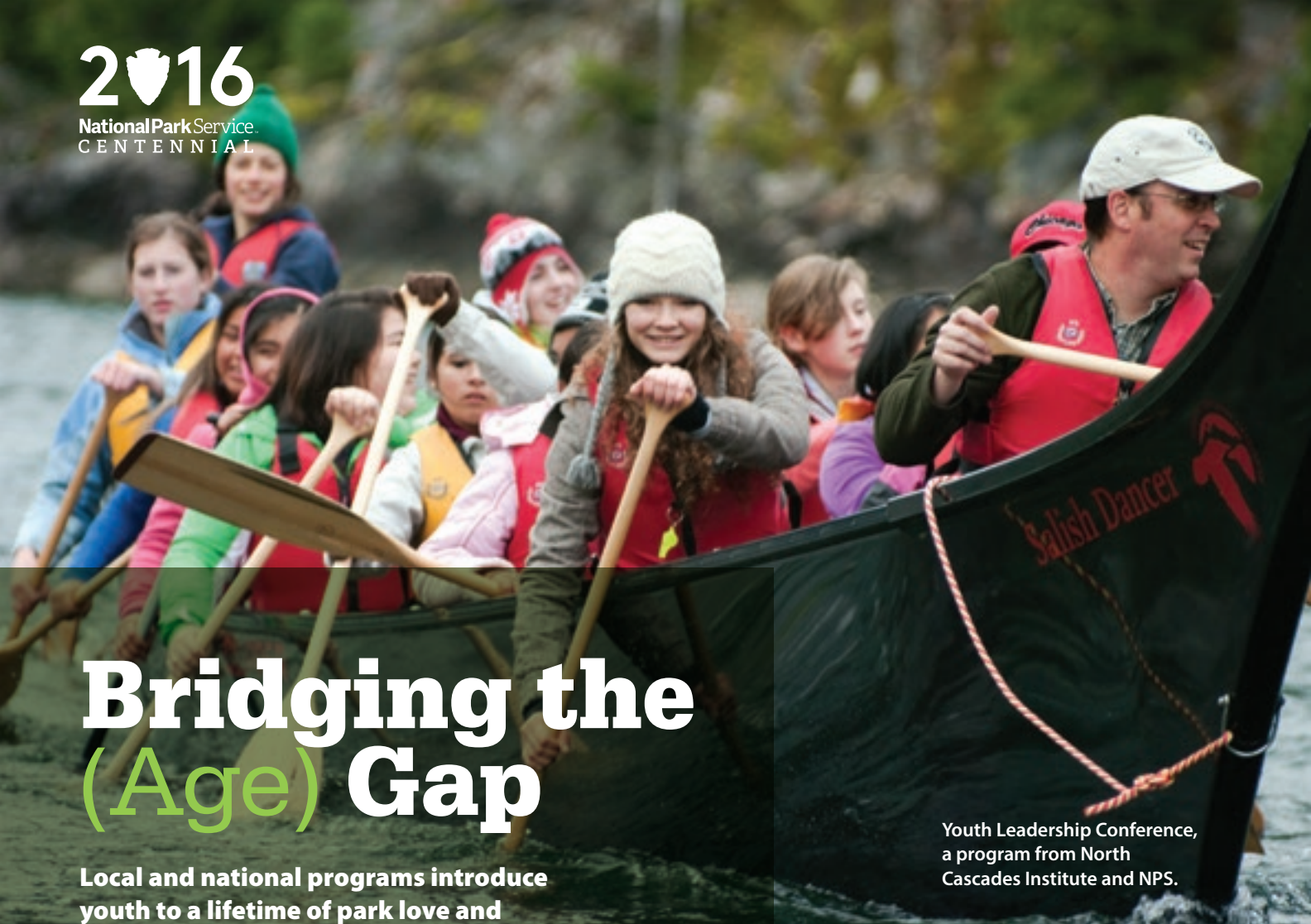


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Bridging the (Age) Gap

Local and national programs introduce youth to a lifetime of park love and stewardship | By Charlie Lieu

Youth Leadership Conference,
a program from North
Cascades Institute and NPS.

Photo by NPS/Andrew Pringle

OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SITES HAVE SEEN AN UNPRECEDENTED NUMBER OF VISITORS—but the average park visitor has gotten older. According to a report published in July 2015 by Clemson University, the average age of national park visitors increased from 39.8 in 1988 to 45.0 in 2011. While that's partly due to the aging baby boomer population, it's also the result of a sharp decline in younger visitors. In fact, according to a CNN report, the number of visitors under the age of 15 has fallen by half in the last decade.

There are many reasons for this. Today, parks are competing for people's attention as our culture becomes increasingly "plugged in." It doesn't help that young adults and children tend to favor cities and their modern conveniences. Unfortunately, this drop in visitation of those 21 and under is happening at a time when it is increasingly important to get youth into nature. It is not just a matter of combating childhood obesity or providing outdoor exposure and environmental education—it's a matter of survival for parks. People don't fight for things they don't know or love, and the lack of youth engagement means national parks are in danger of losing an entire generation of advocates and stewards.

As part of its centennial this year, the Park Service made it a mission to "create deep connections between a younger generation and parks through a series of diverse park experiences," according to its Call to Action. Unsurprisingly, the Pacific Northwest is leading the charge. Andrew Pringle, WTA's Outdoor Leadership

Training manager, explains, "We have large urban centers near large national park sites ... and a large web of institutions and organizations that are introducing youth to the outdoors."

Some fantastic programs that have initiated in the Pacific Northwest include:

Youth Leadership Conference (ncascades.org/signup/youth/ylc)—created by the North Cascades Institute in conjunction with the Park Service to "facilitate increased engagement through repeated and new experiences, offer leadership training and workforce development opportunities."

In My Backyard (inmybackyardnw.wordpress.com)—started at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park to engage university students in developing programs that connect urban youth with the nature and culture in their own back yards. The program utilizes social media platforms heavily to highlight conservation topics youths are passionate about.



Engaging a younger generation means we are engaging the future leaders of our nation, and even the world.

—**SHERI FORBES**, CHIEF OF INTERPRETATION FOR THE PACIFIC WEST REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DID YOU KNOW?

CITY OF ROCKS NATIONAL RESERVE

is the site of "Register Rock," where today's park visitors can view signatures in axle grease left by California-bound emigrants between 1843–1882.

MANHATTAN PROJECT NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

is the only park managed by both the National Park Service and the Department of Energy.

JOHN DAY FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

is widely considered by paleontologists as having one of the most complete fossil records on the planet. ▼



Nationwide, in alignment with its centennial goals, the Park Service launched **Every Kid in a Park** (nationalparks.org/ook/every-kid-in-a-park), a White House youth initiative to get fourth graders and their families to experience national lands free of charge. Additionally, individual parks are engaging in their own ways, from on-site high school conservation courses that meet educational requirements for their region to the **Youth Conservation Corps** (nps.gov/gettinginvolved/youthprograms/ycc.htm) and the popular **Junior Ranger Program** (nps.gov/kids/jrangers.cfm).

While not always widely publicized, these programs appear to be working: "I love the activities!" says 11-year-old Julianna Maness, who has earned three Junior Ranger badges for completing tasks designed to educate and foster interest. She bubbles with enthusiasm as she talks about the program and professes that she has "learned so much about the parks."

A remarkable thing happened a hundred years ago. The Organic Act of 1916 came into existence to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects ... as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." That future generation starts with the youth of today. May the National Park Service inspire another generation to enjoy, love and protect their inherited natural and historic assets. ■



Photo by Wallace Keck

CITY OF ROCKS NATIONAL RESERVE is the site of a major stop along the western migration route during the gold rush. The travelers of the California Trail called the rock towers that span the horizons throughout the park "the silent city." Today, in addition to its rich historical value, the park is a premier rock climbing destination. Inspirational scenery, exceptional opportunities for geologic study and remnants of the Old West await your discovery. nps.gov/ciro



MANHATTAN PROJECT NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

spans three sites in three noncontiguous states: Washington, New Mexico and Tennessee. One of the newest national parks, established in November 2015, it preserves portions of the World War II-era sites where the United States developed the world's first atomic weapons. Visitors can learn the story of the more than 600,000 Americans who left their homes and families to work on a project they were told was vital to the war effort—and changed the course of World War II. nps.gov/mapr



JOHN DAY FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

is located within the John Day River Basin in east-central Oregon and is known for its well-preserved layers of fossilized plants and mammals that lived in the region between the late Eocene (about 45 million years ago) and the late Miocene (about five million years ago). The monument consists of three geographically separate units: Sheep Rock, Painted Hills and Clarno, each of which is geologically unique. nps.gov/joda





What I see most often is that the kids are
in awe of things I take for granted.

—SARA ULLMER

INSPIRING YOUNG HIKERS

BY KRISTA DOOLEY
ILLUSTRATION BY LINDSAY HOLLADAY

On a recent camping and climbing trip to Vantage, a sophomore student turned to her teacher. **“This is the best night of my life!” she said.** The student had just discovered the sheer number of stars she could see in the night sky and was eager to learn more about the outdoors so she could share similar experiences with her friends and family. “What I see most often is that the kids are in awe of things I take for granted,” says her teacher, Sara Ullmer, who teaches science at Highline High School in Burien.

