

Summer 24

# Washington Trails

A Publication of Washington Trails Association • [wta.org](http://wta.org)

**Mend before you  
spend — fixes  
for common gear  
problems**

**How the future  
of public lands is  
in hikers' hands**

## How we hike **matters**

**Building a better future for trails, one hiker at a time**

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# Washington Trails

A Publication of Washington Trails Association

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# A Part of Something Bigger

**W**ith the start of spring, I always feel a renewed sense of energy and connection to the outdoors. The longer days and spring flowers motivate me to get outside more, and every time I do, I'm reminded how the outdoors helps bring people together and connects us to something bigger than ourselves.

Lately, I've been going on more walks with my family, reconnecting with colleagues on trail work parties and getting out with partner organizations and other groups passionate about the outdoors. Each person I meet is one point of connection within a much bigger whole: generations of hikers and outdoor



Left to right: Jaime, Jill, Karen and Elizabeth. Front: Charlie Lieu, former WTA board member.

enthusiasts who have come together to help others get outside, steward and advocate for trails and public lands.

I had one particularly nice example of this recently when I ran into my three WTA predecessors at a Mountaineers event: Jill Simmons, Karen Daubert and Elizabeth Lunney. Each held the role I have now, and each worked to strengthen the hiking community and bring the power and beauty of the outdoors to more people. We had a blast reconnecting and reminiscing, and I left feeling so supported and honored to be carrying on that tradition.

Together, we represent 25 years of WTA leadership, a drop in the ocean compared to the timescales our landscapes inhabit, or the lineages of the Native Americans who have been stewarding these lands since time immemorial. But one beautiful thing about the outdoors is that we are all part of this bigger whole. It doesn't matter whether you come from a long line of outdoor enthusiasts or you just discovered your love of the outdoors recently — you are part of the present and future of trails.

So however you choose to get outside, I hope you find joy, peace and inspiration. And I hope you too are reminded that we are each a part of something greater and that what we do today — for trails and for each other — can contribute to that long tradition of people coming together to care for trails and ensure they remain for generations to come.

**Jaime Loucky** | Chief executive officer | [jaimel@wta.org](mailto:jaimel@wta.org)

Photo by Charlie Lieu

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## Personal joy, collective responsibility

**As the hiking community grows, we have the potential to be an incredible force for good. WTA's advocacy director outlines a way forward through the challenges ahead.**



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A little pre-planning goes a long way to reducing your plastic consumption while hiking, backpacking or camping.

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Ooey. Gooley. S'mores-y. Washington hikers' favorite s'mores hacks.



#### **On the cover**

**Jason Gerend** took this photo of a dear friend while hiking through the grasslands near Horse Lake Reserve, near Wenatchee.



#### **Four summer favorites**

Hiking writer Craig Romano visits trails all across the Northwest. Here are a few spots he finds himself visiting again and again.

Photos by Andrea Imler, Craig Romano

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## POWERED BY YOU

**Washington Trails Association is a nonprofit supported by a community of hikers like you.** By mobilizing hikers to be explorers, stewards and champions for trails and public lands, together, we will ensure that there are trails for everyone, forever.

**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.

### Summer 2024 | Volume 59, Issue 2

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## Our Best Selves

**I**n about a month, I'm going to be taking a 3-month break from my job here at WTA. It's a perk of working at WTA that, after 7 years, employees are able to take a sabbatical. I'm looking forward to the extra time to explore. I have a couple of big backpacking trips planned and a running list of shorter trips I've been dreaming about for years. While I will definitely not finish my to-hike list, I hope to make a good dent in it.

I am extremely grateful for this time, and I appreciate that WTA cares about its employees and their well-being. When people ask me about my work, I always tell them that WTA is a humane place to work. We recognize that, if our employees are going to show up as their best selves, they need room to care for their mental and physical health.

While I'm on break, I am legitimately going to miss my work. I'm going to miss my coworkers, too. WTA folks are a joy. I will come back, however, with renewed energy and excitement to work on new challenges and tell new stories.

This sabbatical is really going to help me show up as my best self at work. And, truly, WTA already helps me show up as my best self on trail. Even before I worked here, WTA's resources helped me learn how to be a more responsible, competent and confident hiker. And that work, multiplied across all of the hikers we reach, really makes a difference.

This magazine includes stories that touch on that — individually and collectively, hikers can make a difference for trails. If you reduce your waste when you're backpacking (page 10), you're doing your small part to reduce negative environmental impacts. When you hike with consideration for the larger community (page 16), you're helping to create trails for everyone. We also know you need to recharge your own batteries, so we're sharing Craig Romano's favorite vacation spots (page 34), as well as a great batch of hiking recommendations (page 44). And if you're looking to take your hiking — or your care for trails — to the next level, we can help with that, too (page 12).

I wish you all a glorious summer. I hope you find plenty of peace out on trail. I will see you back here for the winter issue!

**Jessi Loerch** | Washington Trails editor | [jessi@wta.org](mailto:jessi@wta.org)

# Moments with Miles

Hike-a-Thon's spokesmarmot chats with WTA staff about his favorite event of the year

**Every August**, trail lovers across the state can celebrate their love of being outdoors. Hike-a-Thon, an annual community fundraising event, encourages hikers to hike, share stories of their adventures and raise funds that directly support trails in Washington. We caught up with Hike-a-Thon's official spokesmarmot, Miles, on the trail recently to hear what he's most excited about for the 2024 event.

**Q: How was your winter nap, Miles?**

**A:** <Stretches and smacks lips> Not bad, not bad. Could've used another few weeks, but I was just so excited to get ready for Hike-a-Thon that I couldn't sleep another minute!

**Q: Whew, sounds like being the spokesmarmot for Hike-a-Thon is a pretty tiring job! What makes you keep coming back year after year?**

**A:** Well, the snacks I eat on trail during Hike-a-Thon are always amazing — and I'm pretty hungry right now ... I haven't eaten in months! In fact, give me a sec, just gotta grab that lichen right there. <chews> Much better!

**Q: OK, so besides the snacks, what makes Hike-a-Thon special?**

**A:** So many things! I love meeting the amazing people who hit the trail to raise money for WTA. Their hard work means that WTA can continue to provide incredible resources for hikers, build and maintain trails all over the state and advocate for trails and the critical role they play in the community. Oh, and there are PRIZES! I could use some WTA gear to spruce up my burrow and to help me on trail!

**Q: What's your favorite prize?**

**A:** I just love the Hike-a-Thon T-shirts so much! When you're born with



cryptic coloration, you love anything that helps you stand out. Plus, it's fun to spot other Hike-a-Thoners and know you're part of a community that's making sure there will always be trails for everyone, forever.

**Q: Wow, it sounds like Hike-a-Thon is pretty darn amazing! Do you need to hike on mountains in Washington or can you hike anywhere?**

**A:** See, that's the wonderful thing about Hike-a-Thon. You can participate in whatever way works best for you. Sneak in a quick visit to a local park while you run errands or get a few miles at the Grand Canyon on a family vacation. I think the trails in Washington are just the best, but I might be biased.

**Q: So, if you can hike anywhere for Hike-a-Thon, does that mean that anyone can join and donate?**

**A:** Sure does! Signing up for Hike-a-Thon is free and easy, so why not do it? If you're social — like a marmot — then you can even join a team and participate with friends or family. Anyone who donates to Hike-a-Thon will become a WTA member and support an incredible organization that helps people spend

## Hike-a-Thon at a glance

- Register starting on July 1.
- Hike from Aug. 1 to 31.
- Share your trail stories and connect with other hiking enthusiasts in the Hike-a-Thon Facebook group, [go.wta.org/fb-hike-a-thon](https://go.wta.org/fb-hike-a-thon).
- Earn prizes and celebrate your achievements.
- To register, or for more information, visit [wta.org/hikeathon](https://wta.org/hikeathon).

time outdoors. I've got groundhogs in Georgia and woodchucks in Wisconsin who donate to my Hike-a-Thon page, and they all love getting the WTA magazine! I think they might use it in their dens for bedding when they're done reading it, but that's OK — it's recycling.

Now if you don't mind, it's been great chatting but I REALLY need to go grab some more snacks. I've got a lot of eating to do before Hike-a-Thon kicks off on Aug. 1. **See you on trail, and don't forget to sign up for Hike-a-Thon!**

Photo by Jenny Stuart

# Share a story

## Memorable moments from WTA's online community



**I've been into photography** since I was young, but moving to Washington certainly kicked things up a notch. I like that photography has a technical and creative side, and I enjoy the challenge of capturing these places that we all love. Also, the photos are a great way to reminisce about past adventures.

As soon as I moved to Washington, WTA trail work was on my radar as something I would probably enjoy doing. I figured it would be a good way

to meet some people and get to know the area. The first person I met here had recently started going to work parties and highly recommended it. I signed up, and after a day on Oyster Dome with a wonderful and diverse group of like-minded people, I was sold! Even after a couple seasons of professional trail work, I kept coming back for more fun with WTA.

Nothing beats a sunny day up at Heather Meadows! On this work party,

I knew this would be a good photo opportunity.

I like everything about spending time on trail. It's "forest bathing," observing flora and fauna, and getting some much-needed exercise. It's fun conversations, an excuse to explore new places as well as old favorites and the challenge of trying to capture them with photography.

— **Derek Posey**, @derekposey

Join us online!



# A Gift That Reaches Across Generations

By Adam Steinberg

When Janice Neumiller first called Washington Trails Association, she was hoping to learn more about how our work makes a difference for trails and for people who love the outdoors. Her parents, who loved spending time outside, had passed and she was looking for a way to honor their memory. That conversation ultimately led to a generous \$1 million gift that honors her parents and will make an incredible difference on Washington trails for many years to come.

Janice's parents — Al and Beulah Hilstrom — loved the outdoors. When the weather was right, you could often find Al enjoying Washington's calm lake waters while fishing. And for Beulah, hiking was more than a pastime; it was where she found her community. For 37 years, Beulah was a beloved member of the Renton Women's Hiking Club and Renton Rovers, exploring all across the state. Even in winter, she was regularly outside, cross-country skiing and adventuring on low-elevation trails.

Janice often joined her mom on trips with the Renton Women's Hiking Club and was amazed by their ability to continue trekking well into their 70s and 80s. On one hike, Beulah and her friends pointed their hiking poles at every flower and called out its name. Janice found they knew the names of over a hundred flowers. That made her realize that, despite all her time in nature, there's always more to learn. Janice will never forget this gift that her mother passed on to her.

Al and Beulah imparted a love of the outdoors to their three children: Janice, Keith and Roger. After Al and



Janice Neumiller (above, center) honored her parents, Beulah and Al Hilstrom (below), with a generous gift to WTA. WTA volunteer Jim Scrafford (above, left) and Jaime Loucky, WTA's CEO, are holding a crosscut saw engraved with Al and Beulah's names.

Beulah passed, their children couldn't think of a better way to honor them than by donating their estate to the causes Al and Beulah held most dear. Each sibling chose one cause that symbolized the values their parents embodied. As Janice learned more about WTA, she knew she'd found a way for her parents to leave an enduring legacy in the outdoors that they loved so much.

The transformative impact of this gift is being leveraged over the course of 5 years. A gift of this magnitude provides stability for the organization and provides space for inventive thinking around how WTA can best support hikers and trails across Washington. Whether it's expanding our professional backcountry Lost Trails Found crews, increasing Outdoor Leadership Training workshops or building out new features for our Hiking Guide, WTA is able to use this gift where it is needed most.

Janice's choice to honor her parents' legacy through this gift is an act of incredible generosity that will have a huge impact on the Washington hiking community. WTA's staff, board and community are grateful for the trust in our organization to steward this important gift.



To honor their impact, WTA volunteer Jim Scrafford engraved Al and Beulah's names into one of our beloved crosscut saws. These tools take special skill to wield and last for decades. In 2024, this saw will have a major ripple effect. It will be used to clear downed trees throughout the Puget Sound and the Central Cascades. But it will also be used as a training tool during all of our sawyer certifications throughout the state, empowering the next generation of expert sawyers.

As a result of their gift and this saw, Al and Beulah's legacy will touch hundreds of trails for many years, helping sustain an accessible trail system — now and for the next generation.

