

Hikes and gear to keep you happy all winter

Washington TRAILS

A Publication of Washington Trails Association | wta.org

northwest EXPOSURE

2017 Calendar: Photo Winners Revealed

Jan+Feb 2017



SUMMER BEGINS
» FEBRUARY 11TH

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**Trails all over Washington
need your help.**

You can give back to trails this summer on a WTA Volunteer Vacation or Backcountry Response Team. Join us for a multi-day adventure during which you will have the opportunity to work alongside fun and friendly people while accomplishing much-needed trail work in beautiful locations across the state.

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Photo courtesy of REI





New Year, New Leader

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Washington Trails Association is a volunteer-driven membership organization. As the nation's largest state-based hiking nonprofit, WTA is the voice for hikers in Washington state. We engage and mobilize a community of hikers as advocates and stewards—through collaborative partnerships, grassroots advocacy, volunteerism, education and inspiration. WTA is committed to making trails accessible to everyone in Washington and protecting our state's wild places for the next generation.

.....

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

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I will open the New Year with exciting news: Jill Simmons will start on February 13 as WTA's next executive director. Jill will lead us into our second half-century amid unprecedented love for trails and need for our work.

Our board chose Jill after a six-month national search featuring 75 candidates. Jill is an avid hiker and long-time WTA member with more than 15 years of professional experience in the public and philanthropic sectors. She served under two mayors as director of the Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment, working closely with government, nonprofit, and business partners to help Seattle achieve its bold environmental goals. I'm sure you will be impressed, as we have been, by her passion for trails and strategic focus on achieving our vision.

Jill's top priority will be to implement WTA's ambitious strategic plan. Just in the last five years, we have gained 54 percent more members, organized 45 percent more hours of volunteer trail work, and informed trail users through 320

percent more website sessions. But we can't stop there. The number of hikers—of all ages and backgrounds, in all parts of our state—continues to increase, so we need to do more to maintain our trails, speak up for our public lands and use new technologies to help more people find and appreciate them. Jill and her team will translate our strategic goals into practical initiatives that protect trails and connect Washingtonians to our state's amazing wild places.

Our successful search had many ingredients. Special thanks to Karen Daubert, whose five years as executive director left WTA ready to take on the opportunities ahead. Also to Rebecca Lavigne, our Trails Program director, whose service as interim executive director kept WTA running smoothly, which made a thorough search possible. And finally, thanks to the six-member search committee led by former board president Wendy Wheeler Jacobs, which worked diligently to find the best person to honor WTA's legacy and culture while carrying our mission forward.

I know that Jill will do a great job leading WTA to the next level. Please join all of us in welcoming Jill to the helm.



Jill Simmons will join WTA as our new executive director in February.

Bruce Burger



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WTA presents the winners from our annual photo contest. » **Inside**

Powerful partnerships

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A new son, a new style of hiking

Craig Romano hasn't slowed down since the birth of his son, but he's shifted his perspectives. » **p. 18**

A chance to save a forest

The Port Gamble Forest could be a park four times the size of Central Park in New York—but time is running out to save it forever. » **p. 20**

Cover: Riverside State Park shows that close-in adventures can deliver outstanding scenery. Photo by Craig Goodwin.

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The power of *photos*

A picture is worth a thousand words. It's a cliché, of course. But like many clichés, it's also true. Images are powerful. When I started taking long backpacking trips with my husband, I made a habit of making a photo book for each trip. I usually created them in the winter, once the shorter days and rain had driven me inside.

All year long, *Washington Trails* shares stories of the amazing people and places of Washington's hiking community. A big part of the way we do that is with photos. This year, I had the privilege of helping to judge our annual Northwest Exposure photo contest. It was a wonderful and inspirational experience. Choosing the winners was excruciatingly difficult—there were so many stunning images.

I am so grateful for all of you who shared your images with us. While we can't fit them all in the calendar—we received 4,897 submissions—we appreciate every one. Take a look at the calendar inserted in this magazine for the winning photos, which were selected by our judges. We've included a short story about each photographer and how they captured the image. I loved hearing the stories from these photographers. While some are professionals, most are simply passionate about the craft or enthusiastic hikers who captured a powerful moment.

For a taste of even more images, check out Pages 34 and 35, where I share my picks for honorable mention. (Being editor has some excellent perks. Getting to share my favorite images is one of them.) And again, thank you to everyone who shared a photo with us. We will use these photos all year long. You may see them in this magazine or we may carry them to Washington, D.C., to help advocate for funding for our state's trails.

I hope that, as you look through this year's winners, you are inspired. Perhaps you will finally plan that epic hike you've been dreaming about. Or you'll get your children out for their first hike. Or maybe, being reminded of the glorious wild places we have in Washington, you'll feel motivated to call your legislators and tell them how important trails are to you. At the very least, I hope these images welcome you to the new year with a feeling of hope and inspiration.

Happy New Year!

Jessi



Photo by Jeongrae Cho

Before You Plan, Dream

Where to find inspiration for your big New Year's goals

Here we are in deep winter, in the dark and quiet days when the wind bites hardest and snow hangs heavy on the high peaks.

For some, it can be a tough season to weather. For others, the snow and solitude are something to cherish. But there's another reason to love these dim, cold months: This is the time for dreaming.

Inspiration for adventure can strike at any time, but there is a special quality about the new year when we seem most open to it. This is the time to return to the scraps of information we hikers are always collecting: bookmarked Trip Reports, dog-eared guidebooks, pages torn from magazines, favorited photographs, highlighted maps, a mile-long list of saved hikes in My Backpack.

Inspiration is more than a to-do list; it's that feeling that comes over you when you look at the list and something speaks to you.

It's that little bubble of excitement just under your ribs when you see a photo of a hiker—a total stranger, even—standing in front of a mountain that you don't know but suddenly must get to know.

So where to search for the spark?

Follow the adventures of audacious people. From Kevin Fedarko's *The Emerald Mile* to Erin McKittrick's *Small Feet, Big Land* to Adventure Journal's regular Historical Badass column to the latest podcast from Dirtbag Diaries, there is no shortage of great storytelling about people doing incredible things.

Closer to home, pull out your Green Trails maps or dog-eared guidebooks and start highlighting the trails that look interesting.

Dig deep into trip reports from seasons past. When I need great advice on desert hiking or early-season backpacking, I turn to mytho-man's Trip Reports.

When I set my sights on backpacking Eastern Washington, I dig into Holly Weiler's reports. When I'm looking for great basecamping adventures, I look back at Bob and Barb's reports. For daily inspiration, the regular reports from onehikeaweek or hikingwithlittledogs keep me motivated.

Are you more inspired by photos than words? Surround yourself with the possibilities. Tear pages from this magazine and post photos you love from places you've never been to. Curate an Instagram feed or blogroll from trip reporters: real people having real adventures right here in Washington. Go outside. Look at the mountains on the horizon and pick one. Search everywhere and wait for something to seize you and shake you and say: "This! Do this." Then start to make your action plan. Set goals and milestones.

Then go and, in the doing of it, perhaps you'll inspire someone else next year.

Trail Smarts

5 Steps to a Perfect Plan



No matter how modest or ambitious your hiking goals, a good plan is the key to helping you achieve them.

Want to try hiking with your toddler? Rehab a knee so you can hike to Spray Park in wildflower season? Section hike the Pacific Crest Trail—while keeping your day job? Want to spend 10 percent of 2017 sleeping under the stars? A great plan is the first step.

Five key elements of a good plan:

- 1. Know what, exactly, is required.** Time, money, permits, physical strength, skills, co-conspirators, gear: Before you can do anything, you need to know what you'll need. Make a list and get really specific about it.
- 2. Research early.** Part and parcel of defining what your goals will take is doing the research. When researching your trips, knowing as many details as possible ahead of time can make all the difference. Look at maps, read Trip Reports and hiker blogs. Call ranger stations. Research the likely weather. Know the regulations. If your goals are largely physical, talk to your doctor.
- 3. Create an action plan.** Now that you've researched and listed your requirements, it's time to work backward. If your goal requires training, you'll want to build time into your life. When will you need to start saving your gas money and asking around for gear you might borrow or get cheap? If your goal will require new skills—such as navigation or changing a diaper on trail—figure out when and how you will learn and practice those skills.
- 4. Invite co-conspirators.** You have a community—your family, friends, colleagues and the larger hiking community. Use them! Share your goals and (this one is hard for many of us) ask for help. Work out a plan to open up time to work toward your goal. Join a hiking group or sign up for Hike-a-Thon with WTA. If you want to take your baby backpacking, start recruiting friends to help share the load. Find a training partner to keep you honest.
- 5. Have a backup plan.** Any good plan has a backup. A backup plan for your backup plan isn't a bad idea either. Life happens, so try to anticipate any possible barriers to your goals: weather, wildfire, work emergencies, injuries. Having a Plan B and C will keep your options open when things go sideways.

A final word: Celebrate the small wins along the way. Every mile on the way to your goal is an achievement. The first time you find yourself on a map: success. You hike pain free after surgery: success. Take the little wins, and eventually they'll add up to something greater.