Ullmer has been able to offer outdoor experiences to her students because of the leadership training and resources provided by Washington Trails Association’s Outdoor Leadership Training program. WTA’s youth programs provide a variety of opportunities to engage young people in the outdoors: training workshops and resources help community leaders break down barriers to getting outdoors, volunteer trail maintenance opportunities provide hands-on experience and the ambassador program trains teens in leadership skills. WTA strives to inspire a new generation to connect to, explore and conserve the outdoors.

Training Community Leaders

Washington Trails Association developed the Outdoor Leadership Training (OLT) program to help youth organizations working in local communities, such as schools, after-school programs and community centers, get young people outdoors. We collected information from successful programs around the country and from local organization leaders about the challenges they face, which include lack of funds, experienced leaders and appropriate gear. The OLT program trains leaders to take young people hiking, camping, snowshoeing and backpacking, provides free access to outdoor equipment for trained leaders and offers mini-grants of up to \$250 to reduce the financial barrier many organizations face.

As the assistant manager of youth development at West Central Community Center in Spokane, Ben Baird gets to create programs that benefit youth in his community. One of his first projects was to organize outdoor experiences for school-age children and

teens. He attended an OLT camping workshop in 2015 and found the experience very rewarding:

“Those who work in the nonprofit sector know the obstacles that get in the way when starting something from scratch—money and time being the greatest—so I was excited and relieved to attend a WTA Camping Workshop last year on scholarship. Those few days have proven to be priceless!

“Upon my return, I began to implement just about everything I learned. From trail activities for kids to risk management, the tools I gained at the workshop have become the backbone of the programs I manage and the outings kids enjoy.” Baird has grown the Outdoor & Wilderness Learning Program (OWL) from a one-week camp reaching approximately 20 kids (with no budget) into a year-round, fully funded (and outfitted) program.

The program Baird developed promotes healthy choices and self-esteem while getting youth into the wilderness. It also teaches outdoor ethics, local history and self-reliance by utilizing experiential learning in an outdoor “classroom.” The program helped OWL participant Kiana P. become more comfortable outdoors and open to new experiences. She says, “I feel like I don’t have to be afraid of trying new things anymore. I’ve learned a lot from our hiking trips and from the staff. I know what to expect.”

Exploring and Connecting

Connecting to the outdoors is a valuable experience that extends beyond your senses to your core. A shared outdoor experience often brings people together and helps them to discover a sense of awe, wonder and appreciation for the natural world. WTA is committed to supporting these opportunities for teachers and community leaders. Ullmer attended an OLT hiking workshop in 2014 and has utilized the program resources to lead 10 outings for her students. She has also started an outdoor program at her school to expand opportunities for students beyond the indoor classroom.

“I see a tremendous need for students to get outdoors and away from home, where they become calmer and more self-

reflective. I also want to share my love for the outdoors and help them develop a passion for getting outside." Ullmer's first outing directly related the science lessons they were studying in class to the real world. She took a group of students to collect water samples from the Duwamish River near their urban school and Bridal Veil Creek in the Central Cascades and then compare the two.

Since then she has expanded her trips throughout the school year. "Many of the students I take outdoors are English Language Learners, and I'm surprised at how simple activities can bring so much joy. A freshman science student of mine had spent much of his life in a refugee camp and our trip to Snoqualmie Pass was his first time seeing snow. He kept throwing it up in the air in front of him and he couldn't get over 'how weird this stuff is!'"

Reducing barriers such as access to appropriate outdoor equipment (which can be expensive) has allowed the opportunity for nearly every student to participate in Ullmer's outings. "I could not do any of my trips without WTA. Being able to borrow everything I need for my students from the gear library is really extraordinary—I've had students show up to a hiking trip with high heels on, and I can just ask, 'What's your shoe size? Let's grab you some boots.' It's been incredible to be able to offer that, and it makes them feel more comfortable when I can assure them that I'll take care of them."

Ullmer integrates the outdoors into her lessons as much as possible to help her students make connections with each other and to explore the natural world around them. She says, "It's also easier to mentor my students through these trips because they talk more, laugh more and we can talk about more than just science. I hope they realize that exploring the outdoors is accessible and can be done with minimal special equipment. I want them to be able to share these kinds of experiences with their friends and families, and perhaps someday, their kids. I also hope they become better stewards and think about how personal actions are connected to the environment."

Confidence Through Stewardship

Since 2005, WTA has been creating stewardship opportunities for teens. As the youth trail maintenance program has grown and changed over the years, we have developed programs to support the enthusiasm and interest of our youth volunteers. Today the program has expanded beyond just one-day events to include 18 week-long volunteer opportunities in frontcountry and backcountry locations, and a 16-day backcountry trail work backpacking trip.

As teen volunteers continued to connect with WTA and showed a desire for engagement beyond trail work, WTA responded by creating a leadership program to help teens share their outdoor experiences within their own community and represent WTA as Youth Ambassadors.

Anna Silver first connected with WTA as a high school freshman volunteering on a weeklong youth vacation. Access and affordability made it appealing for Anna to go on to volunteer on six trips across the state. Recently she shared, "As

**I'm surprised
at how simple
activities can
bring so
much joy.**

a child of decidedly non-outdoorsy parents, WTA was my gateway to the outdoors. Because Volunteer Vacations were affordable and extremely fun, meaningful work, I was able to explore many different facets of the state I have come to love so much." During her junior and senior years of high school, she also participated in WTA's Youth Ambassador program. Attending those trainings helped Silver build confidence in articulating her interest and passion for the outdoors, something that she says helped to get her into college as well as a part-time job at an outdoor store.

Silver's experience working with WTA crew leaders whetted her appetite for more outdoor experiences. In 2015, she participated in a two-month National Outdoors Leadership School (NOLS) course in Canada's Yukon Territory, trekking, whitewater canoeing and navigating solo for a week. "I know I wouldn't have even heard of NOLS, let alone wanted to take a NOLS course, if not for WTA," Silver reflects, "How very lucky I have been to find such a down-to-earth, spunky and caring community. The work I did in high school for WTA cemented my love of the outdoors and showed me the value of hands-on labor so very different from my typical learning style in class."

Now a junior at the University of Michigan, Silver is pursuing course work in public policy focused on environmental policy and possibly restorative justice and she sees the two linked at the most fundamental level.

Over the summer, Silver returned to Washington for the opportunity to gain more public policy experience as an intern at Climate Solutions, working on environmental policy and advocacy related to the Power Past Coal and Stand Up to Oil campaigns. Additionally, she worked part time at The Mountaineers with the Youth Mountain Workshops. On her days off, Silver was also able to get outdoors and joined WTA once

Families Go Hiking
email newsletter
subscribers by year

1,831
2012

6,313
2013

10,362
2014

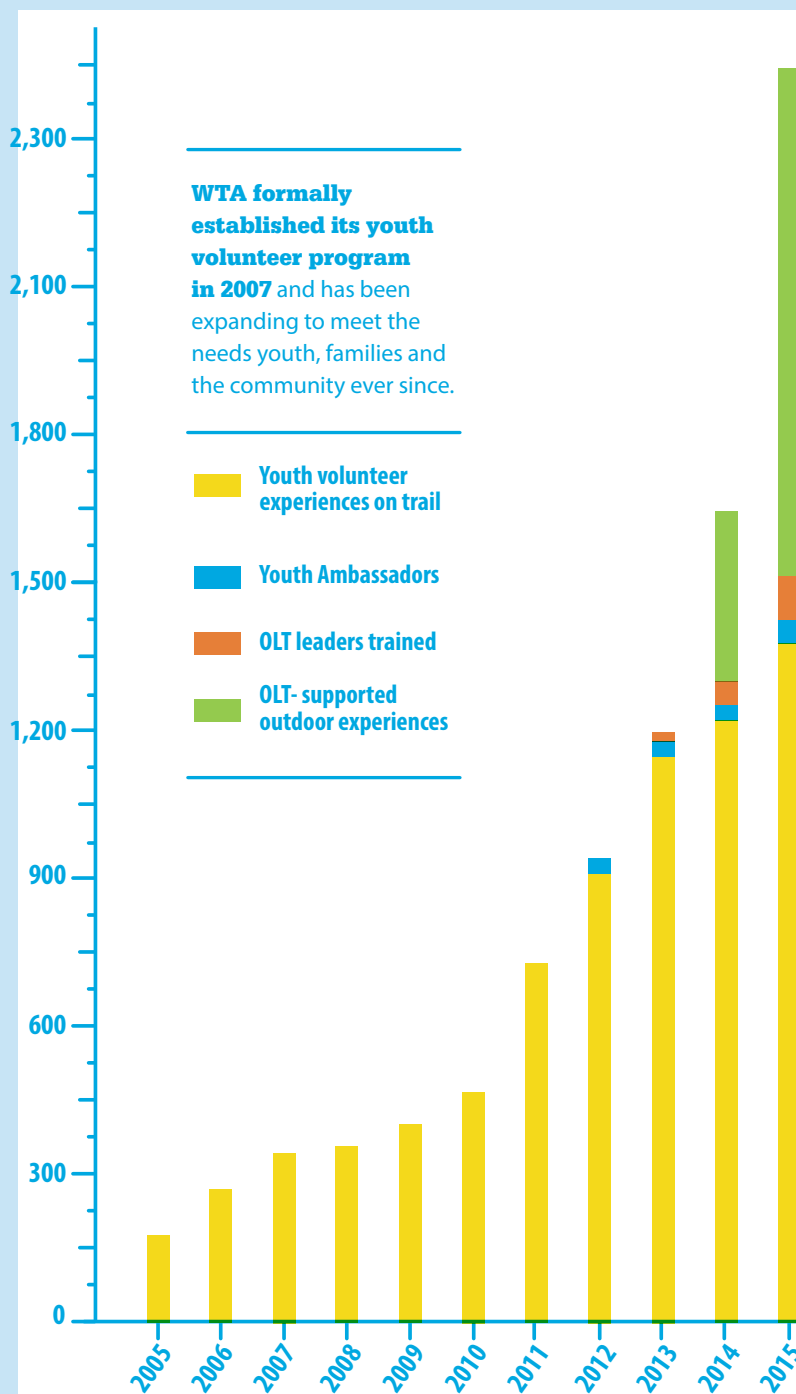
14,952
2015

again on trail, this time with an adult Backcountry Response Team improving trails near Lower Tuscohatchie Lake. She is grateful to WTA in general for helping her realize her love of the outdoors and encouraging her to pursue more time outside. "I have also come to appreciate trails much more than ever before, both as a way of providing many people with access to the outdoors, especially those who may not have otherwise have had access, but also as very impressive feats resulting from hard work and team effort."