Photo by Adam Steinberg and courtesy Janice Neumiller

# Highlights

A quick look at what WTA is accomplishing on trails around the state

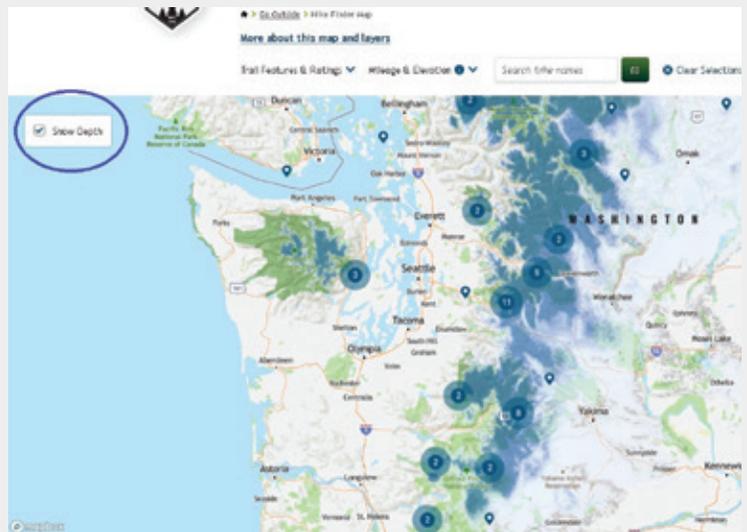


## Leaders & Partners

In March, WTA's Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) cohort and WTA staff joined Washington state Sen. T'wina Nobles (back, left) and Washington State Parks DEI director Janette Chien (front, right), on a hike at Dash Point State Park. Sen. Nobles championed funding for ELP, which is a partnership between Washington State Parks and WTA, in the state's 2023–2025 operating budget. ELP is a 14-week program designed for a diverse cohort of individuals who want to form an inclusive community and build leadership skills to support future career interests in natural-resource stewardship and outdoor recreation.

## New Snow Depth Info on Hike Finder Map

Figuring out where to expect snow in the high country is tricky in spring and well into summer. That's why we added a snow depth layer to our Hike Finder Map in February. The new layer gives trail users a sense of how much snow to expect as they make hiking plans. The new layer joins our air quality (AQI) and wildfire layers, which are handy for planning in summer and fall. Many of you have been asking us for a layer like this for years, and we're thrilled to deliver it this year, with the help from some of our incredible volunteers and member supporters. Have an idea to improve our website or mobile app? Tell us at [website@wta.org](mailto:website@wta.org).



### WTA Pro Tips for Your Next Hike

WTA's Anna Roth was featured on the Washington State Hiking Podcast, hosted by Jennie Thwing Flaming and guidebook author and Washington Trails magazine contributor Craig Romano. In this episode, Anna talks about everything from our Hiking Guide and Trailblazer app to hiker how-tos that can help you choose and prepare for trails and hikes that fit your hiking style. [go.wta.org/hiking-podcast](https://go.wta.org/hiking-podcast).

### How You Hike Matters

Join WTA in celebrating Washington Trails Day on June 22! We will be talking to hikers at trailheads around the state. And we are encouraging hikers to take a pledge to stay on trail this summer — and beyond. When we stay on trail, we protect the environment, help trails last longer and keep trails thriving for fellow hikers. Learn how and take our pledge at [wta.org/watrailday](https://wta.org/watrailday).

NOTEWORTHY

Photo by Owen Rowe / Washington State Parks



TRAIL SMARTS

# How To Reduce Your Waste on Trail

By Marissa Wall

I'm sure that many of us have had the **experience**, while still glowing from a glorious backpacking or hiking trip, of being confronted with a pile of waste.

I spent last summer working on WTA's Lost Trails Found crew, and after trips I often found myself clearing out my pack and wondering, "How could this be better? How can I create less waste on trail?"

Doing trail work has given me many opportunities to practice reducing waste. I've found that an added benefit is that my food has been healthy and delicious while saving me money! Here are my top tips and tricks.



Photos by Erika Haugen-Goodman

## The big picture

My top tips for reducing waste on trail are:

- Reuse plastic bags and jars.
- Buy in bulk.
- Make your own bars, trail mixes and other foods.

## Reusing plastic packaging

- Save sturdy plastic bags. I like the organic mango bag from Costco and reuse that bag for my dried bean flakes. I reuse granola bags for my oatmeal mixes. If you do this, you won't be throwing away bags and you won't have to use Ziploc bags.
- When you do use Ziplocs, wash them for reuse if they're in good condition — seriously, it doesn't take long.
- When you do need a sandwich or snack bag, use compostable bags. They hold up so well. I use them for my spice bags and they last the whole season.
- For vegetables and fruit, I use and reuse Debbie Meyer produce bags. I grow kale, zucchini and cauliflower in my garden and these bags keep everything fresh for 7-day trips.
- The Yellowbird hot sauces sold at REI have a no-spill container that's perfect for sauces and even olive oil! Just clean and refill.
- Use Bee's Wrap reusable wrappers for things like wrapping your cheese while backpacking or a sandwich for a day trip.
- Splurge on products you really like, and save waste where you can. For example, I love the Thai lime & chili cashews from Trader Joe's, but they come in plastic. So, I'll save that bag because it's sturdy, and refill it with a mix of beans and grains for a cold-soaked lunch.
- Reuse your plastic peanut butter jars. (Get a brand without a BPA lining.) Buy a giant jar at Costco to refill or get the freshly ground nut butters.

## Buy in bulk and make your own

- I make my own snack bars or bags of trail mixes from the bulk section. You can find high-quality ingredients at a co-op. You can also find affordable bulk options at Winco.
- I learned from my crew mate Rhoda to put together nuts, fruits, seeds, coconut, etc. in the same bag as dark chocolate. Let it melt in the sun and, when it cools, you have freshly made clusters.
- Create your own oatmeal mixes from the bulk section, where you can personalize with your favorite dried fruit and nuts.

## Making DIY meals in advance

- If you have a dehydrator, you can make meals ahead of time and place them in reusable plastic containers or reused baggies. This is one of the best ways to reduce your overall waste. (Recipes at [wta.org/backcountrykitchen](http://wta.org/backcountrykitchen).)

## Planning your meals

When you make your own meals for the trail, you will need to buy things in plastic such as grains, dried potatoes and local cured meats. But you'll still be producing much less waste than a prepackaged backpacking meal. You'll also save money, which makes it easier to splurge and get high-quality ingredients. And you'll have the choice of exactly how much spice and flavorings to put in to create your cuisine of choice. Here are some meal-specific tips for food to consider and how to limit waste for specific meals.

### Snacks/Breakfasts

- Use the tips here for bulk buying to make bars, oatmeal and clusters.
- REI sells containers for eggs. Eggs, quick-cooking grains (obtained in the bulk section and placed into a smaller container) and veggies make for a low-waste savory breakfast.

### Lunches

- My crew mates love reusing Talenti gelato containers to cold soak their beans, precooked quinoa, couscous or a homemade dehydrated meal! Add some olive oil, hot sauce and other sauces, and it's super yummy.
- There's no way around plastic for tortillas/bread yet, but you can get bread that comes in a paper bag, and transfer to a reused bag.

### Dinners

- Carbs: Bob's Red Mill dried potato flakes (bagged), pasta of any kind (bulk or paper container), precooked grains (such as quinoa or couscous) and other meal "sides" often come in paper packaging that can be recycled, composted or burned.
- Fats: Cheese, olive oil, coconut milk powder, coconut milk solids, tahini (bulk), homemade or store-bought tallow.
- Proteins: Dried flaked beans (bulk), local salami or cured meats, eggs, chickpea pasta or other legume products.
- Veggies: Use a produce bag or get dried veggies in bulk.
- Dessert: Dark chocolate usually has a recyclable package. You can also find sweet options in bulk!

## More tips for reducing waste

- Switch from using toilet paper or wipes to using a portable bidet. I use the Happy Bottom brand. It's amazing and I feel super clean.
- There are several ways to reduce waste associated with dental care. For toothpaste, my crew mate Kyvan uses a refillable toothpaste tube from REI, or you can use toothpaste tabs. I use biodegradable floss that comes in plastic-free packaging. Using a bamboo toothbrush is a great idea. When it's time to replace it, break off the brush part and compost or burn the wood.
- I make my own hand sanitizer by combining 1 cup isopropyl alcohol, 1/2 tablespoon vegetable glycerin and essential oil. Then I put that in a reused spray hand sanitizer bottle.

**Our earth is our home.** It's not fair to her to be incredibly considerate of wilderness areas while contributing to toxic, inhumane landfills elsewhere. Even though our reliance on plastic is not the consumer's fault, we can all try to make an effort to reduce our waste in service of our home. You'll eat great food, save money and have less to throw away!

# 5 Steps to Take Your Hiking to the Next Level

By Joseph Gonzalez





**I** moved to Washington in January of 2019 for work, selling trips for REI Adventures. Imagine my surprise when some of my new colleagues were more familiar with the conditions of the places we were selling trips to — like Everest Base Camp, the Grand Canyon or the Grecian Islands — than they were about the conditions of Washington trails. They might not have known the answers, but they knew enough to know where to find them.

“You’ve gotta check out Washington Trails Association. It’s the bible for hikers,” said a colleague.

I’d already hiked over 5,600 miles in the last 3 years and guided hikers across the Grand Canyon and up Half Dome — what could I learn from WTA that I didn’t already know?

A lot, it turns out.

### Knowledge is power

That first year was humbling. I had a wide breadth of knowledge about most things hiking related and how to tackle trails in favorable conditions. But I was missing some local knowledge, including familiarity with Washington’s trails year-round (hello, summer snow), an understanding of Washington’s permits and passes, and knowledge of which trails were iconic and why. There was much to explore, but I needed a friend to show me the way. That friend was WTA. I’ve explored much of the state since then — from Mount Spokane to Cape Alava — and WTA has been there every step of the way. Now, as a member of WTA’s communications team, I help provide these resources to hikers in the same place I was. It’s good to have a friend who helps you get outside.

Whether you’re brand new to hiking or have been roaming the mountains for a lifetime, WTA has the resources to help you achieve your hiking goals. Here’s how to take your hiking game to the next level with WTA.

### Step 1: Build a foundation

WTA’s Trail Smarts ([wta.org/trailsmarts](https://wta.org/trailsmarts)) is a comprehensive collection of everything you need to know to hike safely and responsibly. From the basics of crossing creeks during spring runoff to designing advanced gear systems (rain skirt or backcountry bidet, anyone?), there’s something for every hiker.

### How to learn more about hiking in Washington

New to Washington and want to get mossy? Follow these steps to take your hiking game to the next level:

- Download WTA’s Trailblazer app, [wta.org/trailblazer](https://wta.org/trailblazer), and create your My Backpack account, [wta.org/mybackpack](https://wta.org/mybackpack).
- Sign up for WTA’s Trail Action Network to stay in the loop about all things Washington trails, [wta.org/tan](https://wta.org/tan).
- Join us at Hike the State on May 21 to learn about 12 of our favorite hikes, [wta.org/hikethestate](https://wta.org/hikethestate).

### Step 2: Get outside

Explore WTA’s Trailblazer app and Hiking Guide to find a hike near you. Use the filters to fine-tune your search based on distance, elevation change, features and more.

### Step 3: Hone your planning skills

Check trip reports to learn what other hikers are saying about the hikes you hope to visit. This will help you design your own itinerary and get inspired for new trails to hike.

### Step 4: Journal your adventures

Have you learned from someone else’s trip report? Great! You can help another hiker by doing the same and posting a trip report of your own. Not only will your trip report help educate other hikers, it’s also a fun way to chronicle your adventures across the state.

### Step 5: Give back

Hoping to give back to the organization that helped you along the way while meeting like-minded hikers? Check out [wta.org/volunteer](https://wta.org/volunteer) to learn about the various ways you can contribute to the WTA community, whether that’s by doing volunteer trail work, assisting us on the web or becoming an ambassador.

With over 4,000 entries in our Hiking Guide and dozens of Trail Smarts resources, WTA’s work helps ensure everyone can find a trail that works for them.



# Together, We Can Do More for Trails

Washington Trails Association and the Mount St. Helens Institute team up to make it easier to hike near the iconic volcano

By **Tiffany Chou**

**For 15 years, WTA has worked** with and alongside the Mount St. Helens Institute (MSHI), and we've been complementing each other's work from the beginning. From some of our earliest collaborations on the Volcano View Trail to an exciting project at the Johnston Ridge Observatory planned for this summer, we've been making it easier for hikers to experience the dynamic landscape around Mount St. Helens.

The real power of this partnership lies in the variety of skills and expertise that we each bring to the table, paired with our shared missions to be good stewards of the land. WTA's

extensive experience with trail work combined with MSHI's comprehensive educational and interpretive programming covers more ground than each organization might on its own.

"Together, we've built community and connection to public land. We strengthen and expand our individual volunteer communities into a larger, more engaged community," said Abi Groskopf, MSHI's programs director.

Building the Volcano View Trail (initially called the Ape Cave Viewpoint Trail) was one of the first projects we teamed up on. Both WTA and MSHI completed many work parties over a couple of years to turn the former road into a trail. These days, the trail offers hikers a short hike that weaves through trees and boulders to a vista of the south side of the volcano.

"Pooling our resources, knowledge and skills has increased the amount of work we can do at the Mount St. Helens National Monument," said Ryan Ojerio, WTA's Southwest regional manager. "Our joint work parties give WTA volunteers a chance to learn all about MSHI's programs and vice versa — it's a real fruitful cross-pollination (pardon the pun)!"