Do you have any hiking or trail goals for 2017?



“Goals: Hike-a-Thon, Granite Mountain, Camp Muir (stretch goal). I also want to do more camping and try a few one-night backpacking trips.”

—SITA MANSOUR, WTA MEMBER AND HIKE-A-THONER REHABBING POST-SURGERY

“Get in better shape so I can do longer hikes and get to fire lookouts I have not been to yet. I have a long term goal to try and hike to all our remaining lookouts.”

—GABE PURPUR, WTA MEMBER AND TRIP REPORTER

“Dreaming big about the #PNT!”

—CAITY ROCK, WTA MEMBER

“My goal is to earn my trail crew vest, which is awarded to volunteers who have completed 25 work parties.”

—BRITT LÉ, WTA VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGER



Photo by Daniel Silverberg

The Leaders in Logging-Out

Award criteria

1. Uniqueness or ingenuity displayed in completing the job without the use of motorized support.
2. The resurrection of traditional skills or tools.
3. Accomplishment of a job with traditional skills and tools when motorized tools could have been used.
4. Difficulty or challenging nature of the task.

WTA earns national award from Forest Service

Each year, the U.S. Forest Service recognizes individuals and groups that have demonstrated excellence and leadership in six different categories for the National Wilderness Awards Program.

WTA is proud to announce that we have received the 2016 Traditional Skills and Minimum Tool Leadership Award for the work that our saw teams accomplish in the wilderness. WTA was honored for our long-time dedication to training volunteers to safely and effectively use these traditional and valuable tools.

Though it might seem easier to use chainsaws in certain situations and places, offering volunteers the opportunity to work alongside certified sawyers provides them with a glimpse of a time long before the convenience of modern-

day motorized tools. Saw teams are especially valuable in remote areas, which are often difficult to reach with heavy motorized equipment. Moreover, the use of saw teams and sawyers ensures that WTA upholds the prohibition on motorized equipment within wilderness areas as defined by the Wilderness Act.

Currently, WTA has more than 60 certified sawyers available to lead crosscut saw teams on volunteer work parties. At WTA, saw teams are composed of three people, one of whom must be a certified sawyer. These trained volunteers give WTA's other volunteers the chance to learn new skills and see what goes into this important work.

WTA is proud to accept this award on behalf of all of our sawyers, without whom this kind of work would not be possible. Thank you for keeping the art of the sawyer alive and well!

What to Expect

Our state's trails and public lands have been experiencing an unprecedented number of visitors as more people have come to Washington to live, work and play. And the trend isn't likely to change. Washington's population is expected to grow by 1.8 million people over the next 25 years.

We are excited at the prospect of new hikers to advocate in support of trails, but we also know that more investment will be needed to support the increase. We need more new trails and more work on existing trails—and the funding to support both.

Funding for trails and outdoor recreation lands will be the primary focus for WTA during the 2017 state legislative session.

The legislative session runs from January 9 to April 23; the focus will be on developing the state's 2017-2019 budget.

All of the state land agencies that have recreation lands—Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Parks and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife—will have funding requests. In addition,

major grant-funding programs—the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Nonhighway and the Off-Road Vehicle Activities program, Recreational Trails Program—will be up for reauthorization as well.

WTA will support funding for:

- Teanaway Community Forest budget requests, to ensure that people are able to access and enjoy the forest lands.
- Washington State Parks' budget requests, to keep our parks and trail accessible.
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition's program. WWRP is the largest source of funding for bike and ski trails in Washington.
- Washington Department of Natural Resources' request for recreation funding for the Natural Areas program.

Washington state has some of the best-loved and most-visited open spaces and trails in the country for hiking, walking, bicycling and horseback riding. We want to see trails and public lands protected. Join us on Hiker Rally Day on February 15 to help advocate for trails.

To keep up-to-date with our work during the legislative session, go to wta.org/action.

Hiker Rally Day: 3 reasons to attend

1. We need your voice. To represent you, elected officials need to hear from people in their district.
2. Learn a new skill. You don't have to be an expert. WTA will train you to meet with legislators.
3. Your story is more powerful than numbers. We can provide the stats; you provide the personal connection.

Hiker Rally Day is February 15.

Register today at wta.org/hikerrallyday.

Teanaway Community Forest: Help Plan Trails

Hikers, bikers, equestrians and other outdoor enthusiasts have enjoyed the scenic Teanaway River Valley for generations. In 2013, the state purchased 50,000 acres in the area and created Washington's first community forest. There is no formal trail system or recreation plan—yet.

That will change, thanks to a new planning process. The Washington Department of Natural Resources and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, which jointly manage the land, want to hear from the public to help shape recreation priorities for the area—including if new trails should be added, and where. The agencies will listen to feedback from the public, and the plan for trails and recreation will reflect that input.

The recreation planning area covers the entire 50,000-acre forest and the three forks of the Teanaway River system, where hikers can discover astounding views and iconic geologic formations like Cheese Rock. The forest also contains nearly 400 miles of free-flowing streams that fish and wildlife rely on for their habitat.

The plan is an important part of managing this new community forest, and it could take up to two years to finish. Hikers, however, will get the benefit of new and sustainable trails in the area.

WTA has participated in the Teanaway advisory committee since 2014 and will continue to represent hikers' interests as the process moves forward. We hope other members of the hiking community will take this opportunity to help shape the future of trails in the Teanaway. **Read more information about our work on the Teanaway at wta.org/teanaway.**

For more information, including when upcoming meetings are planned, go to www.dnr.wa.gov/teanaway to sign up for DNR's Teanaway email list.



WTA's third class of youth ambassadors is ready to share the joys of hiking and volunteering with their peers. This year's cohort gathered in November to meet each other and learn new skills. Photo by Andrew Pringle.

Youth Leaders Make New Connections

Sitting on a panel with four other teens, high school senior Julian Narvaez shared his thoughts with his peers at the third annual Youth Ambassador Summit. "It is very rare to get a community that is this focused and this passionate about one thing [trails]. It's definitely a gift, so take advantage of it."

In mid-November, WTA hosted the Youth Ambassador Summit with the goal of giving teens an opportunity to meet like-minded peers from around the state and to provide an introduction to continued involvement with WTA and information on jobs, internships and volunteer opportunities with outdoor and environmental organizations.

WTA's new cohort of 15 ambassadors represents 14 high schools from Stanwood, Darrington, Edmonds, Olympia, North Bend, Yakima, Kirkland and Seattle. Over the course of two days, ambassadors participated in sessions related to public

speaking, leadership, diversity, equity, inclusion, resume writing and careers.

Several ambassadors had attended the previous Youth Ambassador Summit, and there was a session dedicated to learning from those veteran ambassadors. Some returning ambassadors shared how they used the experience and training from last year to launch hiking clubs at their schools and gain employment. After last year's summit, Narvaez made a resume based on the tips he was given—and landed a job. Another returning ambassador, Reya Fore, shared her experience of taking middle school students on a hike. The middle schoolers' enthusiasm led to staff at the school starting a hiking club for students.

Returning ambassador Ben Rankin reflected on how the program has created opportunities for him that he could not have imagined. "Even more important than the hiking club I started are the connections I made here. I have gone

on hikes and ski trips with a lot of the ambassadors that I met last year ... I have really close friends who like to hike now. It's a great thing that has really changed my life. [Before I attended the Youth Ambassador Summit] I had only one friend in Darrington [who] hiked regularly with me, and now it's opened a door to a whole new world of hiking. When they say a community of hikers, this is it, man."

Over the next five months, ambassadors will be busy presenting opportunities for youth to engage with WTA in their schools and neighborhoods. Ambassadors will also develop an independent project of their choice, such as organizing a work party or starting an outdoor club at their school.

We want to welcome all the ambassadors to our community and thank them for all the time and energy they're dedicating to blazing a path for Pacific Northwest youth to access trails and outdoor experiences.



On Youth Vacations, you'll get the chance to make a lasting impact on trails. This crew at Pear Lake is showing off their new rock steps. Photo by Jacob Mandell.

Youth Volunteer Vacations

How to Apply in 5 Easy Steps

We're looking forward to another great season of trail work for high school students this summer. Make sure you know how to apply for your space on Youth Volunteer Vacations with these easy steps:

- 1** Make a My Backpack account at wta.org (parents and youth will both need an account).
- 2** Complete your required forms, including a medical history form, parental release and teacher reference (for new summer volunteers). Apply for a scholarship.
- 3** Submit your application starting February 3, when our schedule of trips is announced. Priority placement will be given to applications received by February 20.
- 4** Discover which trips you are on when WTA emails you, starting March 8.
- 5** Secure your space on your trip(s) by paying your trip fee(s) within two weeks.

Questions? Check out our application details at wta.org/teens.

\$500 for 50th: Challenge Met!