As a result of listening to the community's needs and responding with opportunities to impact more youth across the state, WTA's youth programs have engaged and supported more than 10,250 outdoor experiences since 2005. The youth programs at WTA will continue to evolve and grow with the needs of our community. We are committed to supporting a new generation of outdoor enthusiasts and stewards. Continuing to have public lands valued and trails seen as an important part of Washington depends on connecting young people to these special places.

There are so many opportunities for an outdoor experience to transform the life and perspective of a young person. What keeps WTA focused on continuing to provide and support these opportunities is hearing about the impact of our programs from community leaders and alumni. As Silver says, "Although I still think much needs to be done in terms of making trails and the out-of-doors accessible to all, WTA has shown me the importance of having easily navigable pathways through the outdoors. The trails WTA helps build and maintain are perfect for more advanced hikers, but also for those who are figuring out nature for the first time. The way I see it, trails are a way to experience nature without overtaking nature, and in my opinion this is the perfect balance." ■

Learn more about WTA's youth programs:
wta.org/volunteer/youth.



Help inspire future stewards

Our achievements wouldn't be possible without the support of WTA members and community partners.



You can help continue this work by taking a young person for a hike and sharing your interest in the outdoors with them.



Tell a teacher or youth program professional about the Outdoor Leadership Training program. wta.org/olt



Invite a kid (age ten and up) to join you on a volunteer trail work party.

Get inspired to take your family hiking.

WTA's Families Go Hiking email newsletter has trails suggestions and tips to keep your kids engaged on your next family adventure. wta.org/family-newsletter

By Jonathan Shipley

TRAILS *to Ales*

Perfect pairings of hops and walks



“It was a wise man who invented beer,” said Plato; his student, Aristotle, said, “In all things of nature there is something marvelous.” Those ancient Greeks were on to something. A frosty pint can be the perfect post-hike elixir. We’ve rounded up a few routes where the brews are as plentiful as the views.



Photo by Steve Payne

MOUNT CONSTITUTION

The highest point on Orcas Island is a lofty perch indeed—a stone tower, built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1936, that sits atop Mount Constitution. Atop the tower, hikers meet stunning, sweeping views of the San Juan Islands, the snow-capped peaks of British Columbia’s Garibaldi Range and Washington’s iconic Mount Rainier. It’s breathtaking, as is the hike to get there (6.7 miles round trip).

HIKE HERE Begin at the base of the mountain, at Mountain Lake. Along the quiet shoreline, keep an eye out for wildlife, including kingfishers, herons, eagles, woodpeckers, ducks, deer and otters. From the western shoreline, turn up into the woods, which starts as a soft ascent into lush green forests, then becomes a 1,000-foot ascent over less than a mile, through deep timber, to the top of the mountain. Spectacular scenery awaits at the top. Looping back down, hike through lodgepole pines and steep drops.

DRINK HERE Island Hoppin’ Brewery, in nearby Eastsound, has a motto: “Beer inspired by the sea, sky, and earth of Orcas Island.” All true. Family-friendly, with a cozy taproom, seven beers on tap, and light food, the brewery is open seven days a week, year-round. It’s a favorite watering hole for tourists and locals alike. Beers include Elwha Rock IPA, floral and citrusy using Chinook, Centennial and Zeus hops, and Old Madrona Imperial Red, their classic that starts with dried fruit aromas and leads to a strong, sweet and malty beer. Their Camano Coffee Porter uses the nearby island’s brew to create a roasty, full-bodied, near-black beer.

EAT HERE Hogstone’s Wood Oven is a farm-to-table, local and organic restaurant in Eastsound. Farmer, chef and co-owner Jeff Blackinton was recently nominated for a James Beard Award. Expect exceptional wood-fired pizzas and more.

GET THERE Ferries leave several times a day to Orcas Island from Anacortes, 80 miles north of Seattle. You’ll need a car or bike to explore the island properly.

INFO visitsanjuans.com/about-the-islands/orcas-island



Photo courtesy Birdsvie Brewing Company

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN LOOKOUT

It has sweeping 360 degree-views of the North Cascades. It was a fire lookout. It has streams and meadows. It's also almost entirely overlooked by hikers. Getting to it requires a climb through deep forests, but if you want a trail nearly to yourself, get here early and start climbing.

HIKE HERE The trailhead is off Highway 20, seven miles up Cascade River Road. You'll immediately climb into the trees, which is where most of the 9.4-mile round-trip trail stays. It is a bit of a slog to get to the worthwhile views—plenty of switchbacks and steepness. Once you emerge from the forest, there's a rocky vista that may fool you into thinking that the lookout must be close—it isn't, there are more switchbacks. But you'll eventually reach the final worthwhile ascent, with its grand views, to the fire lookout that was renovated in the 1960s. It has a large deck, open to the public, from which you can gawk at the full breadth of the North Cascades—Mount Baker, Mount Shuksan, Eldorado Peak.

DRINK HERE Near the town of Concrete on Highway 20, celebrate your bird's-eye view of the Cascades with a pint of beer from Birdsvie Brewing Company, voted best brewery in Skagit County. It's family-friendly, and brewmaster Bill Voigt works hard at keeping all 10 beers on tap, including Bill's Pils, a pilsner using world-renowned German lager yeast; SasScotch Ale, full-bodied and malty but smooth enough for light beer drinkers; and Golden Pale Ale, a sweet and floral brew that uses whole-leaf local hops and local malts.

EAT HERE The fine-eating pickings are pretty slim along Highway 2, but Sedro-Woolley has arguably the best Mexican restaurant in Skagit Valley—Lorenzo's. It has such dishes as tacos el pastor and macho de carne asada burritos.

GET THERE Approaching from the west, drive Highway 20 to Marblemount; you'll pass Birdsvie on the way to the trail. Remember the brewery on your journey home. To get to the trail, turn right at Cascade River Road and drive 7 miles until you reach the trailhead.

INFO cascadeloop.com



Photo by MichelleF

SNOW LAKE

Snow Lake is the most visited lake in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. It should be—it's beautiful. After a trail with minimal elevation and not too far to go (7.2 miles round trip), the lake is translucent and tucked underneath Chair Peak, an oasis amongst a landscape of oases—forests, mountains, meadows and streams.

HIKE HERE From the Alpentail ski area parking lot, the trail gradually ascends into a sleepy forest. A mile or so in come talus slopes and rugged landscapes. Weaving up into the wilderness, you'll find true unspoiled beauty as you reach the saddle above Snow Lake. Past an old cabin, the lake is a small marvel. From here, hikers can continue on to more lakes or take a side trail to an overlook of Source Lake, the headwaters of the Snoqualmie River's south fork. Hikers should return the way they came.

DRINK HERE Dru Bru sits on the summit of Snoqualmie proper. "Beer brings people together, and Snoqualmie Pass provides the perfect setting to do just that," says head brewer Dru Ernst. The brewery's European-inspired beers include a Kolsch German-style ale that was recently awarded the 2016 Best of Craft Beer Gold Medal; Hop Session, a light ale bursting with Mosaic and Citra hops; and Schwarzbier, a German light-bodied black ale with a dominant roasty burnt caramel bite. All ages are welcome.

EAT HERE A half-hour from the summit in sleepy Snoqualmie is Woodman Lodge, which serves some of the best steaks in Western Washington and has an extensive wine list.

GET THERE From Seattle, drive east on I-90 to exit 52. Turn left (north) and continue to the end of the road to the Alpentail Ski Area parking lot.

INFO summitatenoqualmie.com



Photo by Ashley Stover

HORSE HEAVEN HILLS

At Horse Heaven Hills the desert is all around you—and yes, you're still in Washington state. It's a tree-barren landscape of windswept and stark beauty above the Yakima River Valley. You might find a slice of heaven—and wildflowers—at the place where wild mustangs used to roam.

HIKE HERE The hike is simple: go along the ridgeline for as long as you'd like and then turn back (up to 5 miles round trip). In season, flowers—such as lupine, yellow bells, Cusick's sunflower and desert parsley are plentiful. You can also find animals, including songbirds, mule deer and badgers, if you're lucky. Hikers can explore the gullies of the area as they hike west, and often go as far as Chandler Butte, a 2,050-foot butte about 3 miles from the start. It offers commanding views of the Yakima Valley's farms, the town of Benton City and the vast horizon.