Several years later, in the mid-2010s, WTA and MSHI further merged our trail work by making work parties in the

Photo by WTA staff and Matthew Vader



## Get involved

**The Mount St. Helens Institute**  
Since 1966, the Mount St. Helens Institute has worked to educate the public on the volcano and the surrounding Gifford Pinchot National Forest through programming — like its outdoor school and guided adventures — and volunteer opportunities. Learn more about their work at [mshinstitute.org](https://mshinstitute.org).

### Volunteer opportunities this summer

Join WTA and MSHI on trail this summer July 19–21! Sign up for any of the days or all of them, if you're hoping to camp out in the beautiful Mount St. Helens area. Projects will include clearing the trail corridor, fixing the trail's walking surface and clearing drains. And every night, you'll enjoy good company at camp, listen to guest speakers and share s'mores. [wta.org/volunteer](https://wta.org/volunteer)

monument a co-venture between both organizations. Combining work parties made our work easier and more effective because we no longer had to plan around each other and could coordinate to avoid duplicating efforts.

Over the next several years, MSHI will be taking on a redevelopment and renovation of the Science and Learning Center at Coldwater, near the Johnston Ridge Observatory. One aspect of the huge undertaking involves designing — and eventually building— a trail system connecting the center to other nearby trails, and WTA is excited to join forces with MSHI on this part of their project. This year, WTA will be scouting potential trail connections and passing

along a plan to the Forest Service, with the hopes of starting trail construction within the next few years. Projects like these require a large amount of trust from both sides, which we have built over many years, and WTA is looking forward to continuing to work with MSHI.

“Since merging trail work efforts, MSHI offers diverse volunteer opportunities for WTA volunteers connected to Mount St. Helens, and MSHI offers continued learning opportunities,” Abi said. “We have also been able to focus our efforts on what we do well — education and interpretation — and allow WTA to shine in what WTA has done well: build and maintain trails.”



## Spend the summer with the Fireside Circle

Fireside Circle members are those who donate \$500 or more to WTA annually. When you become a Fireside Circle member, you can join this summer's happy hours and work parties, and receive handpicked hike recommendations. Learn more and give at [wta.org/firesidecircle](https://wta.org/firesidecircle).

Photo by Erika Haugen-Goodman

# Thinking Beyond Your Next Hike

The landscape of Washington state is changing. As the state's population grows, along with the demand for trails, hikers have a major role to play.

As people who love time outside, we gain so much from trails. The future of trails is in our hands and we have a great responsibility to care for them and each other as we enjoy outdoor spaces.

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By Andrea Imler,  
WTA advocacy director



**The heat was oppressive — so hot that I could see heat waves shimmering above the ground.** Sitting next to a craggy boulder in a patch of shade, I drank some water and ate a snack. I was high

up on the flanks of Old Snowy Mountain in the Goat Rocks Wilderness. A warm breeze whipped around me and all was quiet. I felt so alone, but then I heard a happy chorus of voices coming closer. There was laughter, and then I saw the group making their way toward me.

Given the terrain, I saw them before they saw me. I marveled that they seemed so carefree and full of excitement, while I was questioning my choice to be hiking in such heat. And then they were in front of me.

I asked them if they were enjoying their trip and they clearly were. They were from a high school in Seattle and had just summited Old Snowy. It was a first backpacking trip and first peak scramble for most of them. They were disappointed that they hadn't seen a mountain goat yet.

The group continued on, and I was once again on my own, deciding if I should continue upward. Inspired by that group, I decided to. I wanted that same joy!

**Leadership  
& Innovation**

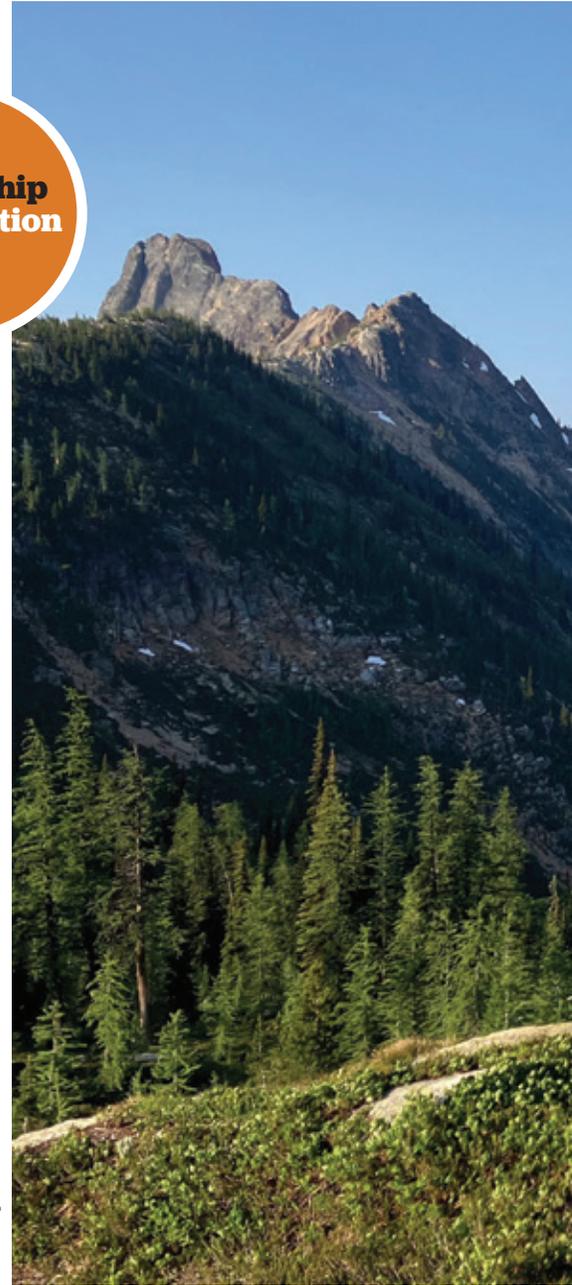


Photo by Andrea Imler

Up higher, a bit of movement caught my eye — three mountain goats were frolicking on a patch of snow a couple hundred feet below me. I wished the school group could have seen them.

Last summer, I took a sabbatical from my work at Washington Trails Association. I spent much of that time exploring some of the most beautiful places in our state via the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). I met a



lot of people along the way, including the high schoolers. The common thread among everyone I met — whether PCT thru-hikers, day hikers, trail runners or first-time backpackers — was how happy they were to be out in nature.

**A personal connection, a sense of responsibility**

I backpack because that is when I am most connected to the natural world

around me. To put it plainly, I feel better when I'm outside. I love the quiet mornings sipping coffee as the sun rises above the ridge. I love the simplicity of carrying everything I need on my back and using my feet to propel me forward. I am grateful for Washington's spectacular alpine peaks, subalpine meadows, aquamarine lakes and deep forests. I also feel a great▶

“ This work is not easy. It will require thoughtful planning, a willingness to try new management approaches and a shift in our expectations about the outdoors.

sense of responsibility. I have spent the majority of my career working to protect and steward these wild places. I want to ensure that people in the future still have access to them — so they, too, can enjoy watching goats be silly.

## Challenges and hope

I have seen public lands face increasing challenges over time. Our state's population continues to grow. By 2050, it's estimated that an additional 2 million people will live in Washington, which means more houses and infrastructure will be needed to support that growth, encroaching on public lands. More people are visiting the outdoors, which we can't build more of. Climate change is bringing an increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires and more frequent flooding, making some trails and areas inaccessible. Meanwhile, government land managers have dwindling financial resources to meet these challenges and demands.

All of this has a big impact on hikers and public lands. More people are outside on a fewer number of underfunded trails. More people means more of other things too — think full parking lots, dog poop bags left behind and social trails developing around lakeshores and in other delicate areas. And there are impacts we may not see — like how our growing numbers affect sensitive wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Yet I have also seen people step up for trails in so many ways, including volunteering, advocating for funding and land protections, helping more people discover the much-needed benefits of time in nature and picking up litter on every hike. The hiking community is a powerful force for good. We must continue to hone this ethic by giving people the tools they need to be respectful stewards.

As we embrace this new reality where there are more people and more challenges to the spaces where people love to get outside, we must re-examine how we balance the values of recreation, conservation and access to public lands

## Tips for recreating responsibly

**Be prepared:** Before you go, make sure you know the trail and weather conditions and any rules about visiting the area.

**Be welcoming:** Everyone deserves to get outside and enjoy the benefits of nature.

**Leave No Trace:** Reviewing the Leave No Trace principles ([wta.org/Int](http://wta.org/Int)) can help ensure your visitation doesn't harm natural places.

**Help out:** Look for ways to make the outdoors better for everyone, such as advocating for trails or volunteering.

to protect the core human need for time in nature, while ensuring that these places exist into perpetuity.

We must also recognize that Indigenous people have lived on and stewarded these same lands since time immemorial and maintain their sovereign and inherent tribal rights, including rights reserved by treaties. As some of the least disturbed landscapes, these lands are critical to tribes in protecting the fish, plants, wildlife and sacred places on which their cultures depend. As we re-examine how we weigh recreation, conservation, equity and access to public lands, we must all commit to learning and acknowledging that we are visitors and that our actions impact the abilities of tribes to exercise these rights and care for their ancestral lands.

## A careful path forward

WTA is committed to creating a sustainable trail system that minimizes the impacts of visitors on the environment while ensuring

that the benefits of hiking aren't lost. This will require continuing research around land use and land management in our state. WTA believes that decisions around this work should be informed by science and data, societal values and traditional knowledge. We will work with land management agencies, tribes and user groups to better understand the challenges and possibilities. We will approach this effort with a spirit of collaboration and work to ensure that our values of equity and access are taken into consideration with tribal rights and agency concerns. Solutions must take into account the unique qualities of an area, while not losing sight of the overall recreation landscape in Washington.

This work is not easy. It will require thoughtful planning, a willingness to try new management approaches and a shift in our expectations about the outdoors. But if we come together with a shared belief that time in nature is vital and every hiker must be a steward, we can begin to plan for trails that meet the growing demand while balancing conservation, access and equity.

I realize this all feels like a lot. After all, many of us go hiking to escape from the buzz of life and all of the challenges it brings. Yet we must work together toward solutions that address these challenges that are impacting the very places we like to hike. Everyone should be able to experience these places, so that people like the group of students I met on my Goat Rocks Wilderness trip can summit Old Snowy in the future too.

As the saying goes: One voice makes a difference; many voices can change the world.

Please join WTA as we explore topics about the future of hiking and recreation in Washington state and how we can all work together to protect and steward trails and public lands in upcoming Washington Trails magazines and on [wta.org](http://wta.org). ■

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**The seaweed harvest** of May 2023 with my community. We harvested rockweed and nori, roasting the latter on Douglas fir boughs over a campfire.



# A Bounty of Seaweed

A foraging trip offered a connection to the land and sea — and my own and other cultures

By Riley Collins



**G**rowing up, I was wary of seaweed. I unwrapped it from my sushi and I'd leave the room if someone opened a can of furikake, scrunching my nose at the fishy stench. I would wade in the waters of the Salish Sea and find my ankles woven with long whips of bull kelp, raising a fear of what lies beneath the surface of the ocean.

But my fear began to fade in my junior year of college when I took a course called Wild Foods. We took field trips to parks and wilderness areas around Northwest Washington. We foraged for treasures of springtime, such as sword fern fronds and stinging nettle, while learning about the ways Coast Salish peoples connected to the land through careful and intentional plant harvesting.

For our sea vegetables unit, we went on a seaweed harvesting trip. We chose to harvest at Fort Ebey State Park on Whidbey Island and arrived there on a beautifully overcast April afternoon. We went to Ebey's Landing, a 5.6-mile loop hike that

Photos by Riley Collins. Illustrations from Shutterstock

includes some coastline hiking, as well as a stretch along the bluff above the beach. We enjoyed views of Puget Sound, the Cascade Mountains and the Olympic Mountains all at the same time. After my classmates and I hiked from the trailhead to the beach, we were welcomed by hills quilted with purple vetch above fields of salty “sea beans” on a rocky beach. The low tide rolled back, revealing the briny, green smell of the Puget Sound.



on and how we can tend to both history and the ecosystem.

We began our harvest with the most proud and abundant sea vegetable, Alaria kelp. You might know it as wakame, the dried flakes in miso soup packets. You can recognize this vegetable by its long spine, which allows the plant to extend up to 30 feet. We cut it with kid scissors about one foot above its holdfast (the stem that

Before we began our harvest, we paused to learn about the history of the land we were on. We were told that this was land stolen from the Coast Salish, who have stewarded the land since time immemorial. When the Treaty of Point Elliott in 1855 forced tribal leaders to surrender most of their land to the U.S. government, tribes were moved off the land and into reservations. To this day, tribes still maintain their sovereign and inherent tribal rights, including rights reserved by treaties on these lands. It was important to realize the context of the land we were harvesting

connects it to a rock or the seafloor) to allow it to regenerate. We stored our wakame in large plastic baggies with some seawater to keep it fresh for a salad or to dry it at home for furikake seasoning. Then, we met sea lettuce, a bright green type of algae that has a unique umami flavor when eaten fresh or dried. Again, we made sure to harvest with scissors and leave the holdfast attached.