In honor of WTA's 50th anniversary, our generous donors Steve and Cynthia Hammer stepped forward to issue a challenge. When 200 people contributed \$500 or more over and above their 2015 giving level by the end of 2016, the Hammers would contribute \$100,000 to WTA. We're thrilled to report that we met the challenge, raising more than \$200,000 for trails! Many thanks to the Hammers for this amazing contribution—and many thanks to all who participated! Your generous support helps jump-start the next 50 years of trails.



In November, WTA youth volunteers built a new switchback during our first work party in partnership with Seattle Parks. Look for more family work parties coming up this year. Photo by Jacob Mandell.



Members of WTA's Legacy Circle gathered at the home of former WTA Executive Director Karen Daubert to celebrate 50 years of trails. Learn how you can leave a legacy for trails at wta.org/legacy. Photo by Jared Smith.



Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Supervisor Jamie Kingsbury presented WTA with a golden shovel to commemorate our 50th anniversary during our annual volunteer appreciation party in Seattle. Photo by Anna Roth.

2 New Trails Planned Near Skykomish

The recreation community's wait has ended! After its initial proposal several years ago, the Alpine Falls and Frog Mountain Trail Construction Project was approved in late October. This project will create two trails.

The Frog Mountain Trail, into the Wild Sky Wilderness, will be a roughly 4-mile path to the mountain's summit. It will be off the Beckler River Road and offer an alternative to the beloved Beckler Peak and Evergreen Mountain Lookout trails.

The Wild Sky Wilderness is the state's newest wilderness area, and the recreation community has asked for more trails in and around the wilderness. In 2014, WTA was among 13 conservation and recreation groups in the state that wrote a letter to the U.S. Forest Service supporting these new trails.

Alpine Falls, along U.S. Highway 2, will get a new family-friendly and ADA-accessible trail for day hiking. Alpine Falls is located just 6 miles outside of the town of Skykomish. The ADA-accessible trail will lead to a viewpoint of the falls.

A construction date has not been announced, but we'll keep you up to date on the progress.



Beckler Peak is a popular hike near Skykomish. A new trail nearby will climb to the peak of Frog Mountain and offer another option for hikers in the area. Photo by Erik Haugen-Goodman.

Explore 100 Peaks in Mount Rainier National Park

March 4
Mountaineers Program Center in Seattle

Presented by Mountaineers Books and Washington Trails Association

Learn more at wta.org/100peaks-rainier

Photo by Craig Allen

Membership Update



Thank you for being a member of WTA.

As a member, you're providing critical support for WTA's programs—and you're sending a powerful message that you care about Washington's wild places. As more people seek opportunities to explore trails, WTA is called upon to grow our capacity to inform hikers, maintain trails and advocate for public lands. From new website features to expanded trail work across the state, we're putting your membership dollars to work like never before.

That's why in 2017 we are raising our basic membership rate from \$40 to \$50.

When you join or renew at the \$50 level, you'll receive *Washington Trails* magazine six times per year and a brand-new decal featuring our updated logo, among other benefits. Thank you for your outstanding support and for continuing to build a legacy for our trails. **To learn more about membership levels, visit wta.org/support.**



White Hat Award recipient Pete Dewell proudly wears his award at the 2016 Seattle volunteer appreciation event. Photo by Anna Roth.

And the White Hat Goes to ...

Pete Dewell!

Not many folks are aware of WTA's coveted White Hat Award. Since WTA's inception in 1966, only eight individuals have been named White Hat Award winners. Past recipients include Louise Marshall, WTA's founder; Bill Sunderland, the mastermind behind the WTA website; and Elizabeth Lunney, WTA's longest-serving executive director. What do these folks have in common? Their extraordinary commitment, service and leadership over the course of many years have had a transformative and everlasting impact on WTA.

This year, WTA is proud to announce our newest inductee to the White Hat Award club: longtime member, dedicated volunteer and outspoken trails advocate Pete Dewell.

We wouldn't be surprised if you've worked alongside Pete on a work party or if you've spotted him out and about while on a hike. Since first becoming involved with WTA in the late 1990s, Pete has spent more than 1,600 days (that's almost four and a half years!) out on trail as a volunteer. But it doesn't stop there; in addition to his time spent on trail, Pete also served several years on WTA's board of directors, has graciously provided pro bono legal counsel to the organization and has even written a how-to trail guide for trail volunteers.

"I began doing trail work with WTA around 1998," Pete says. "As I began to come out more often, crew leaders taught me more skills—construction of puncheons, walls, steps and turnpikes, for instance—which increased my trail building fun and satisfaction. For me, all trail building and maintenance work is fun, even brushing and duff removal. I find that personally doing the work, as well as teaching how to do it, give me equal satisfaction."

We can't thank Pete enough for his steadfast commitment to WTA and for everything he has done for the organization and the hiking community at large. Make sure to congratulate Pete the next time you see him out on trail!



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The *value of* urban partnerships

**Close-in trails help WTA reach
more hikers, all year long**

BY WTA STAFF



Photo by Todd Bridges

At Washington Trails Association, we believe strongly in the value of getting people outside. We want everyone to have the ability to access the outdoors.

While WTA is perhaps better known for working in more remote areas, our urban projects are also a vital part of our mission.

Trails in and around cities offer a wide range of benefits. They are a welcoming way for new hikers or families with young children to start exploring. They're also an excellent way for avid hikers to get in quick trips before or after work or to stay in shape when higher trails are inaccessible. By teaming up with agencies that work in or near urban areas, we both benefit. Cities get improved access to green spaces, and we gain a new way to expand our reach.

Much of our close-in work is powered by volunteers. Veteran trail workers are frequently joined by new volunteers who discovered WTA simply by seeing the work on their favorite local trails.

We have a long history of powerful partnerships with land agencies all over the state. Here are some of the stories of the newest areas where we've been working—in and near cities and with partners who help us expand our reach.

Swan Creek Park

Over the past year, WTA has been working on Swan Creek Trail in partnership with Metro Tacoma Parks. Volunteers have been helping improve a trail that winds through Swan Creek Park, an urban oasis on the boundary of east Tacoma and Pierce County. The park features a wooded canyon, forested hills and a salmon-bearing stream.

Crews have worked on improving the trail's tread, brushing, fixing drainage and building turnpikes. Work is continuing on the park.

"We've been getting really nice compliments on the work," says Alan Carter Mortimer, WTA's field programs manager.



Volunteers replace steps at Meadowdale Beach Park in Edmonds. WTA sometimes uses power tools to speed up work on busy trails. Photo by Jessi Loerch.

WTA expects to continue the partnership with Metro Tacoma Parks, and hopes to help improve smaller parks in the system.

Meadowdale Beach Park

WTA has an ongoing partnership in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest along U.S. Highway 2. We have just committed to a new, multi-year partnership with Snohomish County Parks, building on the past work of WTA volunteers in county parks. This will also allow us to continue work when snow comes to the Cascades.

Volunteer crews began working in Edmonds in October to replace a heavily eroded and dilapidated staircase on a steep section of trail in Meadowdale Beach Park, the first of several county locations expected to benefit from WTA volunteers. That work will continue in 2017. The project helps maintain a popular trail that's easily accessible all year.

"I love working on this trail because I see such a wide range of users, perhaps more so than on any other trail I work on," says crew leader Barbara Budd. ▶



Crews work on the trail at Snow Mountain Ranch outside of Yakima. Photo by Lisa Black.

Snow Mountain Ranch

Just outside of Yakima, Snow Mountain Ranch offers year-round hiking options on about nine miles of trails. WTA has teamed up with Cowiche Canyon Conservancy to improve the trails throughout the ranch. Some of that work has repaired a trail damaged by a major storm and improved a severely rutted trail.

In addition to on-the-ground trail work, WTA has consulted with the conservancy to help them plan sustainable trails. We also helped them find a way to avoid building a bridge, which saved money on the project.

We look forward to continuing working with the conservancy—and hosting additional work parties in the area—in the coming year.

“It’s a valuable partnership that benefits Yakima residents and visitors alike,” says Lisa Black, WTA board member and volunteer crew leader who led WTA’s first work party at Snow Mountain Ranch.