DRINK HERE In nearby Prosser is Horse Heaven Hills Brewery, locally owned by Gary and Carol Vegar. Gary is the brewmaster, and their place is family-friendly, offering pints and grub for thirsty and hungry hikers. Some of the beers on tap include Buck Off IPA, Horse Heaven Wheat, Dark Cherry Stout and Heaven's Hefeweizen.

EAT HERE Wine O'Clock Wine Bar and Bistro at Prosser's Vintner's Village offers unusual dishes like blue marlin, house-ground brisket burgers and a salad with pan-seared sea scallops.

GET THERE To get to the trail, from Interstate 82 take the Benton City exit. Go south on Webber Canyon Road until McBee Grade Road. Turn right. Drive a short way down a gravel road to the parking area and trailhead.

INFO tourprosser.com

OTHER NEARBY BREWERIES

Anacortes: Rockfish Grill and Anacortes Brewery
Bellevue: Bellevue Brewing Company
Ellensburg: Iron Horse Brewery
Kennewick: Two Sisters Brewery, Ice Harbor Brewing Company

Mount Vernon: Skagit River Brewery, North Sound Brewing Company, Farmstrong Brewing Company
Richland: Shrub Steppe Smokehouse Brewery
Roslyn: Roslyn Brewing Company
Snoqualmie: Snoqualmie Brewery and Taproom
Sunnyside: Snipes Mountain Brewery

INNOVATIONS:

Tech Upgrade

A hundred years from now, history books will probably refer to our modern times as the age of innovation. From digital advancements to fabric research and development, information flow is at an all-time high, and companies are constantly seeking to create the next game-changer. Technology has made its way into just about every aspect of our lives, and the great outdoors is no exception.

CHARGERS + POWER CELLS

Your smartphone can be used as a compass, watch, camera and map, as well as provides a safety net for contacting outside help. But what happens when the battery goes dead? New technology to address this problem has been emerging. Once bulky and finicky, products that charge your devices in the backcountry have greatly improved.

Rechargeable power banks are plugged in at home to store power until you need it, whereas solar chargers rely on the sun to soak up power and distribute it. Both link up to most devices via USB cables.

EnerPlex Kickr IV: This rugged portable solar charger features a foldable and lightweight panel that collects and transfers energy at the same rate as a standard wall outlet. Most phones will have a full battery within two hours.

Digipower Re-fuel: ▶

This rechargeable power bank has two USB ports to charge multiple devices at once. With 2.1 amps of power and a 13,000mAh capacity, this handy charger can refuel devices up to five times per charge.



** It is always good to carry a paper map as a backup.*

BACKPACK ADVANCES

An uncomfortable pack makes even the most seasoned and optimistic hiker feel like a beast of burden. Pack development has come a long way, but knowing what will and won't work isn't always obvious. The individual pieces of each pack are important, but how they are actually assembled is where innovation is happening now.

New technology for this hiking staple includes groundbreaking suspension systems, frameless packs, new options for adjusting fit and removable pieces for customization. Creating a lightweight and functionally comfortable pack is still a tricky and personal process with no single solution, but today's new packs provide enough options for most of us to hike without misery.



Osprey Atmos/Aura: ▶

A new Anti-Gravity suspension system utilizes a mesh-panel back so the pack molds to your back. The increased ventilation keeps you dry and comfortable.

Granite Gear Virga 2: Frameless packs are favorites for ultralighters, but the lack of structure means other parts have to pick up the slack. This redesigned pack now features a hip belt and updated shoulder straps made from high-quality dense material that pads without being bulky.

MOBILE APPS

Have a problem in the backcountry?

There's probably an app for that. Mobile apps are one of the technological game-changers of the past decade or so. While many hikers still cringe at the idea of technology infiltrating the outdoors, the advantages are tough to argue with. Information and abilities that were once relegated to physical books or desktop computer programs are now accessible at the touch of a button.

This access allow you to have the most current and updated information with you at all times, such as directions to a trailhead, information on how to treat a snake bite or which plants are edible. Because a single smartphone has so many embedded capabilities, you're able to leave old gear that performs duplicate functions at home, like your camera or field guide.

SAS Survival Guide: A former instructor for the Special Air Service of the British Army created this app, which provides a comprehensive first-aid reference guide, among other features.

Washington Wildflowers: ▶

This app gives you access to almost 900 native wildflower species on your smartphone. Once downloaded, you don't even need WiFi to identify a new flower in the backcountry.



New products improve upon old practices and make the outdoor experience more comfortable, practical and efficient. While new technology brings plenty of convenience, it also introduces a host of new problems—which only opens the door for more innovation in the future.

TIPS FOR CHOOSING TECH PRODUCTS

Before you fully incorporate the latest outdoor technology, here are a few things to think about:

IDENTIFY PROBLEM AREAS: It's easy to be swayed by shiny new things. Don't pack gear to fix problems you don't have.

CHECK REVIEWS: Like anything else, new technology often goes through several modifications before it works like it should. Don't jump on the bandwagon until a particular piece of technology has been thoroughly vetted.

TEST IT: Experiment with new technology at home or on short day trips before relying on it for long outings.

USB RECHARGEABLE ITEMS

We've all been faced with the battery dilemma. You're heading out for an overnighter and can't remember how much power is left in your headlamp's disposable batteries. Do you risk it and hope that they have enough oomph left to get you through the trip, carry extra, in spite of the extra weight, or play it safe and replace them, while feeling guilty for trashing potential usable battery power?

New technology is fixing this three-pronged quandary, one battery-powered item at a time. Headlamps, lanterns, digital cameras, GPS units and even water filters are trading in disposable batteries for USB-rechargeable ones. For more flexibility and assurance, boost your batteries with a power bank or a solar charger. With new adaptations in this category, hopefully we can continue to reduce the amount of electronic waste.

SteriPEN: Ultra: This rechargeable water filter uses UV light to destroy bacteria, viruses and protozoa. The USB rechargeable battery is good for 50 treatments per charge.

Black Diamond Sprinter USB Headlamp:

This 130-lumen headlamp has a rear battery pack and charges in about five hours. It runs on high for six hours and on low for 42. ▼



POLARTEC SYNTHETIC DOWN

Down feathers comprise some of the warmest and lightest garments around, but they're mostly useless when wet. Traditional synthetic insulation batting mostly solves that problem, but it's heavy and lacks ventilation. The latest performance fabric manufacturers seek to solve those problems with innovative products that provide better breathability.

Polartec, known mainly for its original cozy fleece, introduced its Alpha synthetic insulation a few years ago. It was developed for the U.S. Special Operations Forces—and now more brands are picking it up. Down jackets typically require high-density woven layers to create a vapor barrier that protects the feathers, but this restricts airflow and traps moisture inside. Because the new Polartec Alpha technology has lofted knit fibers, it is more stable, and can be used with interior and exterior breathable fabrics. Innovative breathable puffs will keep hikers warmer and drier during activity.

Mammut Guye Jacket: Insulated with Polartec Alpha, this jacket uses thinner backing layers that make it lighter. Fleece along the inner arms increases mobility. Vest also available.

Outdoor Research Deviator Insulated

Hoody Jacket: This cozy synthetic down and fleece hoody won *Backpacker* magazine's 2015 Editors' Choice Award. Polartec Alpha throughout the front torso keeps your core warm. ▶



TENTS

Picking a tent is always a balancing act between weight and function.

Since it's the heaviest thing in your pack, it's tempting to choose the skimpiest model you can find; but it's also your shelter. In recent years, many well-known models have dropped more than a pound without sacrificing performance. Fabric advances have created stronger nylons and weaves that allow thinner and lighter materials that don't compromise strength. Carbon poles, while more expensive than aluminum, are also helping cut weight.

Manufacturers have also been experimenting with tent-top solar panels to merge with existing technology. Upcoming advances will likely incorporate lighting, charging capabilities and even heating in new ways, further reducing the amount of gear you have to pack.

MSR Carbon Reflex 2: Easton carbon-fiber poles and a zipper-free fly mean this quick and lightweight shelter weighs just 1 pound 13 ounces.

Big Agnes Fly Creek HV UL2 mtnGLO:

This new version of the Fly Creek mainstay features built-in LED lighting. Unique DAC pole architecture increases usable space without extra weight. ▼



By Doug Diekema

Trail Tech

While a GPS device shouldn't replace basic analog map and compass skills, it offers a handy adjunct, providing information not always readily discernable from a map, like your current location and altitude. Here we highlight a few of the options available to those wanting to add this tool to their arsenal.

4 Things to Look for in a GPS Device

Size, weight and price range will be important starting points for most people. In addition, carefully evaluate the following characteristics to be sure your needs are met.

Construction: You're using this outdoors. It should be rugged and waterproof.

Battery Life: It should get you at least through a long day hike.

Display: Color and a larger screen are handy for reading topo maps.

Maps: Do they come preloaded or do you have to purchase them separately? Are they sufficiently detailed? Most hikers will want 1:24,000-scale topographic maps on their device.