For our skincare lovers, we harvested rockweed, a type of seaweed that has branches of air bubbles to help it stay afloat. In these bubbles, rockweed holds its reproductive fluids, which we coated our faces with as a moisturizer and sunscreen. The plant can also be deep-fried and coated with parmesan as a “wild Cheeto.”

Finally, I discovered my favorite of the seaweeds, rainbow



### How to prepare for the seaweed harvest

**Get your permit:** Get an annual shellfish and seaweed license from your local license dealer. Information here: [wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/fishing/types-fees](https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/fishing/types-fees). List of dealers: [wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/dealers](https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/dealers).

**Find a harvesting spot:** There are three designated areas to harvest seaweed in Washington — Fort Flagler, Fort Ebey and Fort Worden.

**Review state regulations:** It’s important to know about seaweed conservation and harvest rules, found here through Washington’s Department of Natural Resources: [dnr.wa.gov/seaweed](https://dnr.wa.gov/seaweed).

**Get your supplies together:** Scissors, resealable plastic baggies and a cooler with ice are a great start.

Photo by Tiffany Chou

## Tuna (or tofu) wakame salad recipe

(courtesy of Bamboo Sushi, Portland, Oregon)

### Sauce

- 1 cup low-sodium soy sauce
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons sake
- 2 ounces toasted sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons Japanese seven spice

### Salad

- 2 ounces wakame (1 ½ cups if dried or 2 cups freshly cut Alaria)
- 1 red onion
- 8 inches English cucumber
- 12 ounces sushi-grade albacore tuna or tofu
- Toasted sesame seeds for garnishing

### Instructions

Mix together sauce ingredients.

**Prepare salad:** If using dry wakame, soak in cool water for 10 minutes, drain and allow to sit for 5 more minutes.

If using fresh Alaria, blanch in boiling water for 15 seconds.

Slice onion very thinly, dice cucumber into small pieces, cut tuna or tofu into dime-sized chunks.

Pour sauce over salad and lightly toss.

Enjoy!

leaf. Its other name, “splendid iridescent,” perfectly encapsulates the rainbows that bounce off of it while soaking in the sunlight. Its secret power is that, when boiled with oat, coconut or dairy milk, it has gelatinous properties that gel the milk into a heavenly soft, mousselike pudding.

As all of these culinary ideas were discussed by our group, I was reshaping my distaste for seaweed that I’d held onto for much of my life. At the end of the day, my class made a fresh wakame salad together with rice vinegar and sesame oil, enjoying the snap of the recently harvested kelp.

While snacking on our bounty and watching the sunset, I noticed how many Asian families shared our space. I realized that for many Asian immigrant families, including my own, the seaweed harvest in the Pacific Northwest is a way to connect to deep ancestral food practices. Fort Ebey State Park acts as a transient meeting ground. It bore witness to the removal of the Coast Salish peoples from the land, the preservation of cultural food traditions by Asian immigrants and the exploration of outdoor enthusiasts drawn to the area.

As for myself, I considered these pieces of history to shape my thoughts about what foraging means to me. Harvesting seaweed is a practice of care. It requires a sense of community between everyone involved and a willingness to learn from the living beings in our local ecosystems. Harvesting and cooking with seaweed can inform us about enjoying seasonal gifts and deepen our respect for harvesting plants. Since that field trip, I have made the journey two more times with the community

I’ve made through working at Asian-run farms. Each time, I feel as though we all learn something new while connecting over our own cultural identities. I hope to gain more excitement and wonder about the bounty that our ecosystems have, and grow as a forager with a focus on the lands and histories that support all of us.

*Riley Collins is a Washingtonian with roots in Seattle. They’ve spent the last few years working at organic vegetable, flower and herb farms, forming their relationship to the land. They love swimming in glacial lakes in the summer, hiking through the winter and foraging for local plants for food and fiber year-round. They are constantly on a journey to become a steward of the land and continued that effort through trail work and BIPOC community building as a member of this year’s Emerging Leaders Program. ■*

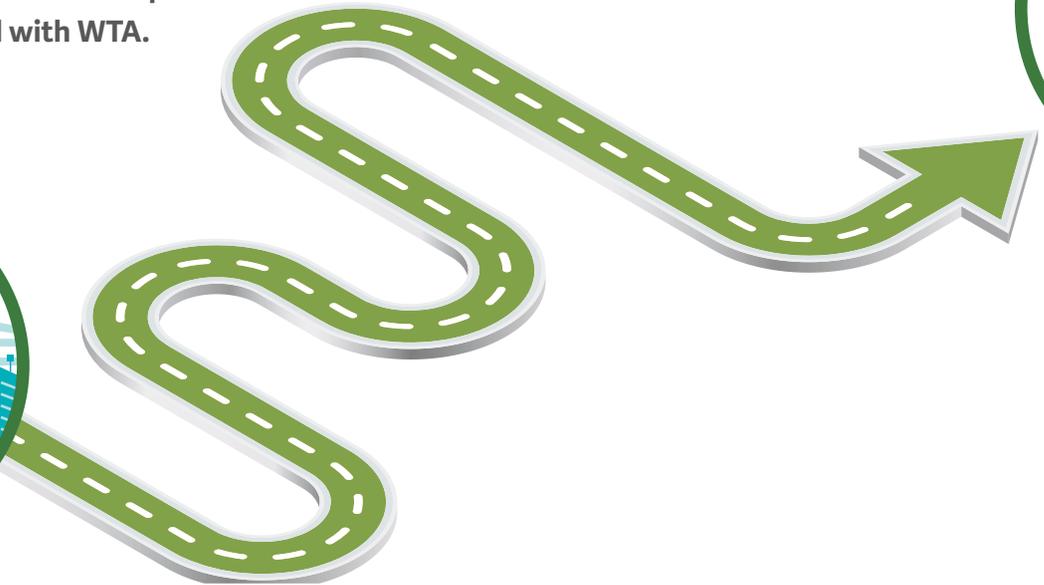




# Worth the Trip

WTA's backcountry trips draw volunteers back year after year from across the country. Three volunteers explain why they make the trip to spend time on trail with WTA.

By Anna Roth





**Clockwise from far left:** Asher Levey and crew play cards in camp, Bob Cowdrick poses with a large tree he removed on a BCRT and a slice of marionberry pie lakeside caps off a day of hard work. Photos courtesy Tobias Levey and Bob Cowdrick.

WTA backcountry crews spend their days together, building connections while they build or repair trails. The cooperation required to complete a project provides good ground to share hiking hacks, create inside jokes and build trust.



Volunteers come to us chasing a physical challenge or the chance to camp in beautiful places. But they keep coming back because of the people they meet. WTA crews

are full of knowledgeable, friendly people ready to welcome newcomers. Some volunteers even return year after year from places like New York and Georgia. Here's why.

## Proud to give back

Asher Levey travels to WTA work parties from New York



The first time I learned about WTA, I was hiking with my dad on the Suiattle River Trail. We were a couple of miles in, just after a swim, when we happened to meet a WTA backcountry response team (BCRT) crew building a rock wall.

Later on, my dad asked me if I would be interested in joining a BCRT. I said no at first but then realized it

could be a good test of my body's limits. So when he asked me again, I said yes.

That first year, in 2022, we worked at Marmot Pass with (crew leader) Rick Bennett. It was an intense hike on a steep trail under a sweltering sun. The work was tough.

But I had fun, and Rick was a great leader. So the next summer I jumped at the opportunity to do another BCRT: a log-out led by Simon Lie on the upper Pratt River Trail.

We worked hard during the day, then swam in nearby Tuscohatchie Lake in the evening and watched the stars at night. My dad's really into cooking, so we ate well too.

One of the best moments of the Pratt trip was the appearance of "the pie guy." Halfway through one of our work days, a mysterious figure approached us. He held a perfectly protected mixed berry pie. It was Mike Read, a WTA volunteer who wasn't on our work party, but hiked in this amazing treat. It was so great to have that pie after a long day of work.

I've learned BCRTs aren't just about the physical challenge; there is a mental component as well. You have to be ready to improvise. You have to be creative and willing to learn. I've learned how to use a handsaw, how to identify different soils and how to use forest materials to build bridges and construct stone steps. I often meet engineers on these trips, and they are more than willing to share their wisdom. This year we will be on Emily Snyder's log-out at Dorothy Lake. I look forward to learning from Emily about saws and safety.

For me, it's always worth it to make the long journey back to Washington from school in New York and go straight to the ▶

woods. I am in awe of the beauty of the Cascades. We spend so much time looking down at our devices that we don't realize the beauty we can see just by looking up. Washington is one of the places where natural beauty still reigns, and it's important we preserve that beauty for future generations and our own. I'm proud to be a part of giving back like that.

## The people are the best part

Bob Cowdrick travels to work parties from Georgia



**Bob Cowdrick** (right) had such a good time on his first BCRT learning from crew leader Gary Zink (front, center), he returned every year to spend another week gaining wisdom and skills.

I had previously worked on trail crews in Maine, Tennessee, Georgia and North Carolina. I enjoyed working on log-outs and read about WTA's backcountry response teams, specifically the log-out crews.

My first WTA trip was a BCRT at Cathedral Rock on the Pacific Crest Trail. It was a log-out crew led by Gary Zink. After a week with him, I learned that Gary is an excellent sawyer, a patient teacher and a pleasure to spend a week with in the Cascades. Since then, I have traveled to Washington for five other BCRTs and have had the opportunity to work with Gary again.

I return to Washington most every year for a BCRT. Yes, I get to explore different parts of Washington's backcountry, but it is the crew leaders and members that are the best part of the trip.

## Join us on trail

Whether you're a Washington resident or living out of state, we'd love to see you on a work party. There's no experience necessary. The crews are fun, the projects are interesting and the views are gorgeous. See all the places you could go at [wta.org/volunteer](https://wta.org/volunteer).

They are very knowledgeable about WTA and the trails, and they are an absolute joy to be with.

This year, I was fortunate enough to be able to register for the Salmo Basin log-out. It will be an enjoyable work crew in the Salmo-Priest Wilderness in northeastern Washington, led by Jane Baker. I am looking forward to logging out some big trees!

## A chance to learn every year

Rick Colbert travels to work parties from Maryland

My first awareness of WTA's volunteer vacations was through my college roommate, Reed Waite. He lived in Seattle, had been a WTA member for some time and was a frequent work party participant. I had backpacked for nearly 50 years, and trying a trail work trip sounded interesting, but it sounded challenging, too. After attending a WTA member get-together with Reed and his wife, Tina, I figured I would give it a try. I am glad I did. I now look forward to those trips as part of my summer routine.

My first volunteer vacation was with crew leader Lisa Black at Coldwater Lake near Mount St. Helens. It was a learning experience — how to use the tools, how to perform the tasks. On every trip, I pick up a new skill. And I frequently learn something new that I can pass on. On that first trip, Jim Langdon, another volunteer, showed me how to move heavy rocks by sitting back-to-back with a partner, one providing a backstop for the pusher. Even though it was sometimes strenuous, it was surprisingly doable. I learned to love moving rocks. I have shown that trick to others on several trips. People love it.

The learning is one of the reasons I go back, and it's not only trail work tricks. On that first trip I discovered a way to provide shade in unshaded areas: umbrellas! Our crew used them during a lunch break. I felt like I was looking at a Monet painting with all the parasols out.

For me, being able to camp in some of the most beautiful places is a real blessing. The people on these trips are great. You get a real diversity of people: different ages, different walks of life, different experiences. I really like watching people grow on these trips. You have first-timers, like we all were, who have no idea what they are in for. By the end of the week, they end up feeling the joy of "I can do this." People open up and become part of the group. I enjoy becoming a part of this. I was a manager for most of my working life and like to watch other managers and leaders at work. The crew leaders are all excellent. And of course, I get to meet up with my college roommate. It is a complete vacation. ■

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# How to Repair Your Gear

By Kay Sadowitz  
& Anna Roth



Outdoor gear products are marketed to us as weatherproof, dirtproof, LIFE-proof. While these products are indeed durable, without regular care and cleaning, they won't serve at peak performance.

Gear is essential to keep you warm, safe and dry on trail, but it can be pricey, so it's frustrating when it tears, leaks or breaks. But you can DIY-fix more than you might realize, and a repairist can help with a lot more!

We asked local mender, maker and repairist Kay Sadowitz to outline solutions for common gear damage, including what (and how) you can DIY and when to get a pro's help.

Kay has years of experience repairing and altering or modifying gear for her clients (WTA staff among them) in order to extend the life of the gear they rely on. One reason she recommends consulting pros:

"A repairist can not only repair your gear," Kay said. "They can answer questions about gear quality or make suggestions to improve your comfort. If a person made it, a person can work with you to fix it!"

Kay (like us) encourages renting or borrowing gear rather than buying if you're trying something new. It's a good way to save money and resources.