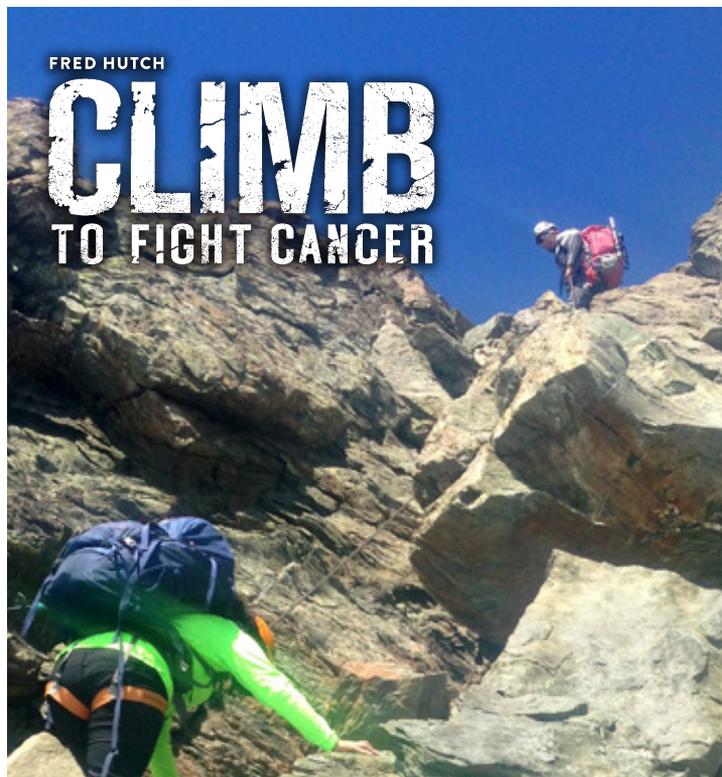
Lake Whatcom

In Bellingham, Lake Whatcom shines beneath Mount Baker. It is a natural close-to-home recreation destination. However, few designated trails exist around the lake and demand for access to the area has steadily increased.

WTA is a member of the Whatcom Outdoor Coalition, an alliance of community members and outdoor organizations. After more than a year of work with the coalition, the Whatcom County Council approved a new trail plan at the end of 2016. The final plan offers high-quality mountain bike courses and trail mileage for hikers and equestrians, and it protects the water source for nearly 100,000 county residents.

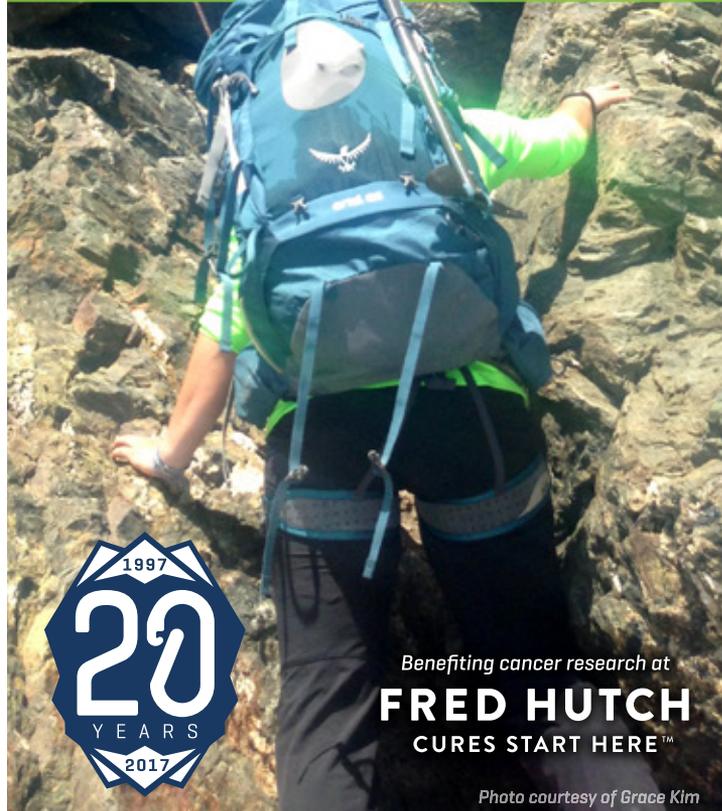
This project is an example of the way WTA works for trails, far beyond our maintenance work on individual trails. This process has helped pioneer a model for how a land management agency and multiple user groups can come together to serve multiple priorities for the benefit of the community at large. We hope it will serve as a model for other areas in the future.

Whether it’s maintaining a single trail in a county park, or helping to plan a whole series of trails for a community, we highly value our work in urban areas. If you’d like to lend a hand yourself, check out upcoming opportunities at wta.org/volunteer. ■



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SNOWSHOEING WORKSHOPS FOR EDUCATORS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7
at Mount Rainier National Park

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4
at Snoqualmie Pass

Did you know that WTA's Outdoor Leadership Training program supports snowshoeing trips for schools and youth-serving organizations? If you're an educator or plan youth group activities, sign up to join WTA staff for a fun-filled day with adult peers and learn how to plan and lead a safe and fun winter outing for the youth that you work with. We'll bring all the easy-to-use gear you'll need—plus hot chocolate! No previous experience is necessary. Once you're trained up, you'll have access to mini-grants to cover trip costs and the gear library to borrow everything your youth group needs.



Learn more and sign up at wta.org/olt.

Photos by: Amanda Sandate and Hamed Ahmadi

New series, close to home

A new set of guidebooks and a young son have given author Craig Romano a fresh perspective

BY JESSI LOERCH



C

raig Romano took his son, Giovanni, on his first hike on Christmas morning two years ago. Giovanni was 11-days old, and they took a 1-mile stroll at Little Mountain in Mount Vernon.

Craig Romano is a prolific guidebook author. Since having his son, he's still hiked more than 1,200 miles a year. Becoming a father hasn't changed how often he gets outside, but it has added a new dimension to his love for the outdoors and his dedication to living an active life. He's raising Giovanni to have that same love for and deep connection to the outdoors.





WE'RE DEFINITELY RAISING HIM WITH EXPERIENCES, NOT THINGS.

Now, when he hikes with Giovanni, Craig has a new focus. Twenty-mile days are no longer the goal—it's more important to ensure his son has a good time.

"It's funny," says Craig. "My hiking life hasn't changed much since he was born. Where it has changed is that I've taken more time to incorporate taking my boy out."

Recently, Craig has been able to incorporate Giovanni into more of his hiking research than he would normally be able to. He's working on a series of urban trail guidebooks, and bringing Giovanni on those trails is much easier than taking him into the backcountry.

"The urban trails have been great," Craig says. "It's been ideal that this whole series launched right when I had him. It's perfect. I can work with him on this book. It was one of those things where everything fell into place."

Since the birth of their son, Craig and his wife, Heather, have been careful to look out for each other's need to get outside. For Craig, that's time to get in those 20-mile days or trips on trails too rough for Giovanni. For Heather, it's time for long bike rides.

With a toddler, Craig and Heather aren't able to take epic hikes together. But they've been creative to get out as a family. They recently took a 52-mile family bike trip on the Chehalis Western Trail while Craig did research for the *Urban Trails: Olympia* book.

Finding time to write has also required creativity. Craig writes at home, and he has learned that an active toddler



Craig Romano and his wife, Heather, have been taking their son, Giovanni, hiking since he was tiny. He recently went on his 100th hike, shortly before his second birthday. Photos courtesy Craig Romano.

expecting his attention isn't great for his productivity. For a recent deadline, Heather took Giovanni to the Oregon coast so Craig could put his head down and write furiously.

And when Craig's out in the field, researching, Giovanni and Heather come along whenever possible.

"This is his normal," Craig says. "It's the only life he knows. We've been doing this from the get-go. We're definitely raising him with experiences, not things. We want him to really appreciate the natural world and get the most out of it. And, of course, we want him giving back to it, too."

Since that first hike on Christmas morning two years ago, Giovanni has been on more than 100 hikes. Giovanni seems to enjoy being in the trailer or on Craig's back in a backpack. Craig makes sure to pause and give Giovanni time to wander around and really engage with the outdoor places they explore. Sometimes, Craig says, that means shifting his mindset.

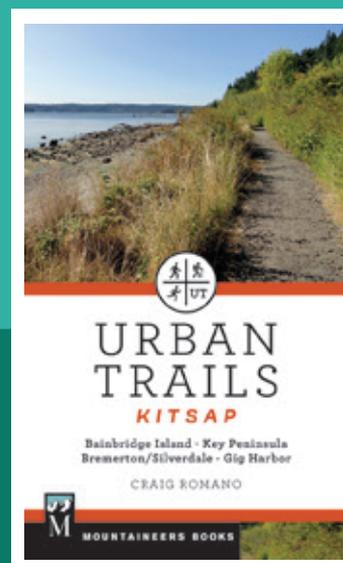
"The scenery doesn't matter. Just being out in the woods and seeing squirrels and running water and anything small. Those types of things are going to be more important than vistas. Vistas don't matter to [small children]," he says. "For someone who likes to do 20-mile days, I have to realize when I'm taking him out that it's going to be all day for 6 miles." ■

Urban Trails series

Urban Trails: Kitsap was published in the fall and is available at bookstores and online. Craig plans to write seven books in the urban series. The other books will focus on trails around Olympia, Everett, Seattle, Tacoma, Bellevue and Bellingham.

Craig hopes they encourage a wide range of hikers, from new hikers just getting started to seasoned hikers looking for an after-work or off-season hike. Nearly half the hikes in each book are accessible by bus.

"Urban parks are so important, especially as we become more and more urbanized, we have to have parks where the people are," Craig says. "We have to have greenbelts and safe bike paths. Puget Sound is a special environment and we're losing a lot of it. We need to protect these last spots on the Sound. Wilderness shouldn't just be some place that's remote. We should have places protected right here."