SPOT GEN3 If you and those who care about you want peace of mind, the light and compact Gen3 personal satellite tracker is worth consideration. While not useful as a navigation device, it provides a way to communicate updates to family and friends, send an SOS in the event of an emergency, and upload real-time online updates that allow others to follow your progress. Waterproof and rugged, the device will operate for more than a month on a single set of batteries with average use. The Gen3 requires a basic service plan that runs about \$150 per year. **\$150**



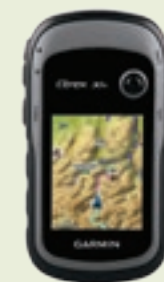
DELORME INREACH EXPLORER The inReach Explorer combines GPS receiver capabilities with satellite communication to allow text messaging of location updates to designated contacts, regular uploading of location information to allow sharing via the web, and SOS transmission in the event of an emergency. Communication functions require a monthly or annual plan. The Explorer features a barometric altimeter, digital compass and color display. A user-friendly odometer tracks trip stats, including distance traveled, average moving speed and trip time. To view routes on a topo map, the device must be paired with a tablet and phone using the Earthmate app. **\$380**



SUUNTO TRAVERSE GPS WATCH Wearing a GPS on your wrist makes it easily accessible, and access means you're more likely to use it. This watch connects to both GPS and GLONASS satellite systems for increased accuracy and acquisition speed. A digital compass and barometer provide additional functionality, and the watch will display a graph of your altitude, vertical speed, total ascent and distance. The battery lasts about four days with the GPS operating. An added plus—the device will link to your phone to allow trip viewing on a 3-D map using Suunto's Movescount app. **\$450**



GARMIN ETREX 30X One of the lightest and smallest handheld units available, the eTrex offers better battery life than most, is durable and waterproof, and provides a great set of hiking tools. The receiver tracks two satellite systems, allowing faster and more reliable acquisition when the sky is obscured by canyons, trees and clouds. A microSD card slot allows additional data storage, which you'll need—the unit does not come preloaded with detailed maps, and adding those for Washington, Oregon and California will cost another \$100. **\$300**



TOPO MAPS; MOTIONX-GPS The right app on a GPS-enabled smartphone provides much of the same functionality as a dedicated handheld device, even outside of cell range. Two of our favorites are MotionX-GPS and Topo Maps (for iPhone). Both offer free topographical map downloads for offline use. Topo Maps is our favorite for identifying location on a trail; MotionX allows route tracking and works much like a dedicated GPS device. The downside—real time tracking will drain the phone battery fairly quickly. Similar apps are available for Android users. **Topo Maps \$7.99; MotionX-GPS \$1.99**





Jerxies

It's pretty easy to find lightweight and portable options for fat and carbs on hikes. Protein? Not so much. This makes jerxies popular among hikers—dehydration transforms otherwise cumbersome chunks of meat into convenient, lightweight and shelf-stable protein bites. While beef jerky is a trail favorite, atypical varieties in this meaty category include strips made of turkey, buffalo and salmon. The best brands out there use quality meat, tantalizing seasonings and a dehydration process that removes moisture without compromising flavor and texture. Most jerxies are naturally gluten free, but check the label if you're concerned. Try one of these selections, or learn how to make your own.

PERKY JERKY—TURKEY ORIGINAL

One of the moistest jerxies tested, this Perky Jerky variety is made with turkey breast and a pepper-laced savory marinade. You won't miss red meat for a second. **Available at Whole Foods. \$5**

FIELD TRIP—ROASTED SESAME OR HONEY SPICE

Field Trip played around with tons of flavors before settling on its six best-tasting varieties. Try the Honey Spice no. 11—sweet with just a pinch of heat; the Roasted Sesame no. 15 is awesome too. **Available at fieldtripjerky.com. \$6.50**

SEABEAR—SMOKED SALMON JERKY

Produced with 100 percent wild Alaskan King salmon, this salmon jerky is a smoky change from your typical game products. You can feel good about supporting a local business; SeaBear is located in Anacortes. **Available at REI. \$6**

THE NEW PRIMAL—SPICY BEEF JERKY

This company focuses on humane treatment of its animals to ensure a quality cut of meat. Pasture-raised, grass-fed and hormone-free beef is preserved and marinated before it is smoked. The Spicy variety is just slightly hot—a nice complement to the smoky flavor. **Available at REI. \$7.50**

TANKA BITES—BUFFALO AND CRANBERRY

Fruit seems out of place in jerky—until you taste these bite-sized snacks. Chewy and flavorful, sweet dried cranberries and real buffalo make for a surprisingly complementary combination. **Available at REI. \$7**

D.I.Y. JERKY

If you've been itching to make your own jerky, check out *All Things Jerky: The Definitive Guide to Making Delicious Jerky and Dried Snack Offerings* by Andy Lightbody and Kathy Mattoon. This book is half manual and half cookbook—perfect for jerky novices. Jerky-making isn't complicated, but there are plenty of variables. Refer to the book for specific recipes and directions, but these basics will point you in the right direction.

MEAT Just about any type of meat will do, but make sure you trim the fat. While it adds flavor to steaks and roasts, it will make your jerky tough, greasy and prone to accelerated rancidity.

EQUIPMENT There are multiple options for drying your meat. A home oven will do just fine, although you may need to purchase additional racks. If you're really going to get into jerky-making, a food dehydrator is your best bet. A smoker is great if you have one. With a bit of care, your backyard BBQ grill will work too.

SEASONINGS Spice blends, marinades, brines, rubs—the possibilities for flavoring your jerxies are endless. Check the ingredient list on your favorite prepared brand and use that as inspiration. After slicing your meat, let the seasonings penetrate for 24 hours.

INSTRUCTIONS Specific directions depend on the thickness of meat and the dehydration method. Generally, meat should be heated to an internal temperature of 160°F (165°F for poultry) to kill bacteria before dehydrating at a recipe's given temperature for the remainder of the drying process—a range of four to 12 hours depending on the meat, thickness and drying method.

STORAGE Let the jerky cool completely before storing. Vacuum sealers are best for long-term storage, although ziptop baggies will work in a pinch, too. Toss in the freezer for up to a year or in the fridge or pantry for one to two months.

By Cassandra Overby



Photo by Erika Schultz

Yoga for Hikers

If you're looking for a way to improve your physical fitness for hiking—and prevent or treat injuries that are common to trekkers—Nicole Tsong's *Yoga for Hikers* is a great place to start. This beautifully written and very accessible book is an excellent guide to starting and maintaining a home yoga practice that will enhance your time on trail. Here's what you need to know to get started:

BY
NICOLE
TSONG



How often do I need to practice?

You'll get the most benefits if you do yoga two to three times a week.

How will this help me on trail?

A regular yoga practice can strengthen your cardiovascular system, core muscles and ankles, which in turn will increase your endurance for long hikes and quicken your recovery time, prevent aches and pains from carrying a backpack and prevent twisted ankles on trail. It can also help you stretch out your tight hip flexors, hamstrings and glutes after an epic hike.

Is this only for the summer hiking season?

No. A regular yoga practice can also help you stay in shape during the long and rainy winter—and get you ready for that first long hike of the summer.

What else do I have to look forward to?

There are all kinds of mental benefits to yoga that accompany the physical ones. For example, meditating can give you a similar practice of rest, quiet and solitude that you experience in the wilderness.



Tree Pose

FROM *YOGA FOR HIKERS*

A simple balancing pose, Tree focuses attention on your feet and ankles to engage and strengthen microstabilizing muscles; in addition, your inner thigh muscles lengthen, rear muscles engage, and the hip on your lifted leg will open.

- ▶ **Stand with your feet together.** Feel the four corners of your feet on the floor or mat.
- ▶ **Lift one foot to either your inner calf**, or above your knee joint to your inner thigh. If balancing is challenging, prop the foot of your bent leg against the ankle of your standing foot with the ball of your foot on the floor.
- ▶ **Pull your belly in toward your spine** to engage your core. Look at a spot on the wall.
- ▶ **Bring your palms together** at the center of your chest. Stay for five breaths.

Yoga for Hikers can be found online at MountaineersBooks.org or Amazon.com, as well as in bookstores around the Pacific Northwest.



This photo of Gnome Tarn in the Enchantments took advantage of side lighting later in the afternoon, which caused the yellow Larch to glow. The clouds created shadows on the landscape, and I took advantage of one such moment when the shadow fell on Prussik Peak, making it appear almost black.

Photo by Doug Diekema

Light It Up

Most of us are on the trail at times other than the “golden hours” around dusk and dawn, which represent the photographic ideal for lighting. But you can still get great photos if you know how to work the light you have.

1 Midday Intense overhead light at this time of day results in high contrast photos with blown-out brights, dark shadows, obscured details and textures, and washed-out colors. Landscapes look flat, rather than three-dimensional. While it's difficult to get an ideal photo under these conditions, you'll get better results by shooting earlier and later in the day or in the fall and spring, when the Northwest sun is closer to the horizon. If there are clouds in the sky, try waiting until a cloud covers the sun. Finally, use a polarizing filter to cut down on bright reflections, intensify colors and boost contrast.

2 Overcast or Shade An overcast sky creates soft, cool light. Shadows are subtle or absent. Skies are often boring. This is a great time to look for shots that highlight the details and textures of the landscape. Focus on foreground elements and minimize or eliminate the sky from the composition. Overcast conditions are ideal for photographing waterfalls, foliage and fall colors. Landscape images taken in overcast conditions may benefit from some increased warming, contrast and saturation either in-camera or post-processing. Shade offers great light for photographing people in the middle of a sunny day.

3 Golden Hour The soft, warm light that's present when the sun is low on the horizon offers ideal photographic conditions. Shadows are prominent but less harsh, often adding interest to a composition. Colors are warm and saturated, and photos have a level of detail, texture and depth that you simply can't get with overhead illumination. Early morning and late afternoon light also changes quickly, giving the landscape a different look every few minutes. Getting this light may mean hiking in the dark, but that's what a good headlamp is for!