## Mending tears or holes

Here in the Northwest, jackets are a favorite piece of clothing on and off trail, resulting in a fair amount of wear and tear. But other gear can get holes, too! If your favorite waterproof or down item gets a hole in it, you can likely patch it. If a midlayer or wool sweater rips, try your hands at patching (or darning, if you're crafty). Tears or larger holes should be addressed by a repairist.

### Do it yourself

**Waterproof items:** Small holes can be mended with pre-cut adhesive patches with rounded corners, which you can buy or make yourself. (If purchasing, look for Tenacious Tape or NoSo.) The rounded corners help the adhesive stay stuck to the item. Just clean and dry the items and apply!

**Down:** Since the fabric used with down is very thin, it's common for feathers to

### Can I use duct tape?

Try not to. It's best to use repair tape for a field fix; duct tape may damage an item when you try to remove it later.

If you do use repair tape or duct tape, see a repairist when you're back in town. They can provide a durable sewn patch that will last much longer — and look cool!

poke through seams or the fabric itself. You don't need to patch these, but if you get a large hole — from say, a stray ember — you can patch it as described above.

**Wool or other textiles:** Try sewing a rip together, attaching your own fabric patches, even darning a hole! (This is a bit advanced, so unless you're already adept at sewing, finding a repairist might be your best bet.)



### Find a repairist

**Waterproof items:** While patches work just fine in a pinch, they won't last forever, and you'll want professional help if it's a waterproof item. If you tear a hole in a waterproof jacket or a seam breaks, a repairist can sew a patch or stitch seams and add waterproof seam tape.

**Down:** A repairist can refill small areas if a down item is losing feathers (as in the photo above).

**Wool or other textiles:** Repairists can also mend and patch other technical layers like fleece, softshell, synthetic puffers, wool and more. ▶

## Restore your rain gear's waterproofing

Waterproof garments are made by sealing together several very thin layers of material. The combination of frequent use and exposure to sweat, dirt, body oils, sunscreen or bug spray can cause those layers to separate or cause the waterproof seam tape to peel.

Prevent this deterioration by washing these garments with the correct cleaner (like Nikwax or Gear Aid) and reapplying the durable water repellancy (DWR) once a season. The special wash and DWR may seem pricey, but it's better for your wallet and the environment than buying a new rain jacket every year!

### Do it yourself

Before you get started, don't use regular laundry detergent! It has chemicals in it that can cause further damage to the fabric.

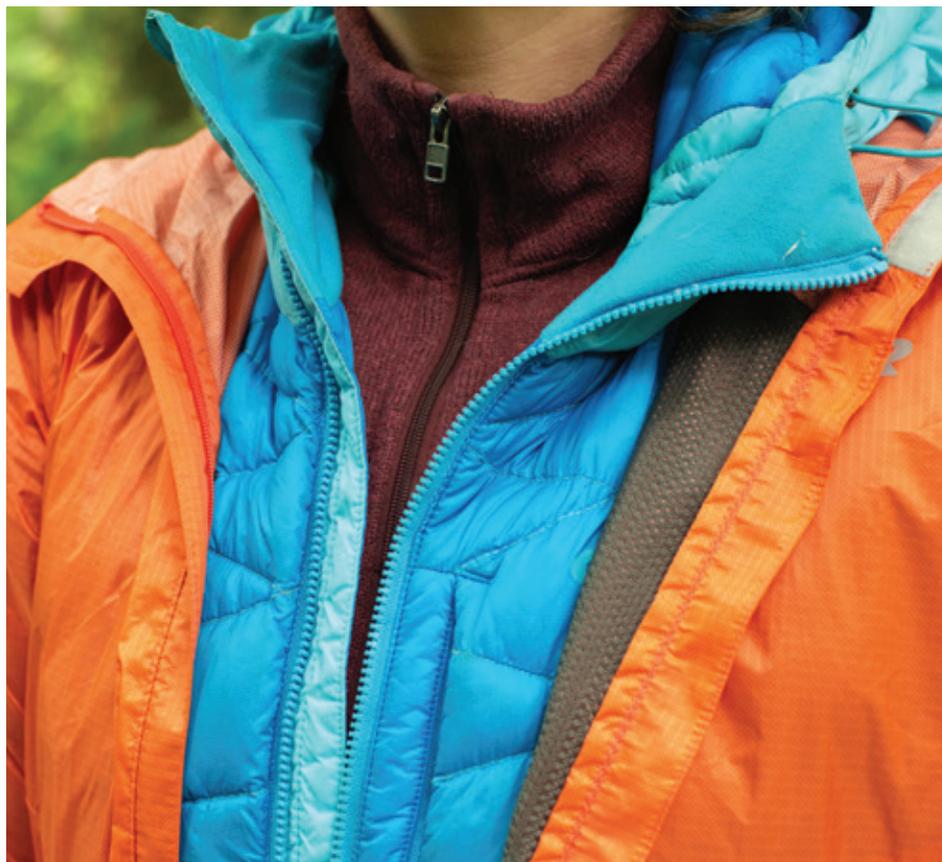
Wash your garment with a product made specifically for cleaning outdoor clothing, such as Nikwax's Tech Wash.

After your garment is clean, apply the DWR at home, being sure to follow the instructions.

DWR is a specific coating that can be re-applied to Gore-Tex items. You can't apply it to something that wasn't manufactured to be waterproof. We like ReviveX which is PFAS free and made by Gear Aid, based in Bellingham.

### Find a repairist

If you tear a hole in a waterproof jacket or a seam separates, a repairist can sew a patch or stitch seams, as well as add waterproof seam tape. See the previous page for mending holes and tears.



## Caring for down

As ducks and geese know, feathers need to be cleaned regularly in order to function properly. The warmth in down comes from the spaces (called loft) between the feathery tendrils, which hold heat in small air pockets. Loft helps birds stay warm and dry in the freezing cold, and it lets you stay warm in your favorite down item.

So how do you channel this avian magic? By cleaning it, a lot more than you probably think you need to.

A sleeping bag should be washed about once a season if you backpack two times a month or more because the down gets dirty, sweaty or wet from condensation, and that causes the down tendrils to get soiled and limp.

The down side of down items is that they are thin and prone to melting when exposed to heat. Drying in a commercial dryer is best, but can be time-consuming at the proper temperature.

Kay recommends going to a repairist if you're washing a sleeping bag: "The big dryer drum is what is really necessary to get sleeping bags nice and lofted," she said. If you have the space, store your sleeping bag loose. Long-term compression can cause down to deteriorate quickly.

### Do it yourself

You can wash your down gear (like jackets or vests) yourself. Always use a down-safe cleaner (never use regular detergent) and fluff it in the dryer (but be sure it's not too hot).

### Find a repairist

Laundromats are dicey places for down gear, since residual detergent and mystery cleaners can hang out in the washers. Consider having a professional clean your down items for you, especially if you don't have access to a personal washer and dryer.

If you do find yourself with a melted mess from a DIY attempt, see a repair specialist for a sewn patch job and a refill of down.

Photos by Erika Haugen-Goodman, Jessi Owens



## Caring for tent poles

A bent pole or a loose shock cord (the bungee cord in a tent pole) can make pitching your tent a headache. Here's how to deal with those issues.

### Do it yourself

You know that tube that comes with your tent poles? Keep it! It's a splint for damaged poles. You can duct tape it to secure it for a field fix.

If your shock cord wears out, you can fix it as long as the end pieces of your poles screw off of the pole and you have small vice pliers or a friend with strong hands.

- Ensure the cord has enough stretch left to tie a knot.
- Tie the knot low on the loose shock cord. When you finish, the pole should fold back up similar to when you got it — the cord needs to have more tension than when you started, but not be too tight.

### Find a repairist

For damage beyond loose shock cords, consult a repairist.

## Field first aid

These items are handy to have in your pack.

- Tenacious Tape (precut with rounded edges, or a small set of scissors).
- Safety pins (large and small for varying fixes).
- Dental floss and a needle (useful for large rips in tents, mesh or webbing).
- A small tube of tent sealant works for tents (and shoes). Tent sealants are weatherproof and flexible. Note what type of tent you have and buy the corresponding sealant.
- Rubber bands or hair ties can come in handy as well.

## Caring for tents

First off, keep your tents clean!

After any trip, especially a dusty or wet one, shake out your tent and, if possible, rinse with water using a hose or a shower, then air dry it completely on the balcony, in your bathroom or backyard before storing it.

Get a spray-on waterproofing product or solar wash. UV rays cause tent fabrics to dry out and get brittle, meaning your tent could rip or leak in the backcountry unexpectedly.

Note: If you have a tent made of Dyneema or other specialized material, we recommend consulting the manufacturer before using UV spray. It likely won't do any damage, but these specialized materials may not need UV spray.

### Do it yourself

Small holes in your tent fly can be fixed with a quick repair tape patch but once you get back home, call up a sewist and get a sewn patch.

Kay also says, "Tent mesh doesn't fray

and isn't as delicate as it looks — if you have a hole of any size, it's not going to get bigger unless you pull on it or your dog pokes their way through it."

Use tent sealant to repair small punctures, ember holes or corners of tents where seam tape is beginning to peel. Tent sealant is good for holes in the floor of a tent as well.

### Find a repairist

Zipper can also be replaced on tents. Many ultralight tents have very small zippers that fail easily. These can be replaced at the same size or one size bigger to be more durable.

### Move on

If you find your tent seam tape peeling throughout the tent, the fabric of your tent getting sticky, stinky, flaky or paper thin, or it still isn't waterproof despite your re-proofing efforts, you may have only a few adventures left in it. A repairist may be able to use fabric from an old tent in other repairs.▶

## Clean shoes = happy feet

Finding the perfect shoe can take a while, so once you do, you'll want to keep them in great shape. There's likely no need to get rid of them just because of some small damage.

### Do it yourself

Most holes, nicks and dings on the surface of a shoe can be sewn shut or repaired with shoe glue or even tent seam sealant.

Replace broken laces with sturdy new ones. If your shoe wears out but the laces are good, save them for your next pair.

Leather boots need to be washed and re-treated about once a season, more if they're repeatedly getting wet and drying out. Otherwise, the leather will crack, letting in water or detaching from the soles.

Trail runners should be cleaned as well. Let dirt dry, then brush it off with a cloth or your hand and give the shoes a couple good whacks against each other to get the debris off.

### Find a repairist

If your tread wears thin or the lugs on the bottom of your boots flatten out, consult a cobbler. They will be able to repair many hiking or climbing boots, as well as clogs or Birkenstocks, if you like to wear those after hiking.

A repairist may also be able to customize a shoe (like a ski boot) to help your foot fit more comfortably.

### Get more tips

Learn more about cleaning and caring for sleeping pads, zippers and more at [wta.org/gear-repair-clean](https://wta.org/gear-repair-clean).



## Caring for backpacks

### Do it yourself

With zippers and straps, there are several ways things can go sideways in the backcountry. You can reattach a broken strap with some dental floss and a needle. (Be cautious about poking your fingers!)

If your zipper separates from the fabric, safety pins will help you keep it closed. Of course, be sure to have a sewist fix damage like that once you're back home.

### Find a repairist

One of Kay's favorite backpack hacks is to replace your shoulder straps (see photo at right). You can do this if you need a different fit, or if the original straps fail entirely.

"It's a great repair, and REI often sells just straps on their outlet or Re/Supply. People can also get a pack at a thrift store and salvage the straps off of it." ■



Photos by Buff Black, Kay Sadowitz

Cut this out and post it at your workplace, favorite coffee shop or library (ask first!) — or share it with someone who recently moved here. ↘



# New to Washington? Find your way with WTA.

**Washington Trails Association's free starter kit is here to help you ...**

- Start a hiking wish list
- Get the permits you need
- Borrow and rent gear
- Answer questions about your new home state



[go.wta.org/newtowa24](https://go.wta.org/newtowa24)

# My Favorite Northwest Getaways

Four areas to enjoy a summer vacation full of hiking

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**By Craig Romano**



**In my 30-plus years in the Pacific Northwest**, I've seen a fair amount of this beautiful region. I've hiked more than 33,000 miles in Washington alone. My work as an outdoors writer and trails guidebook author gets me out on trails regularly — and there are a few areas that I definitely enjoy returning to regularly. So, let me share four of my favorite places in the Pacific Northwest. These are great hiking destinations, and they make excellent family-friendly retreats as well.

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## Lake Wenatchee

Many of my favorite trails in Washington are on the eastern slopes of the Cascades near beautiful Lake Wenatchee. When I lived in Seattle, this area was my go-to when I needed to get out of town for a couple of days of sunshine and quiet trails. Lake Wenatchee State Park, where I set up camp, is extremely convenient, because it's so close to many excellent backcountry trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness and Henry M. Jackson Wilderness, as well as some often-overlooked areas in the Entiat Mountains.