The Kitsap Forest and Bay Community Campaign is working to save land around Port Gamble, a sawmill town that was formed in the 1850s

SAVE

this

FOREST

A POWERFUL
PARTNERSHIP
COMES TOGETHER
TO PROTECT THE
PORT GAMBLE
FOREST

STORY BY WTA &
FORTERRA
STAFF

N

ear the town of Port Gamble, an easy drive from many big cities around Puget Sound, more than 65 miles of trails criss-cross a green space four times the size of New York's Central Park.

The Port Gamble Forest is a special piece of land that is well-loved and frequently used by the community. It's working timber land, but it's also a popular spot for hikers, runners, bikers and horseback riders. The community's love for this area has helped create a broad partnership that's working to save the land from development forever.

»» A LONG HISTORY

The area around Port Gamble Bay has been home to the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe and the Suquamish Tribe for more than 1,000 years. For generations, the tribes have hunted and gathered in the forest and fished and collected shellfish in the bay.

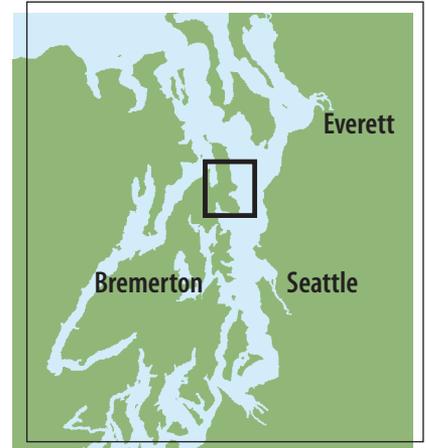
"Port Gamble Bay is an important cultural keystone to my tribe," says Jeromy Sullivan, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe chairman.

The tribe's reservation is just across the bay from a known ancestral village at what is now the town of Port Gamble. Tribal members are still hunting and fishing nearby lands and waters to feed their families, make a living and celebrate their culture. They expect to be doing so long into the future.

The Suquamish Tribe has also gathered in the area since time immemorial in seasonal camps and winter villages, says Leonard Forsman, Suquamish Tribe chairman.

Leonard believes that the work being done by the Kitsap Forest and Bay Project will help to ensure a strong future for his tribe.

"It means that my children's children and generations beyond will be able to practice the ways of our culture, harvesting from the surrounding waters and continuing to act as stewards to the same forest, land, and sea that connects them to their ancestors," he says.



Top: Leonard Forsman, Suquamish Tribe chairman. **Below:** Jeromy Sullivan, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe chairman. Photos by Brian Kilpatrick.



The forest is home to a wide range of birds, including this red-breasted sapsucker. Photo by Don Willott.

»» A NEW PARTNERSHIP

Andrew Pope and William Talbot founded the sawmill town of Port Gamble in the 1850s. Pope Resources still owns the town and the thousands of acres that surround it.

For decades, Pope has allowed hikers, bikers and foragers to use the land, to reconnect with nature without going far from their homes, says Jon Rose, vice president of Pope Resources.

Pope decided in 2007 that it could no longer efficiently continue industrial forest practices in the Port Gamble Forest, due to the population growth of the surrounding areas.

In 2011, Kitsap County and the tribes asked Forterra, a group with a 25-year history of protecting land in Washington state, to negotiate with Pope on their behalf. The goal is to bring as much of the timberland as possible into public ownership, rather than seeing it sold for development.

So far, the partnership with Forterra, the tribes, the county and recreation groups has protected 1,076 acres of forest and 1.5 miles of Port Gamble Bay. ▶

“

IT MEANS THAT MY CHILDREN'S CHILDREN AND GENERATIONS BEYOND WILL BE ABLE TO PRACTICE THE WAYS OF OUR CULTURE ... TO ACT AS STEWARDS TO THE SAME FOREST, LAND AND SEA THAT CONNECTS THEM TO THEIR ANCESTORS.

—LEONARD FORSMAN
SUQUAMISH TRIBE CHAIRMAN

Jon says he hopes the transfer of land can leave a positive legacy for Pope and give those who live in the area a place to recreate well into the future.

Rob Gelder, Kitsap County commissioner, says that in addition to recreation, cultural and environmental benefits, preserving the land would be an economic boon. He believes that outdoor recreation is increasingly important for the region. The impressive size of the land that is proposed for preservation would attract people from a wide area to visit and to spend their money in local communities.

»» ACTIVE USERS

For Lynn Schorn, who has lived in Kingston for 27 years, the Port Gamble Forest was her introduction to the Northwest. When she moved to the area from Colorado, she hiked and biked the forest frequently.

“We did not have maps, GPS or internet, so we created directions in our heads and then over dinner and wine would try to remember and write down the roads,” Lynn says. “My husband gave out handwritten maps for Christmas one year to those with interest in mountain biking and walking.”

Lynn walked the woods while pregnant, then while carrying her daughter in a backpack. Eventually she taught her daughter how to bike in those same woods.

Lynn’s daughter now teaches middle school kids how to mountain bike and takes them hiking among those same trees, meadows, logging roads and trails.

Young residents also share Lynn’s connection to this backyard oasis.

Sam Decker is a 12-year-old emerging horticulturist. He has spent countless hours exploring the forest and appreciates that it is available for so many users. He hikes the land frequently with his four siblings and his parents. He says he’d be a bit lost without the land to explore.

“It would be like losing a best friend, and I would not know how to spend my weekends not being in the woods,” he says.

»» WHAT'S NEXT?

The goal now of the Kitsap Forest and Bay Community Campaign is to fund the purchase of an additional 3,000 acres of forest—an area six times the size of Seattle’s Discovery Park—that is accessible all year.

“The land is a regional treasure and a place

Miles of trails cover the Port Gamble Forest. Photo by Don Willott.



Lynn Schorn (on bike) has been hiking and biking the area for years. Photo by Don Willott.

for quiet amid rapid growth,” says Michelle Connor, Forterra’s executive vice president of strategic enterprises. Ultimately, if the forest is protected, the proposed Sound to Olympics Trail will pass through it—creating a route from Kitsap County all the way to the west edge of the Olympic Peninsula. A 200-acre mountain bike park is also planned. The partners in the project are working to develop a plan for more year-round trails and environmental restoration.

“Protection of these forestlands will preserve access to cultural resources for the Suquamish and Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribes and serve as a place of respite and recreation for everyone in our fast-growing region,” Michelle says.

»» HOW YOU CAN HELP

Community support has driven the campaign to save the Port Gamble Forest. For the rest of the land to receive permanent protection, however, more support is needed. To ensure the land is not developed and that the public maintains access to the land, Forterra and its partners must raise \$3.5 million by July.

To see the land yourself, join a guided hike on Jan. 28 or Feb. 11 at 10 a.m. For more information and to learn how to donate, go to Forterra.org/KitsapForestandBay. ■

EXPERIENCE IT YOURSELF

The Port Gamble Forest offers a wide variety of hiking trails. Here are three options to try. All leave from the Port Gamble Heritage Park. For more details on each hike, go to wta.org/go-hiking.

BEAVER POND TRAIL: This easy 2-mile trail wanders through the forest and past a beaver dam.

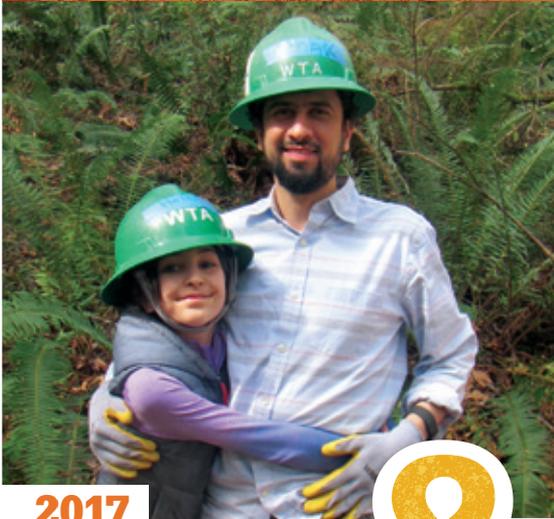
EWOK TRAIL LOOP: This 3.5-mile loop passes through a Douglas-fir forest with a thick understory of ferns.

FORBIDDEN FOREST TRAIL LOOP: This 8.5-mile hike offers a good workout and winds through fairyland-like ravines.

TO GET THERE: From the Kingston ferry dock, drive southeast on First Avenue toward Highway 104 for 4.1 miles. Turn right to stay on Highway 104. The trailhead parking lot will be on the left in 2.8 miles.

MAP APP: The Maprika app offers a detailed map of the Port Gamble Forest trails. Find it at maprika.com.

Make Memories



2017

YOUTH & FAMILY WORK PARTIES

WTA's Puget Sound-area youth and family work parties are intended for youth volunteers ages 10 or older and their friends and families. Join us for shorter, all-ages service projects and fit more fun into your Saturdays!