4 Stormy Conditions We usually don't think of rainy or stormy days as offering much photographic potential, but if you've got the fortitude to put up with the weather, you may get lucky and come back with some unique and dramatic photos. Mist and fog create diffused light that gives trees and lakes an ethereal appearance. Dramatic cloud formations can add interest to a photo, and occasionally those clouds will part, allowing the sun to shine through and illuminating parts of the landscape in front of you with dramatic light.

Light Direction

Where your light is coming from dramatically impacts a photograph.

Top (e.g., midday sun): This is not ideal for photography since it dulls colors, creates harsh shadows and obscures texture, form and shape. The one exception: overhead light brings out the beautiful aquamarine color of lakes better than less direct lighting.

Front: When the light source comes from directly behind the photographer, it acts much like top lighting, creating the same challenges. In addition, it can be difficult to keep your shadow out of the scene.

Back: Shooting with light behind the subject, while challenging, can provide wonderful creative opportunities. Backlighting often puts the subject (like an animal, person or tree) in shade but surrounded by a rim of light. Translucent objects appear to glow, and their colors intensify. Backlighting is also great for creating silhouettes.

Side: Light coming from the left or right of the subject usually results in the best photos, revealing texture, form and shape, and casting pleasant shadows that give the scene a three-dimensional feel.

northwest = EXPOSURE | 2016

Washington Trails Association's annual Northwest Exposure Photo Contest is in full swing. Submit your photos in the following categories for a chance to win great prizes:

Trails**scapes:** Incredible landscapes and the trails that take you through them.

Hikers in Action: Capture the experience with hikers on trails.

Flora and Fauna: Woods, wildflowers and all things four-legged and furry.

Camp Life: Fun picnicking, camping and sitting around the campfire.

Trail Family: Hiking is fun when shared with others. Show us the faces of the people you love to hike with.

Contest ends October 19. Get more info and submit your photos at wta.org/northwestexposure.

Photo by Norm Buckley



Have you found your place in the universe yet?

Green Trails Boots on the Ground crews mapped nearly 5000 trail miles, updated 90 titles and added 11 new maps of popular areas over the last five years so you could plan, enjoy, and remember your best outdoor experiences!



GREEN TRAILS MAPS

We love these places

Photo: Andy Porter
'Camped Under the Milky Way 3'
www.andyporterimages.com

GET SPOOKED

Cool, colorful fall is the best time to trek through these nine eerily enchanting sites, from old rail tunnels to abandoned mines—you might even spot a Sasquatch



NORTHERN STATE RECREATION AREA / NORTH CASCADES

Walk the nearly 100-year-old grounds of this abandoned mental hospital's former farm site. From dilapidated old buildings to the cemetery, there are plenty of spooky spots to discover at Northern State Recreation Area.

Opened in 1912, Northern State Hospital was more than just a facility for the mentally ill. It was an entirely self-sufficient town. More than 2,000 patients populated the facility and contributed to its operations through food and clothing production. The hospital site included housing, a water reservoir, a sewage system, a lumber mill, a quarry, a steam plant, a greenhouse, canning facilities, a gymnasium, a library, a laundry, a dining room, a bakery and a 700-acre farm. Many of these buildings still stand—though some are in better shape than others.

Northern State Hospital shuttered in 1976 after the state legislature cut off funding. Today, miles of easy walking trails snake through the property. Walk among grassy fields to visit the farming facilities, a disc-golf course and a pleasant creek. Wander as much or as little as you like. Most of the gravel paths intersect and return to the entrance, creating a few small loops to explore.

Seeking a truly spine-tingling experience? Visit the slaughterhouse. This squatty building—dark and covered in graffiti on the inside—was certainly the grisliest food production facility on site. Peek in the windows, but respect park rules by staying out of the historic structures. If your heart's not pounding yet, venture into the forest to see the exceptionally creepy well house. One trip reporter warns, "There was an eerie feeling that I got as the dogs put on their brakes and didn't want to go any closer to the house." (Mthound, March 5, 2016). Zoinks! Finally, check out the old cemetery, which is the resting place of at least 1,500 people.

SEASONAL TIP: Always follow posted park rules. Remember to visit Northern State Recreation Area only during daytime hours (dawn to dusk), and keep pets leashed at all times.

DISTANCE: 5 miles // **ELEVATION GAIN:** 50 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 182 ft.
MAP: No map // **PERMIT:** No // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/northern-state-ghost-town

TRAILHEAD: From Burlington, drive about 7 miles east on Hwy. 20. Turn north on Helmick Rd. Drive about 0.3 mile. Turn left into the Northern State Recreation Area parking lot.

HIKE: Brandon Fralic // **PHOTO:** Jeff Bottman



Tubal Cain Mine and Tull Canyon

/ Olympic Peninsula, Hood Canal

Peer into a deep and dark abandoned mine after exploring the remains of a B-17 crash and old mining town.

The Tubal Cain Mine trail begins in a shaded forest of fir, hemlock and salal. In late spring, dense rhododendrons decorate the trailside with pink blooms. By fall, these blooms give way to a variety of mushrooms amid the green moss and lichens underfoot. Past Silver Creek camp and shelter, cross the creek on a log bridge. Continue, climbing into Copper Creek Canyon and Buckhorn Wilderness. At 3.2 miles, reach the Tull Canyon Trail.

From the junction, climb the Tull Canyon Trail to the visible mine. Dug for exploratory purposes, this shaft goes back only about 50 feet. The steep and rocky trail continues, gaining 850 feet in 0.7 mile.

At the fork, veer left to reach the site of the B-17 wreckage. In 1952, this B-17 bomber crashed into the ridgeline above Tull Canyon in blizzardlike conditions. Parts were scattered far and wide as the plane slid 2,000 feet down the mountain. Back at the fork, venture right to the trail's end, where the old mining town of Tull City once stood.

Return to the Tubal Cain Trail and continue, passing the rusty remains of Copper City. A large slope of tailings on the left marks the entrance to Tubal Cain Mine. A short climb up the steep hillside leads to the mine entrance and the creek that exits from its depths.

Used to extract copper and manganese, Tubal Cain Mine travels 2,800 feet into the mountain, with 1,500 feet of side shafts. By the end of World War I the mine was all but abandoned after fire and avalanche destroyed the mining operation.

SEASONAL TIP: Although exploring Tubal Cain Mine is tempting, the mine is still privately owned, and standing water and weak walls make entering unsafe.

DISTANCE: 8.6 miles // **ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,700 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 5,000 ft. // **MAP:** Green Trails 136 Tyler Peak // **PERMIT:** No
DOGS: Leashed

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

TRAILHEAD: From the Hood Canal Bridge, follow SR 104 to US 101 and continue for 18 miles. Turn left onto Palo Alto Rd and continue for 8 miles to FR 2880. Veer right and descend to the Dungeness River, passing Dungeness Forks Campground. After about 2 miles, turn left onto FR 2870 and follow for 11 miles to the trailhead on the right.

HIKE: Kelsie Donleycott // **PHOTOS:** Keith McDaniel, Bill Hinsee



“Knife Edge” of the PCT / Mount St. Helens

Hike the highest section of the Pacific Crest Trail in Washington along the very crest of the Goat Rocks, with panoramic views, rock gardens and fantastic rock formations.

The “Knife Edge” section of the PCT follows the crest of the Goat Rocks from Old Snowy to Elk Pass. The route is mostly on the very top of the ridge, with steep drop-offs. The hike can be done as a backpack from either the north or south or as a day hike from a base camp near Snowgrass Flat or Elk Pass. As Snowgrass Flat is the more accessible end, the route will be described from south to north.

From the Snowgrass trailhead, follow Snowgrass Trail 96 to the junction with the Lily Basin Trail and on up to the junction with the PCT. There are a number of nice campsites beyond the first junction. From the Snowgrass–PCT junction, follow the PCT north to the saddle above the Packwood Glacier and then across the face of Old Snowy to the beginning of the “Knife Edge.” From here, the trail follows the ups and downs of the ridge crest, sometimes on the very top, other times traversing small knobs, eventually climbing to Point 7210 before descending to Elk Pass. Along the way you’ll have panoramic views of Johnson Peak, Hawkeye Point and down the deep valley of Lake Creek to Mount Rainier on one side and the east face of Old Snowy, Tieton Peak and the rugged spires of Mount Curtis Gilbert on the other; you’ll also pass rock gardens and fantastically shaped outcroppings. Be sure to carry plenty of water, as the route is often dry beyond the Snowgrass–PCT junction.

TRAIL NOTE: This is a very dangerous section of the PCT due to exposure to the elements. Do not attempt it in bad weather. Hikers have died of hypothermia up here.

DISTANCE: Approx. 18.5 miles from Snowgrass trailhead; approx. 4 miles from Snowgrass–PCT Junction // **ELEVATION GAIN:** Approx. 2,600 ft. from Snowgrass trailhead; 800 ft. from Snowgrass–PCT Junction // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 7,210 ft. // **MAP:** Green Trails 334 Blue Lake, 335 Walupt Lake, and 303 White Pass // **PERMIT:** Northwest Forest Pass // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/old-snowy-mountain-elk-pass

TRAILHEAD: Drive Hwy. 12 to Johnson Creek Rd. (FR 21), 2 miles south of Packwood. After 15.7 miles, turn left on FR 2150 (signed Chambers Lake) and then right on Rd. 405 to the Snowgrass trailhead.