Yes, the park can be busy — but just during the height of summer. During the off season, and especially on weekdays in May and October, the park can be pretty quiet. And even during summer, barring weekends, I've been able to snag campsites at the adjacent Nason Creek Campground in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. I can set up there and still head over to the state park for an after-hike swim or shower. If developed campgrounds aren't your preference, head up the Chiwawa, White and Little Wenatchee River roads and set up at a primitive campground. I've camped at Napeequa Crossing, Lake Creek and Rainy Creek campgrounds during summer weekdays and had them to myself. But the mosquitoes were out in full force — perhaps the reason for my solitude!

When I prefer more comfort, especially in early and late season when it tends to be wetter and colder, I head to the city of Wenatchee. I can snag a room in a hotel, grab a delicious Mexican dinner and enjoy a whole network of beautiful trails in the Wenatchee Foothills, just minutes away. I particularly like running the Apple Capital Recreation Loop Trail in fall or hiking the Sage Hills in spring for one of the best floral shows in the state.

I also enjoy hiking some of the lesser-traveled trails north of Lake Wenatchee — Rock Creek, Carne Mountain and Red Mountain. On my last hikes on all of these trails, I encountered just one other hiker — or none at all!

When I want to go backpacking or for a long trail run, I love Cady Ridge, Cady Pass, Boulder Creek and Buck Creek for their sprawling alpine meadows, sublime views and miles of uncrowded terrain.

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**Left:** Summer wildflowers on Cady Ridge. **Right:** Falls Creek Falls.



Photo by Kelly Seizler

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## Wind River Valley

I absolutely love the Columbia River Gorge, but some of my favorite places to hike in the region are a few miles outside that popular destination. One of them is the Wind River Valley just north of Carson. Easily accessible for day trips from Vancouver, it also makes a great destination if you're staying in one of the nice lodging options in Hood River or The Dalles in Oregon.

Owing to the area's lower elevations than other parts of the Cascade Range, many of the trails are snow-free by late May or early June. And a handful near the historic Forest Service Wind River Nursery can be hiked year-round. The interpretive Whistle Punk and Wind River Arboretum trails are family-friendly choices. Bunker Hill will give you more of a workout and a chance to see some of the valley's resident elk. Later in the season, follow the Pacific Crest Trail south to Sedum Point for lonely wandering and excellent views of the Wind River Valley. ▶



Looking out toward Lake Wenatchee from the 7,420-foot summit of Mount David.

Photo by Craig Romano

In late spring, stunning Falls Creek Falls is at its showiest. This three-tiered waterfall (although only the two lower tiers are visible from the trail) plunges more than 300 feet into a misty ravine surrounded by old-growth forest. It's one of the prettiest waterfalls in Washington and the hike isn't too long or difficult. A short distance north of the falls is one of my favorite and least-known wilderness areas in the state. At 5,950 acres, the Trapper Creek Wilderness is one of our smallest federal wilderness areas. But it and the neighboring 4,000-plus-acre Bourbon Roadless Area contain more than 35 miles of well-maintained trails for hiking, backpacking and running. A hike up Trapper Creek valley takes you to spectacular primeval forest in Washington's Southern Cascades. A tougher hike is to Soda Peaks Lake, set in gorgeous old-growth forest. Continue to the ridge above for excellent views. But the best views are from Sisters Rock and Observation Peak, an old fire lookout site, where you can gaze out at five volcanoes: St. Helens, Rainier, Adams, Hood and Jefferson.

Autumn is an excellent time to hit the region's trails for abundant huckleberries. And both Big and Little Huckleberry mountains provide views over the Big Lava Bed. There are several small, quiet national forest campgrounds along Wind River Road and nearby Forest Service roads. In winter, snow-parks allow for skiing and snowshoeing.

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## Republic

When I really want to get away from it all, I head to the tiny town of Republic in Ferry County in northeastern Washington. An old gold mining town, Republic is surrounded by mountains, lakes and forests. It's a corner of Washington that retains much of its natural environment and has few visitors. My now-wife and I took our first camping trip to Curlew Lake State Park. And we tied the knot in the beautiful little park surrounded by rolling, golden hills.

Curlew Lake State Park makes a wonderful basecamp (complete with a great beach) for exploring the nearby Kettle River Range, rounded peaks at the transition zone of the Cascades and the Rocky Mountains. Megafauna — moose, lynx, black bears, mountain lions, wolves and the occasional grizzly — roam these lonely peaks. While not federally recognized as such, this stretch of the Colville National Forest is de facto wilderness.

Nearly 100 miles of lightly hiked trails traverse the range. The 44-mile Kettle Crest National Recreation Trail hugs the high spine of the Kettles. This scenic trail traverses wildflower meadows, old-growth and fire-succession forest, and mountaintops exceeding 7,000 feet. Pack plenty of water, because springs are few and far between and summer temperatures can exceed 90 degrees. In autumn, however, the temps are agreeable and stands of western larches turn gold. Many trails tie into the crest, allowing for excellent day hikes and loops. And the crest is also excellent for backpacking and trail running. You can easily access it at 5,575-foot Sherman Pass, the highest highway pass in the state.

Other excellent hiking trails can be found at Swan Lake, south of Republic, where a 2.5-mile trail circumnavigates the quiet lake. The lake has a sandy beach and a family-friendly campground. Listen as resident loons serenade you. It's one of the few lakes in Washington where they breed. Nearby Thirteenmile Trail travels for 16.5 miles through a spectacular canyon, old-growth ponderosa pines and open, rolling hillsides.

Right in Republic, stroll on the paved Golden Tiger Trail, which traverses groves of ponderosa pines, with outstanding views of the Kettles and the pastoral Sanpoil River Valley. And the 30-mile-long Ferry County Rail Trail, which ties into the Golden Tiger Trail, is perfect for short hikes, long bike rides and runs. A gorgeous stretch travels along Curlew Lake and over a historic trestle. In winter, experience it on cross-country skis. Republic has a couple of cozy hotels for when it's too cold to camp; from them, you can walk to a wonderful co-op and brew pub.



Photo by Craig Romano

## Revelstoke, British Columbia

An old railroad city located along the Trans-Canada Highway on the Columbia River, Revelstoke is now a four-season outdoor vacation hub. Although it's well known for its skiing, it's the area's trails that draw me — particularly at two nearby small national parks, Glacier and Mount Revelstoke.

Glacier National Park (not to be confused with the park of same name in Montana) contains some of the most formidable, mountainous terrain in North America. And some of the snowiest too. The park's towering mountains reach upwards of 10,000 feet in elevation and are clad with more than 100 glaciers, which feed creeks and rivers that flow down deep-notched valleys.

The Trans-Canada Highway, completed in 1962, opened up Glacier for more recreation, yet it remains uncrowded. Frontcountry campsites along the Illecillewaet River are usually easy to secure. Take to nearly 90 miles of trails leading to primeval rainforests, silvery cascades, wilderness valleys home to grizzly bears and mountain goats, and high ridges offering mouth-dropping views of sky-piercing peaks and the massive Illecillewaet Glacier. Two of my favorite trails here — Abbott Ridge and Asulkan Valley — deliver mind-blowing alpine scenery. They are challenging hikes, but there are family-friendly nature trails in the park too.

**Craig Romano's** family hiking on the Abbott Ridge Trail in Glacier National Park near Revelstoke, British Columbia

Mount Revelstoke National Park is just outside of the city of Revelstoke. The 16-mile Meadows to Sky Parkway begins right in Revelstoke and winds 4,700 feet up steep, forested slopes to resplendent flowering alpine meadows just shy of Mount Revelstoke's 6,341-foot summit. It's the only sizeable peak in the Canadian national park system that you can practically summit by vehicle. You can stroll several short trails to meadows, a historic fire lookout, small alpine lakes, and stunning views of Revelstoke and the Columbia River below. Strong hikers and backpackers can head out to several large, sparkling alpine lakes set in high cirques beneath 7,700-foot Mount Williamson. Jade, the farthest and most challenging to hike to, practically guarantees solitude.

The park contains many miles of interpretive trails, including to the historic ski jump on Mount Revelstoke's lower reaches. And there are great paved trails in Revelstoke along the Columbia and Illecillewaet rivers. You can camp in the park or stay right in town — there are a number of lodging options. The city's historic downtown is a delight to walk, and there's usually live music or other events. Like with most of British Columbia, expect some excellent restaurants for your post-hike refueling!

**Craig Romano** is a guidebook author, [craigromano.com](http://craigromano.com). ■



# The Big Picture on Wide-Angle Photography

By Doug Diekema

**A** wide-angle lens is an essential part of the hiker's camera bag. Even if your only camera is your phone, it includes at least one wide-angle lens. While a wide-angle lens is great at some photographic challenges, it is terrible at others, and understanding the strengths and shortcomings of this lens will help improve your photography.

Wide-angle lenses have a field of view greater than that of the human eye, which usually translates into a focal length of less than about 35 mm. Be aware that the default lens on most phone cameras falls into the wide-angle category. For example, the iPhone Max has four lens settings: the 0.5x (ultra-wide setting) is 13 mm and the 1x (normal setting) is 24 mm, both wide-angle lenses. The 2x "telephoto" setting is 48 mm, which approximates a standard lens.

## Characteristics of wide-angle lenses

Wide-angle lenses provide greater field of view, allowing the photographer to fit more of a landscape into the image. But the lens also "pushes" distant objects farther away, making them appear even smaller. On the other hand, objects close to the lens will appear larger. The optics of these lenses causes other predictable effects. The wider the field of view, the more distortion you will notice, especially around the edges of the image. Straight lines may begin to bow (which worsens if you tilt the camera up or down), and close objects near the edges may appear elongated. You may also see vignetting (darkening) in the corners of the photo and images may lose sharpness at the edges. Finally, wide-angle lenses often provide a deep depth of field, allowing sharpness from foreground to background.



### When to use a wide-angle lens

A wide-angle lens is a great choice for compositions with a strong focal point in the foreground — a hiker close, a flower — when you also want a sharp background. This is why a wide-angle lens is usually used for “selfie” photography. A wide-angle lens will also “open up” tight spaces — like a narrow canyon or a mountain that is too close to capture with a standard lens. Finally, a wide-angle lens is a good for capturing expansive landscapes with vertical and horizontal interest — such as the Milky Way with mountains in the background.



**Wide-angle photos** work well to showcase images with a strong focal point or when you want the subject and the background to both be in clear focus.

### When not to use wide-angle

Trying to capture everything is often the path to a disappointing image. You may fit everything, but often at the expense of a compelling composition. Distant landscape features often appear tiny and lack detail. Without a strong foreground, the image may lack a compelling focal point, and much of the photo’s real estate may be taken up by a bland sky or other elements that detract from, rather than enhance, the photo. If you really want to fit “everything” in, consider using something like a 70 mm lens to create a panorama or use the telephoto lens on your camera in panoramic mode.

Wide-angle lenses can distort features close to the lens, like faces, arms and legs. Sometimes that will make for a fun photo, but it’s not likely to be flattering so be mindful.

Finally, a wide-angle lens is absolutely the wrong lens for wildlife photography — the animal will appear tiny, and if it doesn’t, you are too close.

### Wide-angle photography tips

Wide-angle lenses are ideal for accentuating interesting foregrounds while keeping more distant landscape features in focus. Compose the image with something interesting in front,

and get close to that object. Wide-angle photos are best when the image contains multiple layers of depth — an interesting foreground, middle and background. Use landscape features like fences, lines in the sand or a trail to lead the viewer’s eye from the foreground to a distant focal point.

Be clear about what makes the scene special. Is it the foreground flowers, the dramatic clouds, the brilliant Milky Way above a mountain range or a leaf on the trail? Make that the focal point.

Pay attention to distortion, especially along the edges and corners. Keeping the camera level with the horizon will minimize distortion. Be mindful of the distorting effect of these lenses on faces, arms and legs that are near the camera.

### Experiment and play

Wide-angle photography helps us see the world differently. The rules of composition still apply (good light, an off-center focal point, the rule of thirds, leading lines), but a wide-angle lens can provide unique creative opportunities. Don’t expect every wide-angle shot to work, but by playing with different lenses and focal lengths, you may surprise yourself with an image that provides a unique perspective on the landscape you’re hiking through.

# Safe in the Sun

How to protect your skin and stay cool on trail

By Sandra Saathoff



**Hiking, snowshoeing, skiing — these activities we love are good for us on so many levels.** They lower our stress levels, increase our fitness, fill our souls. We head out on trail in all kinds of weather to reconnect with ourselves. But did you know that, according to the Centers for Disease Control, Washington is in the top 10 of states with the highest rates of skin cancer? And, according to the American Cancer Society, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer during their lifetime? I didn't.

Knowing that doesn't change the fact that we're all aching to get out on trail, but maybe it will change our behavior while we're out there. The sun's ultraviolet radiation is out to get us, and protecting ourselves from it should become a top priority. When we think of how to achieve this, let's look at three areas: sunscreen, clothing and hiking strategy.