Winter 2017 Dates

February 18: Soaring Eagle

March 18: Soaring Eagle

Join us from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
No experience necessary



Find locations and sign up at
wta.org/volunteer

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

By Brittany Manwill

On-Trail Comfort Food

When the winter elements are hostile, it's nice to have a warm, homey meal to fuel your body and boost your spirits. While these meals won't live up to your mom's apple pie or great grandma's mac and cheese, they're easy to make and comforting enough to make anywhere on the trail feel like home.

DIY: POCKET HOLIDAY DINNER

Sure, the holidays are over. But nothing says comfort food like a big turkey dinner, especially in the middle of winter. While this recipe is more prep-heavy than typical backcountry meals, it's a heck of a lot easier than cooking a whole holiday meal at home.

Ingredients

- 1 canister crescent rolls
- 2 oz freeze-dried turkey, chicken or your favorite protein
- 2 oz freeze-dried mixed veggies (potatoes, peas, carrots, etc.)
- 1 packet powdered-gravy mix

Cook the gravy according to directions, then stir in an additional 2 ounces of water.

Add the freeze-dried meat and vegetables. Cook until tender, adding more water if necessary. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Lay out crescent roll triangles and scoop filling on top. Fold the dough around the filling, overlapping and enclosing the mixture within. Cook on a preheated pan over the stove for about 5 minutes, flipping once halfway through.



THAI KITCHEN—INSTANT RICE NOODLE SOUP

The sniffles hit big time during winter, and nothing eases a cold like a steamy bowl of brothy soup. These Thai rice noodle packets are an easy and budget-friendly upgrade from poor-college-student Top Ramen. They come in several flavors, including spring onion, garlic and vegetable, and Thai ginger. While they're less nutrient-dense than other quick meals, each packet only weighs 1.6 ounces, so it's easy to pack more than one. Or bulk them up by bringing your favorite add-ins. Contains one 170-calorie serving. Available at most grocery stores. \$1

MOUNTAIN HOUSE—BEEF STEW

For many, a juicy slow-cooked roast is the ultimate comfort food—good for the body and the soul. So, if pot roast is your idea of comfort food, Mountain House's freeze-dried beef stew might be your best option. This old standby is a longtime favorite among hikers. After adding boiling water, the savory meat, potatoes and veggies are ready to eat in about 15 minutes. Available at REI. Contains 2.5 210-calorie servings. \$9

BACKPACKER'S PANTRY—CHARROS BEANS & RICE

Gotta love Mexican food in the backcountry. Not only is it delicious, but beans and rice contain all the essential amino acids that make up a perfect protein. Try Backpacker's Pantry Charros Beans & Rice. Just add water, let sit and serve. Pack a few tortillas, the ultimate no-smush bread, and roll up a few burritos for a plate-free option. This one is quick, hearty and vegan. Contains two 400-calorie servings. Available at REI. \$6.50

TIPS

Comfort food means something different to everyone. While some foods are easier to adapt to the backcountry than others, nothing is off-limits. If you're not a fan of these selections, here are a few tips to get you started on your own:

USE NATURE'S COOLER

Winter means you can take advantage of cold weather and bring foodstuffs that would spoil in the summer heat. Chocolate and gourmet cheeses turn simple meals into homey specialties. If you're worried about food safety, keep things cooler longer by freezing them beforehand.

INSULATE & PACK IT IN

Use a Hydro Flask or other double-walled stainless container to pack in your favorite comfort food. Since it stays warm for 12 to 24 hours, you can make it in the comfort of your home and enjoy it stress free at camp.

ADD A STICK

What's the difference between food made at home and food served in a restaurant? Butter. Especially in winter, butter will be fine without refrigeration for a few days. Pack a stick and add a slab to whatever you're cooking. Boom. Instant comfort food.

START NEW TRADITIONS

Start a new tradition by always enjoying a particular meal, drink or dessert on your backpacking or hiking trips. Soon enough, just the mention of that certain food will bring up great memories and a craving to create new ones.



Snowy & Stunning

Lines, colors, shapes, textures and shadows all add to this photo of spring hikers on Pinnacle Peak in Mount Rainier National Park. The exposure maintains the white color of the snow but also shows texture and detail, adding overall interest to the photo.

Winter presents wonderful opportunities for the photographer. Familiar landscapes look completely different when surrounded by snow and ice. But capturing those landscapes can be challenging, requiring preparation and flexibility.

1 Exposure. Since light meters “assume” your subject is neutral gray, bright snow can fool your camera into underexposing the scene, capturing a snowy landscape as dull gray rather than white. The easiest way to obtain a proper exposure is to use the camera’s exposure compensation setting (the button with +/- on it). For a scene with lots of snow, increasing the exposure between +1 and +2 stops is a reasonable starting point, but you’ll need to experiment.

2 Histogram. Snow has texture and detail, which can add immensely to a winter photograph. While you don’t want snow to appear gray, you also don’t want it to become a boring white blob. Use your camera’s histogram to get it right. A scene with lots of snow should give you a hump toward the right side of the histogram. Approaching the right border is good, but take care that the histogram is not climbing up the right edge, which will give you pure white with no detail.

3 Composition. Large areas of uninteresting snow and a featureless gray sky are not ingredients for an interesting photograph. Look for patterns, textures and colors to add interest to a scene. Take advantage of the patterns, lines and shapes formed by the snowy landscape. Colorful trees, buildings or clothing on a snowy background can make a photo pop and highlight an interesting subject in ways that might be more difficult in the summer. Place your main subject off center, using the “rule of thirds” we have discussed in other columns.

4 Stay safe and dry. Keep your camera and lens as dry as possible. When moving into a warmer environment, moisture will condense on and inside of a cold camera. One solution: Seal your camera in a zip-locked bag before bringing it inside and leave it there until it reaches room temperature. Since batteries quickly lose power in cold temperatures, bring an extra battery. Keep the spare warm, swap it out when the camera battery dies and put the “dead” battery in a warm spot to “revive” it. Most importantly, be safe! Tell someone where you plan to go, bring the Ten Essentials, wear proper footwear and warm clothing, and avoid avalanche terrain. Be aware that snowy landscapes, combined with snowfall, fog or gray skies, can be disorienting, making it easy to get lost.

Beautiful Details

Color cast: On sunny days, snow may take on a bluish tint. Changing the white balance setting on your camera to “shade” will help eliminate that.

Focus: Auto-focus may have trouble finding the focus in snowy landscapes without much contrast. Either use manual focus or set your camera to focus on a high-contrast area of the scene (like the line between snow and sky).

Filters: Polarizer filters can help reduce glare and darken skies, but be careful not to overpolarize. With low sun in the winter, overpolarizing will turn your skies a very dark blue.

Time of day: Shooting on snow is often best earlier and later in the day, because the lower angle of the light will bring out texture and detail. That being said, because Washington is so far north, the sun is close to the horizon for much of the day in winter and decent photos can be taken even at times we would normally call midday.

By WTA Staff



Photo by Erik Haugen-Goodman

3 Steps to revive your rain gear

Waterproof and breathable gear is treated with a durable water repellent (DWR) on the exterior layer. This layer is vital to performance on garments such as rain jackets and rain pants. Without it, the actual waterproof and breathable layer will become saturated and ineffective. Over time, the minuscule fibers of the DWR get bent and don't work as well. Putting them in the dryer can help revive them.

1 Clean. Wash your gear, using an appropriate product.

2 Dry. Put your wet gear in the dryer until it is fully dry.

3 Add time. On medium heat, dry the garment for an additional 20 minutes.

If this doesn't do the trick, it's time to use a spray-on or wash-in DWR product.

Stay Dry All Winter

This is a tough time of year for your gear—mud and rain take their toll. Here are four products from Nikwax that will help your gear perform its best.

FOOTWEAR CLEANING GEL

If you do any hiking in the winter, your boots can almost certainly use some cleaning. This product is specifically designed to work on leather. It can also be used on gloves. Our tester found that, for particularly stubborn stains, a stiff brush made it easier to work in the cleaner. If you want to re-waterproof your boots, this gel is a good first step.



FABRIC & LEATHER PROOF

This product helps to waterproof leather boots or other gear. Be sure to start with clean leather. For best results, we found it was helpful to go over seams several times. Our tester, who hadn't re-waterproofed her boots in four years, is happy to report that she can now jump in puddles again.

TECH WASH

If your waterproof and breathable gear isn't performing like it used to, it may be because it's dirty. This wash will remove dirt, oils and detergents that have built up on your gear. Our testers found that the cleaner did its job effectively. It washed off the grime of trail work parties and also got rid of lingering funky smells. This wash can be paired up with Nikwax's TX.Direct Wash-In, which will help restore waterproofing and breathability.



DOWN WASH DIRECT

Down is a fabulous insulator, but keeping it in great shape requires a little bit of extra love. Regular detergent can be hard on down. This cleaner is specifically designed for both regular and water-resistant down. Our tester found that this down wash did the trick for a particularly stinky down jacket that had enjoyed a busy summer of backpacking. It smelled fresh and was much fluffier after the wash.