HIKE: David Hagen // **PHOTO:** David Hagen

“

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—SARAH S., WTA MEMBER

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For more information, visit wta.org/workplace.

Photos by John Tomlin, Dale Blair



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North Fork Sauk River Trail / North Cascades

Deep in lush old-growth forest, the North Fork Sauk River Trail makes for the perfect eerie day hike, or an even spookier overnighter.

A long drive to an isolated trailhead deep in the mountains, towering old-growth trees shrouded in misty fog, a lonely, weathered shelter draped in moss—these are the things scary stories are made of, and you'll find them all along the North Fork Sauk River Trail.

The length of the trail generally parallels its namesake river, which is always within earshot but not frequently within sight; the massive cedar and Douglas-fir trees lining the trail do a good job of obstructing the river and mountain views. This trail is all about the trees, though, and with your attention focused on the ancient forest canopy, you won't miss the panoramic vistas one bit.

Starting from a decent-sized parking area, the trail quickly passes a junction leading to Red Mountain and enters the Glacier Peak Wilderness. After gently climbing for 2 miles, the junction with Pilot Ridge Trail is reached. This is a good spot to take a break and enjoy some river views before continuing on the North Fork Sauk Trail. In 2 more miles, cross Red Creek on a sturdy, new bridge. Another 1.5 miles of fairly level tread brings you to Mackinaw Shelter.

Surrounded by campsites with easy access to the river and a nearby backcountry toilet, the shelter makes an ideal lunch spot and turnaround point for day hikers. However, this is also the perfect backdrop for the bravest of backpackers to spend the night under the stars, sharing frightening tales about the ghosts who haunt the shelter and the creatures that lurk in the deep, dark woods.

SEASONAL TIP: A short side trip to North Fork Sauk Falls is a worthy detour on your way to or from the trailhead. Find parking for the falls right alongside FR 49.

DISTANCE: 11 miles // **ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,000 ft.
ELEVATION PEAK: 2,800 ft. // **MAP:** Green Trails 111
Sloan Peak and 112 Glacier Peak // **PERMIT:** Northwest
Forest Pass // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/north-fork-sauk-river

TRAILHEAD: Drive the Mountain Loop Highway 16 miles south of Darrington or 26.2 miles east of Verlot to FR 49. Turn east on FR 49 and continue for 6.4 miles to a sign for the North Fork Sauk parking lot.

HIKE: Lindsay Leffelman

Suiattle River Trail / Glacier Peak Wilderness

The trail goes deep into a very dense forest, allowing only small glimpses of sunlight, can sometimes give you an uneasy feeling.

This trailhead starts at the end of the 23.5-mile-long dirt-and-gravel Suiattle River Road, tucked in the Glacier Peak Wilderness, one of the most remote areas of Washington state. You realize you are deep in the woods and far away from any civilization early on. This trail runs along the Suiattle River for most of its 6.5 miles until it connects with the Pacific Crest Trail just past the Canyon Creek Bridge. Near this bridge is the first authorized camping area. This is a perfect stop for people wanting to hike farther into Glacier Peak—to Miner Ridge Lookout and Image Lake, Lyman Lake or Lake Chelan. This trail has a gradual climb of 900 feet along the entire length until it meets up with the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). If you believe in Bigfoot, this would be the place to come find one. You can't see very far in front of you since the forest canopy is very thick. The moss grows in abundance all along the trail, dangling down from the trees along with tree fungus that looks alive, giving you the feeling that something is watching you. You can hear the sound of the Suiattle River along large portions of this trail, which drowns out any other noise you might hear to warn you of impending danger. You can often see the fog moving through the valley and engulfing you in a thick layer that prevents you from seeing much of anything past your own face. At other times, the trail can go from light to dark quickly, and trees look like they're disappearing into light or another dimension. If you are looking for a trail that gets you deep into the woods where you can find solitude, this is the trail for you.

SEASONAL TIP: In summer, camp at Canyon Creek (6.5 miles), in then continue on the PCT where it hooks up with Miners Ridge Trail 785 for a climb up to the lookout and Image Lake—the views are to die for.

DISTANCE: 13.2 miles // **ELEVATION GAIN:** 900 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 2,500 ft.
MAP: Green Trails 112 Glacier Peak // **PERMIT:** Northwest Forest Pass
DOGS: Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/suiattle-river-trail

TRAILHEAD: From I-5, take Hwy. 530 out of Arlington, following it through Darrington until you reach FR 26, which is the Suiattle River Rd. Follow this road for 23.5 miles, until it ends at the trailhead parking lot.

HIKE: Mike Morrison // **PHOTO:** Mike Morrison

Goat Mountain / Mount St. Helens

Mount St. Helens's eruptive past and rumors of Sasquatch sightings make this a perfectly spooky place for a Halloween-time hike.

Mount St. Helens is an eerie place, considering its dramatic history. The magnificent eruption of 1980 obliterated the top 1,000 feet of the mountain and spewed hot ash and lava across the surrounding valleys, killing everything in its wake. It can be a creepy experience to think about what was lost—and about the Sasquatch sightings that have been recorded here—but take comfort in the fact that the landscape is beginning to heal, with awesome numbers of wildflowers and lush grasses, as life comes back to the scene.

The trail begins in the forest near Ryan Lake and is a steep switch-backing ascent up to the ridge of Goat Mountain, gaining about 1,500 feet within 2.5 miles. This is the most difficult portion of the hike; the remainder of the trail will be a walk on the south-facing side of the ridge. Once you crest the ridge, the majestic views are there to soak up—Mount Rainier dominates your vision to the north, and Mount St. Helens takes your breath away to the south. You'll also be able to see Mount Adams to the east along the trail, with Mount Hood peeking out in the far distance.

At about 4 miles, as you are heading west on the ridge, you'll switch over from the southern side to the northern side of the ridge. You can turn around anywhere along here. If you want to continue, you can drop down to Deadmans Lake. There is plenty to see that doesn't require the additional leg to the lake, however; looking north there are many lakelets that oftentimes have elk gathered around them. You can also take in the intense demarcation between the blast zone and the unaffected lands, and ponder what it must have been like to be here during that event.

TRAIL NOTE: Road access can be an issue at this time of year. Check with the Gifford Pinchot National Forest to see if it is open from the north when you go.

DISTANCE: 6 miles // **ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,600 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 5,025 ft. // **MAP:** Green Trails 3325 Mount St. Helens **PERMIT:** Northwest Forest Pass // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/goat-mountain-1

TRAILHEAD: From Randle, drive 8 miles south on FR 25. Just after crossing the Cispus River, turn right onto FR Road 26 (paved). Continue 12 miles until a junction with FR 2612 and turn right. Continue 0.4 mile to the trailhead.

HIKE: Kristen Sapowicz



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Snoqualmie Tunnel / Snoqualmie Pass

Complete with dripping walls, echoing voices, misty air and a chilly breeze, this short trek through a piece of railroading history makes for the perfect Halloween hike.

From the trailhead, walk the gravel path the short distance to the tunnel entrance. The wide, graveled railroad grade is flat and it's easy for large groups and bikers to share the trail. At the entrance, note the wooden doors used to seal the tunnel between trains during the winter months. In the past, these were used to minimize the ice that would form in the tunnel and they still are. The tunnel closes every year from November 1 to May 1, to prevent ice-related injuries. The tunnel is chilly and dark, so put on your jacket and headlamp before you plunge into the darkness.

The faint pinpoint of light ahead is the other end of the tunnel, and you'll spend the next hour or so watching it get bigger and brighter. Once you emerge from the tunnel, be sure to linger and take in the decent views of nearby Granite Mountain, Denny Mountain, Bandera Mountain and McClellan Butte. As you turn around, note the second arched entrance that many say was made in preparation for a parallel tunnel that was never built. Because of the slight curve at the beginning of the tunnel, you will not have light to guide you for most of the way, making the return trip a little spookier.

This is a great hike for the whole family. There's no elevation gain, the trail is wide enough for everyone to share and it works well on a rainy autumn day. If you're looking to minimize the number of folks you share the trail with, we recommend you head out to the tunnel earlier in the day, as it can become crowded later. Remember to bring a strong flashlight or head lamp and enough layers to keep you warm.

SEASONAL TIP: The tunnel closes the day after Halloween.

DISTANCE: 5 miles // **ELEVATION GAIN:** None // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 2,500 ft.
MAP: Green Trails 207 Snoqualmie Pass // **PERMIT:** Discover Pass // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: hikingwithmybrother.com/2012/10/snoqualmie-tunnel-via-iron-horse-trail.html

TRAILHEAD: To get there, take I-90 to exit 54 and head right. Almost immediately, take a left onto SR 906, following the signs to Snoqualmie Tunnel. In about a half mile, take a right just before the highway maintenance area. In a few hundred feet, turn right into the trailhead parking lot.

HIKE: Nathan and Jer Barnes // **PHOTO:** Doug Goodman

Red Bluff

Northeast Washington



Use the buddy system when exploring this trail, which begins in golden aspen, birch and cottonwood but crosses into old-growth cedar groves, where something may be lurking in the shadows.

The big mistake of my first backpack on the Red Bluff Trail was in the book selection: Edgar Allen Poe. It might be that my mind was playing tricks on me after such dark reading material, or it could be that the dark forest conceals mysteries. The feeling of being watched never left my hiking partner and me on that first visit, and subsequent visits continued to give me a spooky feeling. The Bigfoot Field Research Organization website holds potential clues—where all reported sightings for Pend Oreille County are within a few miles of this very trail. What's a few miles to Bigfoot?