## Sunscreen

Sunscreen is often what we think of first for sun protection, and it's an important way to protect yourself — especially for any skin that can't be easily covered by clothing. Sunscreen creates a protective barrier against harmful UV radiation. It comes in two main categories — chemical barriers and physical barriers. What we see in stores is most often chemical-based — creams and sprays that absorb into the skin and then absorb UV rays, converting the rays into heat, which then release from the body.

Physical sunscreen contains natural active minerals that deflect the sun's UV rays away from the skin. They may work better for anyone sensitive to chemical sunscreens. I tried a variety over winter, because winter sun should be blocked, too. It comes in creams, sticks and sprays. Some may leave a light film on the skin that is undesirable to some people, but they all seemed to do their job quite well.

When selecting a sunscreen for outdoor activities (not just hiking, but gardening, mowing the lawn and all the other life things we do), consider factors such as SPF (sun protection factor), water resistance and broad-spectrum coverage.

Choose a sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30, which provides adequate protection for most outdoor activities. Water-resistant formulations are important, especially for sweaty uphill climbs and water crossings. Remember to apply sunscreen to all exposed skin, including often-overlooked areas like the ears, neck and backs of the hands. Don't forget to use a lip balm with SPF, as lips are susceptible to sunburn, too.

## Clothing

The issue with sunscreen is that we're supposed to reapply it every few hours — and many of us don't think to do that. This leads us to the next category of sun protection: clothing. If we've dressed appropriately, there's less skin to protect because our clothing is doing the job for us.

Starting from the top, literally...

**Hats:** A wide-brimmed hat is indispensable for keeping the sun off our scalps, faces, ears and necks. I'll admit, I prefer a ballcap, but if I'm going to be in the sun for long, I wear my floppy hat with the drop-down neck shade. It's even breathable,

so I am less prone to overheating.

**Sunglasses:** They're not just a fashion statement! Look for sunglasses that block 100% of UVA and UVB rays, and consider polarized lenses to reduce glare from reflective surfaces like water and snow and to protect against sunburn and cataracts.

**Sun shirts:** Lightweight sun shirts are widely available in a variety of weights and styles. I've tried ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rated shirts from Outdoor Research, The North Face, Willit, REI and Columbia. Most have been a standard long-sleeve hoodie, though I also have a couple of button-down shirts (with a zippered pocket!). They've all done their jobs — it really comes down to personal preference and hiking temperature, as some are lighter weight and more breathable than others. The hood is nice because it provides sun protection for your ears and neck without a hat.

**Sun sleeves:** Some people just prefer short-sleeve shirts. But if you still want some protection for your arms without having to slather on sunscreen, sun sleeves are elasticized and breathable, while offering protection from the sun.

**Sun gloves:** Sometimes we forget that our hands need protection, too, and sunscreen can wear off them quickly. Lightweight gloves offer a physical barrier and can add warmth in slightly chilly weather.

**Pants:** Long pants mean you don't need to apply sunscreen to your legs — a no-brainer. However, for some they're just too hot.

**Socks:** This is where tall socks can come in, covering your legs up to your knees while still allowing a cooling breeze.

**Gaiters:** Even the gaiters you wear to keep detritus out of your shoes can provide sun protection for your exposed ankles.

## Hiking strategies

How you plan your hike can help protect you from the sun as well. Choosing to stay out of the midday sun, hiking under the forest canopy during the most intense rays, and planning your route to include designated rest areas with natural shade can really cut your exposure to the sun.

You can even provide your own shade. Lightweight, compact sun umbrellas can be easily attached to backpacks or carried in a side pocket. They provide on-the-go shade, allowing hikers and backpackers to take a break from their hats without direct exposure to the sun.

When setting up camp, choose a location with natural shade, if possible, and position your tent or shelter strategically to maximize protection from the sun during peak hours. Creating a shaded rest area at camp ensures that you can enjoy the beauty of the outdoors while minimizing the risks associated with prolonged sun exposure.

With a little focus and strategy, you can hide your skin from the sun's UV rays while continuing to enjoy the activities you love. I know I'll be doing a better job going forward. So if you see me looking a little silly in my floppy hat, feel free to laugh. I'm doing my best to stay out of the skin cancer doctor's office. Won't you join me?



# Some More S'mores, Please!

By **Tiffany Chou**  
and **Joe Gonzalez**

Many things make camping great — sleeping under the stars, listening to nature sounds, unplugging from the stresses of everyday life — but perhaps the best part is eating s'mores. The iconic combo is delicious and fun to make around the campfire — or camp stove, if it's fire season and campfires are out.

You can never have enough s'mores (it's in the name!), but if you're looking to change up the classic, we've got ideas for you, some of which were sourced from hikers like you on social media, for your next camping trip.

When you're packing for your adventure, consider bringing along the ingredients for a s'more buffet station. Create your own fun or ridiculous recipes, or get some inspiration here.

## Graham cracker alternatives

- Trader Joe's Speculoos or Biscoff cookies
- Chocolate or vanilla wafers
- Brownie brittle
- Shortbread cookies
- Girl Scout cookies
- Oreo cookies
- Keebler Fudge Stripes cookies

## Chocolate bar alternatives

- Peanut butter cups
- Peppermint patties
- Rolo candies
- Nutella
- Extra-dark chocolate
- Orange chocolate
- Cookies-and-cream chocolate
- Chocolate with nuts (for some texture)
- Spicy chili chocolate

## Marshmallow alternatives

- Peeps
- Bananas
- Whipped cream

## Methodological alternatives

- Stuff chocolate into marshmallows before roasting
- Open-face s'more
- Double-decker s'more (three crackers, two marshmallows, two chocolates)
- Replace crackers with chocolate

## Recipe inspiration

### THE GIRL SCOUT

- Thin Mints, marshmallow
- WTA staff thoughts: "Perfect mint balance and well-melted chocolate."

### THE ALL-AMERICAN

- Graham crackers, marshmallow, peanut butter cup
- WTA staff thoughts: "There's a lot going on in there, but it's pretty good!"

### THE S'MOREO

- Oreo (split in half), marshmallow, chocolate
- WTA staff thoughts: "Delicious, chocolatey graham crackerlike texture."

### THE DALMATIAN

- Graham crackers, marshmallow, cookies-and-cream chocolate
- WTA staff thoughts: "I had to get to the center!"

### PATTY'S FAVORITE

- Graham crackers, marshmallow, peppermint patty
- WTA staff thoughts: "An interesting mix of textures, with a nice punch of mint"

### THE KEEBLER

- Keebler Fudge Stripes cookies, marshmallow, chocolate
- WTA staff thoughts: "The cookie's 'donut hole' makes it extra gooey and delicious."

### THE TABOO

- Graham crackers, caramelized Peeps, chocolate
- WTA staff thoughts: "They're fun to make (colors!) and even more fun to eat."

# Trails for Everyone, Forever



**At WTA, we envision a future where everyone who seeks nature's splendor can quickly find themselves outdoors.** A future where trails are so abundant and high quality that anyone can use them safely and enjoyably. A future where our shared wild spaces are cherished and protected by all.

**Help us secure this vision for the future.** Join the Legacy Circle by including WTA in your estate plan or will — it's never too soon to start planning your legacy.

To learn more about your giving options, contact Corinne Handelman at [chandelman@wta.org](mailto:chandelman@wta.org) or go to [wta.org/legacy](https://wta.org/legacy).

Photo by Lindsay Alaishuski



**Summertime**

# Share Your Adventures

**Long days, sunshine, trails opening for the season** — it's an exciting time of year for hikers! As we head into peak hiking season, remember to check trip reports — conditions change quickly as the snow melts. After you're done exploring, write a trip report of your own. When you share your trail stories, you help other hikers stay safe and know what to expect on their own hikes.





# Palouse to Cascades Trail – Lower Crab Creek

## Potholes region

This hike offers easy walking above the lakes and wetlands of Lower Crab Creek Coulee. You'll have expansive views plus a chance to see spring wildflowers and flocks of migrating water birds.

*By David Hagen*

East of the Columbia River, the Palouse to Cascades Trail runs straight as an arrow up Lower Crab Creek Coulee beneath the towering escarpment of the Saddle Mountains. The coulee is laced with lakes and wetlands that host hundreds of migrating water birds. In spring, the coulee is sprinkled with wildflowers. One favorite route is the walk along the bluffs above Nunnally and Merry lakes.

From the trailhead, cross the Palouse to Cascades Trail and head north on an old double track 0.4 mile to the low bluffs overlooking Nunnally Lake. From here, wander east as far as you like on a clear hunter/fisherman/hiker trail. The ground is sandy at first, and there are many opportunities to drop down to the lakeshore.

As you walk east, the bluffs get higher and more and more basalt begins to appear — slabs, boulders and larger outcrops, all festooned with colorful lichens and mosses. Along the way, there are views to the north across Nunnally and Merry lakes to the bluffs on the north side of the coulee and south to the dramatic 1,700-foot escarpment of the Saddle Mountains.

You can walk the bluffs all the way to Lake Lenice (2.5–3 miles), but you may prefer to find a nice spot above Merry Lake to stop for lunch. Wherever you stop, when you're ready to return, you can either retrace your steps or make your way over to the Palouse to Cascades Trail and walk the railroad bed back to your car for a nice loop hike.

**Tip:** There is no shade or water on this hike. If you go on a warm or hot, sunny day, be sure to have sunscreen, a shade hat and plenty of water.

**Distance:** 1 to 6+ miles ♦ **Elevation gain:** minimal

**Highest point:** 600 feet ♦ **Permit:** Discover Pass ♦ **Dogs:** Leashed

**Info:** [go.wta.org/crab-creek](http://go.wta.org/crab-creek)

**Trailhead:** From I-90 at Vantage, take exit 137 south to Highway 26.

Continue for 1 mile and turn right to remain southbound on Highway 243. In 7.2 miles, turn east onto Lower Crab Creek Road SW in Beverly. Drive 1.9 miles and turn left into the public fishing access.

## NEARBY HIKES

**Burkett Recreation Area:** Just east of Beverly, this recreation area features wide graveled paths around Burkett Lake with dramatic views of the Saddle Mountains and Sentinel Gap. The trails are wheelchair accessible and there are accessible outhouses. (Approximately 1.5 miles of trail, minimal elevation gain)

**Frenchman Coulee:** This is a mostly level walk on an old double track up spectacular Frenchman Coulee to a waterfall. (2 miles roundtrip, minimal elevation gain)

Photo by David Hagen

Wheelchair  
Friendly

## Middle Fork Campground Nature Trail

### North Bend area

Located within the day-use area of the popular Middle Fork Campground, a pleasant nature trail winds through a patch of forest adjacent to the Taylor River.

By Lindsay Leffelman

Also known as the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Little Interpretive trail, this short nature trail consists of one main loop — with several side trails — that makes its way through a delightfully mossy forest in the heart of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Valley. Following the loop counterclockwise, you will soon reach a short series of steps branching off from the trail. This side path makes its way to the shore of the Taylor River. Continuing on the loop, pass a large springboard stump and take time to read the interpretive signs that detail the area's natural features and human history.

At a fork in the trail, continue left to stay on the main loop. The path to the right leads to yet another fork — the day-use picnic area to the right and the campground road to the left via a series of stairs. Back along the main trail, enjoy the many shades of green along the trail and be on the lookout for a variety of fungi. Soon you will be back at the beginning of the loop.

With its short distance and minimal elevation gain, this is a great trail for young children or those with mobility issues. There are even a few benches along the way. The main loop trail's surface is crushed gravel and the grade is gentle, making this a potentially wheelchair-accessible hike. However, with so many trees overhead, it is common for debris ranging from cones and small twigs to larger branches to fall on the trail.

**Distance:** 0.25 mile roundtrip

**Elevation gain:** minimal

**Highest point:** 1,150 feet

**Map:** Green Trails No. 174SX: Middle Fork Snoqualmie

**Permit:** Northwest Forest Pass

**Dogs:** Leashed

**Info:** [go.wta.org/middle-fork-nature-trail](http://go.wta.org/middle-fork-nature-trail)

**Trailhead:** From I-5, take I-90 to North Bend. Take exit 34 and turn north. Continue north on 468th Avenue for 0.6 mile. Turn right on Middle Fork Road (FR 56). In approximately 12 miles, the Middle Fork Campground is on the left.

### NEARBY HIKES

**Middle Fork Connector Trail:** Connecting the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River and Garfield Ledges trailheads, this mellow trail meanders through mossy forest paralleling the Taylor River. Several side paths lead to the water's edge and dispersed campsites. (0.5 mile one-way, 40 feet of elevation gain)

**Upper CCC Road:** Streams, forests and mountain views greet you on this gentle path. The upper section starts and ends on the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road. (6.8 miles roundtrip, 400 feet of elevation gain)



## Grassy Knoll

### Columbia River Gorge

Take a short, heart-rate-elevating climb to a former fire lookout site with extensive views of the Columbia River Gorge, Oregon and the Silver Star Scenic Area.