Photos by Erik Haugen-Goodman

Wrap it Up

The problem: Rain pants are hot and annoying to get on or off. **The solution:** Rain wraps. They go on and off in seconds, have excellent ventilation and pack down to almost nothing. **(Bonus:** They're usually cheaper than rain pants!)

ULTRALIGHT ADVENTURE EQUIPMENT RAIN KILT ▼

This one hits all the bases. Waterproof? Check. Our reviewer wore this in a light drizzle that turned into a more consistent rain, and she stayed nice and dry all day without her legs getting hot. Adjustable fit? Check. ULA suggests those over 5'8" get the large, but the medium's elastic waistband provided more than ample room for our reviewer's 5'10", 180-pound frame. Plus, it's long enough that if worn with tall gaiters, you'll get full



leg coverage. Ideal for hiking through wet, brushy areas. Integrated stuff sack? Check. Bonus point for the Velcro that seals it shut into a dollar-bill sized pouch. Lightweight? Check. At 2.9 ounces (for the medium), it's worth more than its weight in gold, but at 30 dollars, it won't break the bank. \$30; ula-equipment.com.

◀ LIGHTHEART GEAR RAIN WRAP

If you like gear with multiple uses, this fits the bill. The waistband is fixed, not elastic, so it lays flat if you want to use it as a picnic cloth, a seating area, or even a tent footprint. You can even throw it over your shoulders as a pack cover. Our reviewer appreciated the secure, easy-to-operate snap at the waistband. At 3.2 ounces for medium, it's slightly heavier than the other two options. But it's durable and well made and should last you for many miles on the trail. \$55; lightheartgear.com.

MOUNTAIN LAUREL DESIGNS RAIN KILT

If you care about every gram, this is the option for you. The medium weighs 2.3 ounces for the Sil-Nylon version or a minuscule 1.7 ounces for the Cuben-Fiber version. Our reviewer tried out the kilt on a long backpack trip, which made the light weight especially valuable. The waist band cinches tight, but can also be released to lay flat. The kilt could even work as groundsheet for those who want to go ultralight. \$35 Sil-Nylon, \$70 Cuben Fiber; mountainlaureldesigns.com.

By Cassandra Overby



Photo by Tami Asars

Epic Made Easy

The Washington Trails community has been busy! Magazine contributor Tami Asars and former magazine editor Eli Boschetto have released new guidebooks to help hikers tackle sections of the Pacific Crest Trail. Tami's book is a guide to the PCT in Washington and Eli's book covers Oregon. (Look for the California book in fall 2017.) We recently sat down with them to find out why you should add section hiking the PCT to your to-do list—and how these books can help you. Responses have been edited for length. To read the full interviews, go to wta.org/pctbooks.

Why should people hike the PCT?

Tami: The PCT is, and will always be, one of the most epic long-distance trails in the United States. Not only does the distance test the true physical and mental capabilities of the hikers who attempt it, but the terrain is so varied that even adroit hikers are challenged. For as much as it hands out, the PCT gives back in the form of boundless soul food. From high subalpine meadows to deep river valleys, it's one of the most scenic trails in the world and offers the adventure of a lifetime.

What makes these guidebooks unique?

Tami: Most of the guides on the market today are targeted to thru-hikers or day hikers. We wanted to write guidebooks that were designed with section hikers in mind. Taking five months off to hike the whole PCT is often not realistic for busy folks,

those with physical limitations or those who simply prefer a good meal and a comfy bed after a week or so on the trail.

Our guides are broken down into logical sections with trailheads that are accessible by car. Detailed directions to the trailheads help hikers come and go seamlessly. Each section is further broken down into manageable chunks to help readers digest the trail descriptions and get them prepared for what to expect in each new stretch. Every water source, campsite, landmark and landscape feature is documented. Additionally, the books contain suggested itineraries with mileage, color maps, elevation profiles and color photos.

What's your favorite section of your part of the PCT and why?

Tami: Every section in Washington has something to offer, but since I'm such a fan



of solitude, my favorite sections are Stevens Pass to Rainy Pass or Rainy Pass to Manning Park, B.C.

Eli: My favorite section is the Three Sisters Wilderness area, in central Oregon. It has such a plethora of scenic diversity. It's like taking all of the best of Oregon and compressing it into a single stretch that can be hiked in just three or four days.

Why are you excited about these books?

Eli: I'm excited about the potential to make the PCT a more doable trail. When I mention the PCT to fellow hikers, the general response is, "Oh, I would love to do that but don't have the time, experience, endurance, etc." That's when I share that I'm not a thru-hiker either, but the PCT is very manageable in smaller pieces. When they hear that, they suddenly get excited that maybe they actually can hike the PCT.

JUDY STERRY

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PHOTO WORTHY



Whether it's a stark outline of mountains or a sweeping vista of a pebbled beach, Washington has some of the most photogenic landscapes anywhere. Here are five trails where you'll find plentiful chances to practice your photo skills.

Wild Goose Trail | North Cascades

Take a short but grueling climb to a place that has been lauded in many publications as one of the most-photographed spots in America.

Created to connect the scenic Chain Lakes Loop Trail with the parking lot at Artist Point, the Wild Goose Trail starts lower down at Heather Meadows. During winter, the trail is covered in snow, so much so that sometimes even the sign for the trail cannot be seen. Bring a map!

From the southwest corner of the parking lot at the ski resort, snowshoe up the road, near the boundary rope for the ski resort. You will soon see the Heather Meadows Visitors Center on your right. Though closed in winter, it's a useful landmark; this is where you look for the Wild Goose Trail sign. If it's buried under snow, continue past the visitor center and head straight up the steep hill. For this portion of your uphill trek, you will know you are on the right track if the snow-covered road is on your left.

The trail climbs steeply for about 1 mile. As you hike, look for Table Mountain and Mount Baker on your right; Mount Shuksan rises on your left. Cresting the top of the hill, arrive at Kulshan Ridge—better known as Artist Point. From here you can safely trek along this ridge out to a closer view of Mount Shuksan and Baker Lake. In the other direction, peer along the ridge on a clear day for spectacular views of Mount Baker.

DISTANCE: 2.2 miles ♦ **ELEVATION GAIN:** 900 feet
ELEVATION PEAK: 5,100 feet ♦ **PERMIT:** None
MAP: Green Trails Map 14 ♦ **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/wild-goose-snowshoe

TRAILHEAD: From I-5 in Bellingham, take the Sunset Boulevard exit which becomes Highway 542. This road takes you all the way to Mount Baker Ski Resort and a large parking lot, where you should park in the far southwest corner near Bagley Lakes.

HIKE: Mike Morrison ♦ **PHOTO:** Mike Morrison

▶ ALTERNATE NEARBY TRAILS

BAGLEY LAKES: Take a longer, more challenging snowshoe by following the Bagley Lakes loop trail from the same starting point as Wild Goose.

5.5 miles ♦ 1,151 feet of gain

SALMON RIDGE SNOWSHOE: Enjoy a gentle snowshoe, perfect for beginners, with fairytale forests.

5.4 miles ♦ 300 feet of gain

BAKER LAKE-MAPLE GROVE: A good option for a long winter hike that probably won't have snow.

8 miles ♦ 500 feet of gain



South Indian Island | Olympic Peninsula

Hike through a forest of madronas and Douglas firs to a long sandy beach with impressive views of Mount Rainier. Explore a narrow spit and a lagoon flourishing with birds. Indian Island County Park offers some of the best beach walking on this side of the Olympic Peninsula.

From the grassy picnic area, follow the Portage Trail east through a tunnel of vegetation along Portage Canal. The trail brushes up against some marshy openings, ideal for looking for eagles and herons. It then climbs back up a bluff, ending at the park's beach access road after a half mile.

You can continue by hiking left on the road a short distance, and then following the Lagoon Trail for 0.4 mile on a bluff above a big lagoon that teems with birds. But I prefer what lies right. So walk the road, descending from the bluff and reaching an inviting beach. If the tide is low, rock hop or wade the small creek draining the lagoon. Then start walking east along a sandy spit, one of the finest stretches of beach in the region. At 1.2 miles, pass a parking area (an alternate starting point if you don't want to cross the creek).

Continue your beach walk around glacial till bluffs, taking in sweeping views across Oak Bay to Mount Rainier. At 1.7 miles, pass a trail leading left to another parking area and connecting with the Isthmus Trail, which parallels the road connecting the park's two eastern parking areas. Continue east on a narrow rocky strip of beach along marshes connecting Indian to Marrowstone Island. At 2 miles, the public beach ends. Turn around and enjoy your stroll all over again.

DISTANCE: 4 miles ♦ **ELEVATION GAIN:** 70 feet ♦ **ELEVATION PEAK:** 50 feet
MAP: Available online from Jefferson County Parks ♦ **PERMIT:** None ♦ **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: www.countyrec.com; *Day Hiking: Olympic Peninsula* (Mountaineers Books)

TRAILHEAD: From Kingston, drive Highway 104 and turn right onto Highway 19. Then continue north for 9 miles, turning right on Chimacum Road. Continue for 1.6 miles, turning right onto Highway 116. Then follow Highway 116 east for 1.7 miles, turning right immediately upon crossing the bridge to Indian Island into parking area and trailhead.