For those looking for the logical explanation rather than the fantastic, I'll admit the probable cause of my unease was more ursine and less mythical. Even on that first trip, before breaking out the Poe around the campfire, my friend and I noted numerous tall trees with unmistakable scratch marks high up their trunks. This is all the more reason to keep a clean camp at Red Bluff, where both black bears and grizzly bears call the surrounding forest home. Do the cooking 200 feet from tents when backpacking here, and store food safely aloft or in a bear canister. A good campsite can be found near where the trail crosses North Fork Sullivan Creek, about half a mile before the intersection with the North Fork and Halliday Trails. Halliday provides options for additional exploration, but the North Fork Trail is officially closed until work is complete on a reroute around a failed bridge.

SEASONAL TIP: Red Bluff can be a popular hunting area, so wear orange when hiking here in the fall.

DISTANCE: 8 miles // **ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,000 ft.
ELEVATION PEAK: 3,600 ft. // **MAP:** Colville National Forest // **PERMIT:** No // **DOGS:** Leashed

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

TRAILHEAD: Drive SR 31 north. Just before Lone, turn east on Sullivan Lake Rd. Pass Sullivan Lake and the ranger office, continue north approximately 2 miles, and watch for the marked trailhead on the east side of the road. The small parking lot is just off the pavement.

HIKE: Holly Weiler



Lava Canyon / Mount St. Helens

Lava Canyon will get your blood flowing with its cliff-top route, high suspension bridge and 30-foot steel ladder. Descend into this dramatic chasm and be awed by a half-dozen breathtaking waterfalls and fascinating landforms. This trail is not for children nor those afraid of heights.

Start on a paved path, passing a couple of overlooks of the canyon. At 0.4 mile, the pavement ends at a junction. You'll be returning on the bridge to the right—so continue straight, immediately coming to a thundering waterfall. Now hike along the edge of the canyon, admiring roiling waters through polished rock flanked by cliffs of columnar andesite and basalt.

At 0.6 mile, come to another junction. You'll cross the airy suspension bridge to the right after you head into, and return from, the lower reaches of the canyon. Now follow an exposed path along the canyon wall above a crashing waterfall. Use extreme caution. A fixed cable here provides some stability. Reach a ledge above a magnificent 200-foot waterfall—then switchback through big trees that survived the lahar.

After passing beneath an overhanging ledge, reach the top of a 30-foot steel ladder. Carefully clutch its rungs and work your way down into the belly of the canyon. Come to a must-do 0.2 mile side trip to the top of "The Ship". From this massive lava outcrop, gaze up the canyon to waterfalls and columnar cliffs. Then retrace your steps to the main trail and continue right, coming to a junction with the Smith Creek Trail. Turn right and walk a short distance to a big steel bridge spanning the Muddy River. The trail continues 1.2 miles, but this is a good place to turn around.

Carefully retrace your way 1.1 miles to the loop junction at the suspension bridge. Then go left, crossing the impressive 125-foot-long bridge high above the churning river. Shortly afterward, recross the river on a sturdy steel bridge, before coming to a familiar junction. Head left on the paved path, returning to your start.

SEASONAL TIP: Lava Canyon is most stunning after periods of heavy rainfall.

DISTANCE: 3.9 miles // **ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,085 ft.
ELEVATION PEAK: 2,840 ft. // **MAP:** Green Trails 332S
 Mount St. Helens // **PERMIT:** Northwest Forest Pass or
 Interagency Pass // **DOGS:** Not permitted

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/lava-canyon and *Day Hiking Mount St. Helens* (Mountaineers Books)

TRAILHEAD: From Woodland, follow SR 503 east for 29 miles, to Cougar. Then continue east on SR 503 (which becomes FR 90) for 7.0 miles, turning left onto FR 83. Follow for 11.4 miles to the trailhead.

HIKE: Craig Romano // **PHOTO:** Craig Romano

By Kim Brown

LONG-DISTANCE DIARIES

Tracing historic treks in hikers' own words

Today, we follow hikers on long-distance trails via their personal blogs, where they post pictures and stories almost every day that they're on the trail. In low-tech days, such instant gratification wasn't possible. People might hear from a thru-hiker when they picked up a cache every one or two weeks or only upon their return when they would share their adventures through printed letters and home slide shows. If these hikers were lucky, a publication would print their journals.

During the summer of 1975, Chuck Long and Brian Kingsbury thru hiked the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and mailed journals to *Signpost*, written by Long, about every two weeks. *Signpost* readers eagerly awaited reading about their adventures, mistakes, rain, sleet, wet gear—and cravings for Pringles:

"Brian flagged down a logging truck driver who told us the rerouted Crest trail was 'up there,' pointing straight uphill through some logging slash. So after a half hour of fighting the debris we reached the top of the mountain. There was no trail. We asked a logger where the trail was. He said, 'Down there,' pointing to the very road we once were on!"

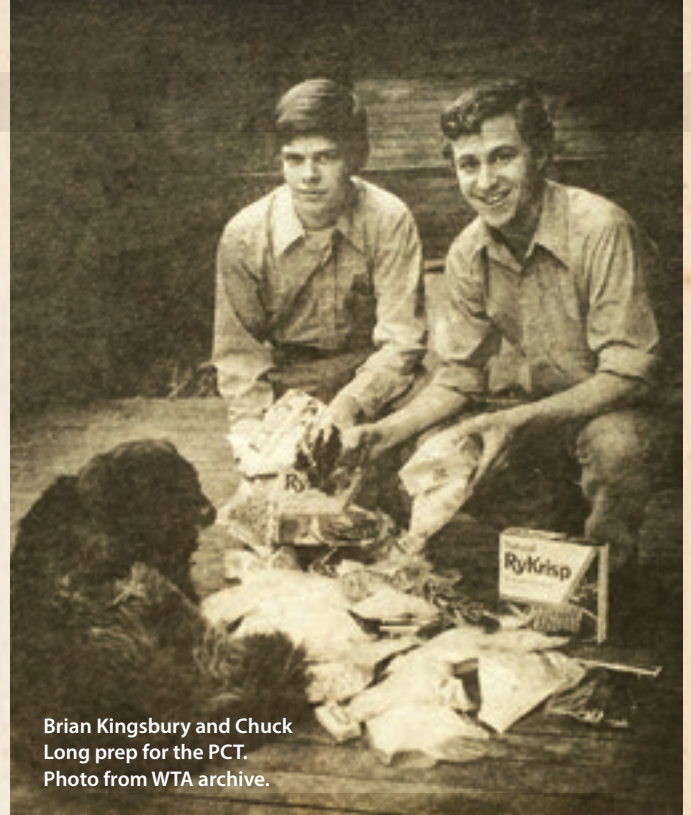
"About the only callouses I'll be getting today will be on what is under the seat of my pants. It rained all last night as we lay inside our tent ... Brian and I together packed in seven *Christian Science Monitor* magazines and we've been reading them all morning. Each time we finish reading one of the *Monitors*, we'll spread it out on the tent floor under our foam pads to soak up the water that continues to seep through the tent floor ..."

"At Lake Sally Ann, I took a rest break and during that break I tried to rewind the film in my camera back into the cassette, but it broke. So I got out my sleeping bag and used it as a portable darkroom as I rewound the film by hand ..."

In 1977, *Signpost* staffer Janet Garner and her partner Rex Bakel were the first to hike the entire proposed Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail (PNT). *Signpost* published their journal in a three-part series—*Backpacker* magazine later published an edited version—detailing their trail adventures, including kindness by locals and fellow hikers, route confusion and miles of road walking:

"People's reactions to us ... were interesting and often most entertaining. ... One excited little boy asked if we'd been out searching for rubies and gold!"

"Once on the docks (Ross Lake) we found the closest thing to a grocery was the Coke machine. There was no cafe, no laundry, no shower—not even a place to sleep. Disappointed, we stepped into the office and inquired about our [cache]. A puzzled look came over his face and he said he didn't know anything about a box for hikers ... The monsoons came that night and continued throughout our stay in the Park (North Cascades)."



Brian Kingsbury and Chuck Long prep for the PCT.
Photo from WTA archive.

In 1980, *Signposter* John Stout participated in a promotional 4,500-mile cross-nation trek to raise awareness about the benefits of hiking, HikaNation. At 69, he was the oldest to complete the 4,000-plus-mile route from California to Delaware, and led the way up the Capitol steps in Washington, D.C. Stout's daily journals appeared in each issue of *Signpost*:

"Deep freeze in Missouri! We bivouac in a barn between the bales of hay. I put my glasses in my shoe to keep them from being lost in the barn. In the morning the lenses are covered on both side with dirty ice. I blow on the lenses to melt the ice—the lenses expand but the frame does not and snaps ..."

"Yesterday I met a father and son who were enthralled with the HikaNation. They spent a long weekend driving down from Connecticut just to walk a few miles and talk with some of our hikers."

"Nine months down the trail, at 3:30 in the morning, I awake feeling sentimental and longing for my green Northwest. I wonder what crazy idea is this, sleeping on the frozen Missouri ground on a thin pad in January ... In the morning I step out on the road and feel the same magnetic pull as always drawing me eastward ..."

In each case *Signpost*ers followed their fellow hikers' adventures—much like we follow our favorite trip reporters today. ■



Trail Family

PHOTO BY NATHANAEL MEBRAHTOM



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