By Anna Roth

Considering the unbelievable views and wildflower displays on this short hike, Grassy Knoll is a surprisingly quiet location for its proximity to the Gorge. You can get a great workout and be rewarded by one of Washington's most unique wildflower displays.

The trail begins by making its way through an open field full of wildflowers. Look for paintbrush, larkspur and shooting stars before diving into the forest. That stellar flower show is a tease — the best displays won't appear until you're nearly to the knoll.

Luckily, the top isn't far away. The trail begins to climb once you're in the forest, and it doesn't let up. Because it's so steep, the trail quality has suffered in places, but it's not hard to follow. At 1.2 miles, emerge from the forest to get views of the Big Lava Bed and the tip of Mount Adams to the east. You may also see some rock penstemon at your feet.

Duck back into the trees and continue hiking, heading downhill 200 feet to a small saddle before beginning your final steep approach to Grassy Knoll. Here the flowers are back in force, and as you wind around the knoll to the summit, enjoy phlox, more larkspur and paintbrush.

Look up from the flower show and take in Mount Hood, dominating the Gorge. That big chunky mountain in front and to the left of Hood, on the Washington side, is Augspurger Mountain, another alternate to the always-popular Dog Mountain. Looking down and to the right, spy a little twinkle of the Columbia River; straight west, the mass of Table Mountain; and further to the north, the tiny peak of Silver Star. Turn left for a view of coy Mount Adams and the Big Lava Bed to the northeast.

**Tip:** If you're wildflower hunting, extend your hike 2 miles (roundtrip) to Grassy Pass. From the lookout site, continue up the trail and enjoy flowers for up to a mile.

**Distance:** 4.4 miles roundtrip

**Elevation gain:** 1,048 feet

**Highest point:** 3,648 feet

**Map:** Green Trails No. 397: Wind River, Green Trails No. 398: Willard

**Permit:** None ♦ **Dogs:** Leashed

**Info:** [go.wta.org/grassy-knoll](http://go.wta.org/grassy-knoll)

**Trailhead:** Drive east on Highway 14 from Stevenson. After 3 miles, turn left onto Wind River Road. In 4.1 miles, turn right onto Bear Creek Road. In 3.6 miles, the road becomes the gravel FR 6808. Continue for 7.2 miles to a three-way intersection. There are two forks along the way: At the first fork, bear right to stay on the main road, and at the second fork, bear left. At the three-way intersection, take the left fork onto FR 68. Drive 2.1 miles and turn right to enter the parking area. The trailhead is marked with a sign across the road from the parking area.

### NEARBY HIKES

**Bunker Hill:** Climb this steadily uphill trail to what used to be the site of a fire lookout. The lookout is now gone, but the trail remains and is a great thigh-burner through grassy meadow and old-growth forest. (4.4 miles roundtrip, 1,250 feet of elevation gain)

**Lower Falls Creek Trail:** Check out a triple waterfall via a relatively quick hike that takes you through forest and over a cable suspension bridge. (3.4 miles roundtrip, 600 feet of elevation gain)

Photo by Anna Roth



## Sweat Creek Basin Trail

### Okanogan Highlands/Kettle River Range

A hike through a gorgeous old-growth forest offers excellent views of nearby summits in the Okanogan Highlands.

By Holly Weiler

Start at the site of a former campground — most amenities have been removed, although a toilet remains.

Proceed past the toilet. There is no signage, but the trail is easily visible behind the bathrooms. After a short distance, the trail passes through a hiker turnstile adjacent to a cattle fence. If you choose to use the fence gate instead of the turnstile (a tight fit for backpacks!), be sure to close the gate, as this area has an active grazing allotment in the summer.

Crossing the fence, the trail reaches a junction with the Clackamas Mountain Trail. Turn east to continue on the Sweat Creek Basin Trail. The trail climbs quickly and steadily, passing beneath the powerlines. The views get better along the way as the trail meanders beneath large old-growth ponderosa pine, Douglas fir and western larch.

At the 4.5-mile mark, reach Hunter Spring, the first access to water. There is a cistern, a cattle trough and a large campsite at this location. Exercise caution if camping here, as there are many standing dead Douglas fir trees in the immediate vicinity of the campsite.

From Hunter Spring, there is an unmarked trail junction leading to Maple Mountain to the east, but the main trail continues to ascend northwest out of the camp area. In approximately 1.5 miles, the trail reaches Pass Spring, which has another campsite. At the 6.5-mile mark, Sweat Creek Basin intersects Clackamas Mountain Trail to the west and the West Fork Trail continues north.

Sweat Creek Basin is part of the Pacific Northwest Trail, which continues along the West Fork Trail.

**Tip:** This trail is spectacular in the spring as the wildflowers begin to bloom.

**Distance:** 6.5 miles one way  
**Elevation gain:** 1,600 feet  
**Highest point:** 5,180 feet  
**Map:** USGS Wauconda Summit ♦ **Permit:** None  
**Dogs:** Leashed  
**Info:** [go.wta.org/sweat-creek](http://go.wta.org/sweat-creek)

**Trailhead:** From Tonasket, drive east on SR 20 for 31.5 miles. Turn left into the Sweat Creek Picnic Area, marked by a national forest sign. Or, from Republic, drive west on SR 20 for 8.6 miles and turn right into the picnic area.

### NEARBY HIKES

**Thirteenmile:** This segment of the Pacific Northwest Trail provides hikers with plenty of wide views and wildflowers as they walk along a ridgeline. (16.5 miles one way, 2,000 feet of elevation gain)

**Ferry County Rail Trail:** Whether you're just looking for a stroll outside or hoping to train for an upcoming race, this long rail trail is a great one to create your own hike for hikers of all ages and abilities. (30.3 miles one way, 1,374 feet of elevation gain)

Photo by Holly Weiler



**Wheelchair  
Friendly**

**Take Transit**

# Vista Ridge Trail

## Seattle-Tacoma area

This paved and graveled loop trail is a great option whether you're looking for a weekend stroll or somewhere to condition for a race within Auburn city limits.

*By Tiffany Chou*

Start at Sunset Park, where you might catch a glimpse of Rainier in the distance.

Walk past the skate park on your left and turn left. From here, the paved trail follows Lakeland Hills Way for 0.7 mile. Along the way, there are a few benches and trash cans if you'd like to take a break. Take care when crossing the street, which you'll have to do several times.

At the intersection of Lakeland Hills Way and Evergreen Way SE, cross the street to the north side of Evergreen Way SE and turn left.

In a few hundred feet, turn right and walk to Dorothy Bothell Park. This is another great break spot, with its picnic tables and play structure. Continue around the park along the paved path. From here, the trail moves away from the street and becomes quieter.

A few hundred feet past the park, turn left at the junction; turn left again to reach an exit point. The trail widens here and sits behind a residential neighborhood.

In about 0.3 mile, carefully cross the street and continue along the wide trail, which will begin to head away from the residential area and gradually downhill. In 0.3 mile, you'll feel more encased in nature as trees begin to surround the trail. Soon after, continue straight at the junction.

The trail begins to follow Lake Tapps Parkway E in 0.4 mile. Turn left when you reach the road, and get ready for a climb! The last 0.7 mile of the loop is a moderately steep ascent along the road back to Sunset Park. Aside from the final steep climb, much of this loop is flat and wheelchair friendly. Both Sunset Park and Dorothy Bothell Park have paved walkways and ADA-accessible parking, and many sections of the loop are wide and paved or well-graveled.

**Distance:** 2.6 miles roundtrip  
**Elevation gain:** 310 feet  
**Highest point:** 602 feet  
**Permit:** None  
**Dogs:** Leashed  
**Info:** [go.wta.org/vista-ridge](http://go.wta.org/vista-ridge)

**Trailhead:** From Auburn, head south on A Street SE for 3 miles. Turn left on Lakeland Hills Way SE and continue for 1.9 miles. Turn right on 69th Street SE. The Sunset Park parking lot will be on your left. There is plenty of paved parking here, as well as toilets, trash cans, covered picnic tables, a play structure and multiple sports fields.

You can also take public transit to get to Sunset Park. From Auburn, take bus 497 south toward Lakeland Hills. The bus will drop you off right next to the parking lot at the Sunset Park & Ride stop in Lakeland Hills.

## NEARBY HIKES

**White River Trail – Auburn:** Follow the White River along a paved, multi-use trail through Roegner Park and Game Farm Wilderness Park. (4.7 miles roundtrip, 115 feet of elevation gain)

**Sumner Link Trail:** Here, you'll get river views, wildlife and native vegetation alongside agriculture and industry, right along the White River. This trail connects to the Interurban Trail and Foothills Trail to offer even more urban hiking options. (5.5 miles one way, 199 feet of elevation gain)

Photo by Linnea Johnson



## Puffer Butte

Palouse and Blue Mountains

By Craig Romano

Puffer Butte in lightly visited Fields Spring State Park sits at the eastern edge of the Blue Mountains where Washington meets Idaho and Oregon. It's a breathtaking landscape of high plateaus, deep canyons and pine-forested hills. Wildlife — especially deer and elk — is abundant. This short loop hike up Puffer Butte rewards you with stunning views.

Puffer Butte teeters high above the sweltering Grande Ronde River Valley. With its lofty elevation above 4,000 feet, the butte is cloaked with cool pine, larch and Douglas-fir forest. These are the ancestral lands of the Nez Perce, who were forcibly removed from southeast Washington in the 1870s. The butte and state park are named after homesteading families.

The trail begins in a mature conifer forest with a lush understory of maple. Follow it, passing a couple of trails and a road that's closed to vehicles (excellent for skiing in winter). Ascend gentle slopes, watching for elk, deer, grouse and wild turkeys. At 1 mile, reach a junction with a short spur bearing right to Puffer's wooded, viewless 4,500-foot summit. Continue straight to another junction at the edge of a sprawling meadow. To the right is a winter warming hut. Fields Spring State Park is an excellent snowshoe and ski touring center.

Now continue left across open meadows of swaying grasses and dazzling wildflowers, and take in the breathtaking views. Gaze south across the Grande Ronde canyon to the lofty Wallowa Mountains and east to the Craig Mountains of Idaho, hovering above the sprawling Snake River Canyon.

Then head north, descending into a pine forest. After crossing a park road, reach a junction. Veer left, passing the Puffer Butte Lodge Environmental Learning Center, and continue hiking on the Spotted Bear Trail, which will return you to the main trail. The trailhead is just a short distance to the right.

**Tip:** Wildflowers are exceptional in early summer.

**Post hike:** Spend a quiet night in the state park's campground, which is set in a grove of tall pines.

**Distance:** 2.5 miles roundtrip  
**Elevation gain:** 600 feet  
**Highest point:** 4,550 feet  
**Book:** "100 Classic Hikes Washington" (Mountaineers Books)

**Permit:** Discover Pass

**Dogs:** Leashed

**Trailhead:**

From Clarkston, head south on SR 129 for 30.5 miles to

Fields Spring State Park. Turn left into the park and drive 0.5 mile to the trailhead.

**Info:** [go.wta.org/puffer-butte](http://go.wta.org/puffer-butte)

*Craig Romano is a guidebook author, [craigromano.com](http://craigromano.com).*

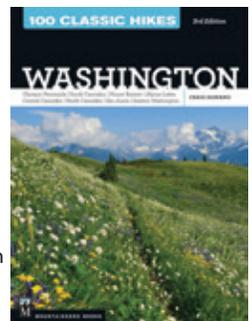
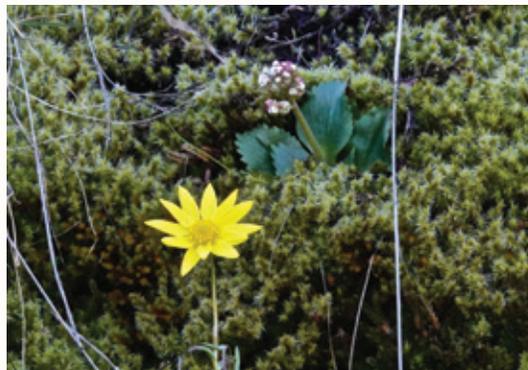


Photo by Craig Romano



## DECADES OF HIKES & STORIES

**Trip reporters Bob and Barb** have been sharing their stories and helping other hikers for decades. Their first trip report on wta.org is from Dungeness River in 2005, and they wrote a few back in the Signpost days — even winning two WTA photography awards. Now in their mid-80s, they've written more than 1,400 trip reports and continue to explore the state together and report back on trail conditions.

In the spring, Bob and Barb love to report on wildflowers, and include gorgeous photos like

the ones above from a trip to Maryhill State Park earlier this year.

"One of the reasons I enjoy writing reports is because it is a 'diary' for us," Barb said. "I enjoy reading reports for the photos and info on conditions of trail, flowers or fall colors seen and new ideas for places to go."

We love following their adventures, and so many of us have drawn inspiration from their trip reports. Thanks for your dedication, Bob and Barb!

To enjoy more beautiful images and trip reports, or to write your own, go to [wta.org/tripreports](https://wta.org/tripreports)



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Photo courtesy of Wild Grief