HIKE: Craig Romano ♦ **PHOTO:** Craig Romano





McKenzie Conservation Area / Spokane Area

Use this hike as a close-to-town alternative for mountain views without driving mountain roads.

The trail system at McKenzie is a little better each time I visit, and on my most recent trip I found it sporting some new signage, both at the trailhead kiosk and on the trail. The trails are now named, making it easier to describe my favorite lollipop loop.

Repeat it by hiking out Bedrock Ridge from the trailhead, passing through a surprisingly lush second-growth forest of cedar and conifer. Just over a half mile into the hike, bear left and downhill on Cross Draw, continuing to where it intersects Turtle Rock Trail. Take a right and head down this old roadbed to the lakeshore, which you'll reach at approximately 1.8 miles. You'll want to linger at Newman Lake, both for the views of the shoreline and the surrounding mountains and also for the native plant garden, installed and maintained by neighbors of this Conservation Futures property.

After taking it all in, continue up the roadbed and just around the bend to rejoin Bedrock Ridge. You'll take this trail all the way back to the parking lot, gaining elevation and getting a few more glimpses of the lake on the part that will be new to you, then eventually rejoining the beginning section to complete the lollipop.

There are a few other trails to explore if you're looking for a little more mileage. Watch for snowshoe hares, whitetail deer and, if you're lucky, a resident at the eagle's nest near the lakeshore. This is a regular hike much of the winter (although traction devices might be useful when it's icy). It could also be a snowshoe hike following winter storms.

DISTANCE: 3.3 miles ♦ **ELEVATION GAIN:** 436 feet
PEAK ELEVATION: 2,434 feet
MAP: spokanecounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/4064
PERMIT: None ♦ **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/mckenzie-conservation-area

TRAILHEAD: Take I-90 east from Spokane to the Sullivan exit. Go north on Sullivan to Trent, then east on Trent to Starr Road. Take Starr north toward Newman Lake, turning right at the "Y" on Hauser Lake Road. Watch for Muzzy Road and turn left (north). Muzzy Road becomes West Newman Lake Road; the parking area is on the left. Snow berms from the plows sometimes block access to the lot. Bring a shovel just in case.

HIKE: Holly Weiler ♦ **PHOTO:** Holly Weiler

▶▶ ALTERNATE NEARBY TRAILS

MOUNT KIT CARSON: Bring your Sno Park permit and snowshoes for a visit to this winter wonderland.
7.5 miles ♦ 1,500 feet of gain

KNOTHEAD TRAIL: WTA has spent the last several springs improving the Knothead Trail, which provides one of the best vantage points in Riverside State Park.
5 miles ♦ 1,000 feet of gain

ANTOINE PEAK: Check out the new trail built by WTA volunteers on Canfield Gulch. You may want to bring your snowshoes, just in case.
5.3 miles ♦ 1,030 feet of gain

Anderson Point Park

Kitsap Peninsula

Enjoy a short hike to one of the best beaches in Kitsap County.

Purchased by Kitsap County in the mid-1990s, this 66-acre park has nearly 2,000 feet of picturesque saltwater shoreline and is a great destination for families. But it closed for nearly five years due to landslide concerns and disputes over public access. Luckily, Anderson Point Park is once again open for all to enjoy.

To access the beach, follow the trail, beginning just past the parking lot on an old gravel service road. Descend—sometimes steeply—through a mixed forest of evergreen and deciduous trees into a mossy, fern-filled ravine.

At 0.7 mile reach a flat near the wide, sandy, driftwood-lined beach. Peer across Colvos Passage to the east shore of Vashon Island. Or look north, where on a clear day, Mount Baker can be seen. Keep an eye out for marine mammals such as orca whales and harbor seals, and birds like kingfishers and eagles.

Native Americans have used this area for fishing and repairing of nets. In the early 1870s, the Anderson family homesteaded on the property. The Mosquito Fleet—an early ferry system that transported passengers and freight between 40 different ports in Kitsap County—also made regular stops at Anderson Point.

DISTANCE: 1.4 miles ♦ **ELEVATION GAIN:** 250 feet
HIGHEST PEAK: 250 feet ♦ **PERMIT:** None
MAP: www.kitsapgov.com/parks ♦ **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/anderson-point

TRAILHEAD: From Port Orchard, take Sedgwick Road to Banner Road. Turn right on Banner Road and follow for 4.6 miles to Milihanna Road. Turn left and drive to the parking lot at the end of the road. The parking lot is small; have an alternate destination in mind.

HIKE: Kelsie Donleycott

» ALTERNATE NEARBY TRAILS

PENROSE POINT STATE PARK: This South Sound gem features mountain vistas and beach rambling.
2 miles ♦ 140 feet of gain

MARY E. THELER WETLANDS: This nature preserve is the perfect place to take inquisitive kids to get an up-close view of wildlife and rain forest plants.
3.5 miles ♦ 50 feet of gain

MANCHESTER STATE PARK: This little nook on the Kitsap Peninsula offers quiet beaches and calm waters.
1.9 miles of trails ♦ minimal elevation gain.



Photo by David Hagen

SCOUTING CHALLENGE

Every day, hikers use WTA's Trip Reports and hiking guide to plan the best hike for their ability. Our database includes more than 3,400 hikes. But some of them haven't seen an update for a long time, and potential visitors may not know what conditions they're getting into. So we're asking responsible, experienced hikers to head for these trails, see what the conditions are and report back.

Maybe the route is completely impassable, or maybe there's a brand-new parking area and beautifully groomed trail. You can tell us. Hike this trail (if you can), and post a Trip Report and photo on our website.

Remember to stay safe. While it'd be nice to get updated information, if conditions are dicey, don't sacrifice safety for the info. Tip: Contact the land manager for details about the area before heading out.

DESERT WILDLIFE AREA

WHERE IT IS: The Potholes Region, near Moses Lake

WHAT WE KNOW: Formerly a desert, before the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project, this unit of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area now collects irrigation water from adjacent farmlands. The moisture created a riot of desert vegetation and encouraged growth of non-native grasses and some invasive species. These in turn host plenty of wildlife, making it a popular hunting destination as well as one that birdwatchers and hikers enjoy in the winter and early spring.

It might be muddy (after all, it's a water collection zone) so bring waterproof boots and binoculars for birds. Photos from previous Trip Reports indicate there are sweeping views to be had, so you might want to pack a camera. Maps for this area are tricky, but take a look at Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's website for some supplemental materials.

RECON REQUEST: Our last Trip Report for this area is from 2010. What's the best route now? Let us know which way you went and what you saw along the way.

northwest = EXPOSURE

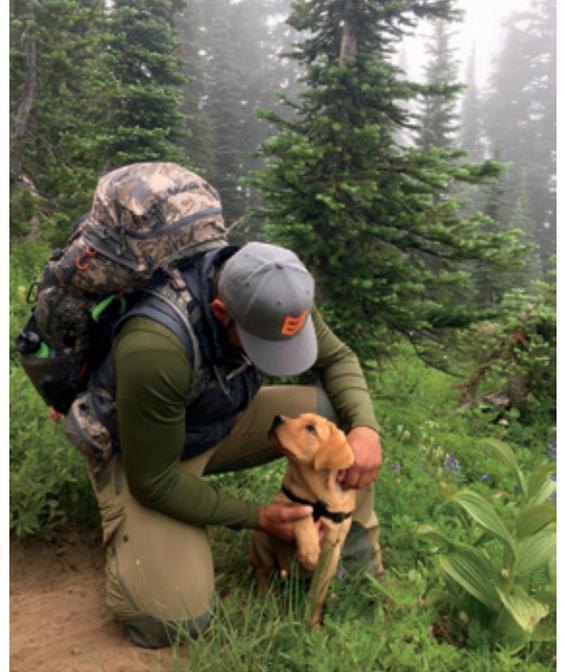
Thank you to everyone who shared photos for this year's contest. In addition to the winners featured in our 2017 calendar, we'd like to recognize 10 honorable mentions.



Adam Soule took this photo as the sunset lit up wildflowers at Columbia Hills State Park.



Derek Henderson says some of his favorite moments in the mountains are when his kids can join him, including this trip on the Lake Stuart Trail.



Tori Harp captured this sweet moment while hiking in the William O. Douglas Wilderness.



Danny Griesmer was with his brother on a bachelor party backpack when he took this shot near Lake Ingalls.



Chris Adams took this photo on Deadhorse Creek Trail.



Isaac Day took this shot from Chuckanut Mountain, as the setting sun painted the sky over the San Juan Islands and Olympic Mountains.



Justin Jennings found this adorable pika preparing for winter on Maple Pass Loop.



Samantha Sweger loves to take visitors to Naches Peak Loop.



Heidi Rosenberg admired this damselfly at Bridal Trails State Park.



Joanie Christian was rewarded for a hike on Kamiak Butte Trail with this shot.

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