

Beginners Guide to Birding in Washington

Washington TRAILS

A Publication of Washington Trails Association | wta.org

EXPANDED
ISSUE!
8 More
Pages!

Party Time!
on Mount St. Helens

Get Out for a Trail Run
NW Weekend in Bend, OR
Stay Hydrated on Trail

May+Jun 2014





18



24



38



50

May+Jun 2014

NW Explorer

Hike Up Your Skirts

Tales from the Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climb, and how you can join the party. » **p.20**

Get Out and Run

If you want more trail and less gear, trail running might be just what you're looking for. » **p.26**

Birding in Washington

An introduction to birding in the Northwest by the duo who literally wrote the book on it. » **p.30**

NW Weekend » Trails & Ales in Bend, Oregon

Hike a trail, float a river and explore a lava tube, then top it off with local food and craft brews. » **p.38**

News+Views

Green Mountain Lookout Is Saved! » **p.8**

Middle Fork Road Project Update » **p.11**

WTA at Work

Trail Work » Crews in Olympic National Forest

The importance of volunteers. » **p.14**

Youth & Family » Summer Camping

Your family summer camping checklist. » **p.17**

Action for Trails » The Legacy of Trails

Where trails came from, and where they are going. » **p.18**

Trail Mix

Gear Closet » Stay Hydrated on Trail

Water filters, bottles, packs and supplements. » **p.42**

Camp Kitchen » Hacking Your Tortillas

Here's the dish on some great trail wraps. » **p.48**

Bookshelf » Editor's Picks

New resources for your own hiking library. » **p.49**

Hike It!

Where the Wild Things Roam

Eight trails for great wildlife watching. » **p.50**

Epic Trail: Loowit Trail

Circle the iconic—and still active—Mount St. Helens. » **p.58**

Cover Photo » "Hi Mom!" from Mount St. Helens

Andrew Johnson of Des Moines, WA, sends a Mother's Day greeting, following a successful summit in 2013. Photo by Michael Songbird.

Washington's Leading Hiking Resource and the Nation's Largest Volunteer Trail Maintenance Program

Washington Trails Association is a volunteer-driven nonprofit membership organization working to preserve, enhance and promote hiking opportunities in Washington state. We engage and mobilize a community of hikers as advocates and stewards for our trails statewide. Through collaborative partnerships and grassroots advocacy, WTA focuses on state and federal issues, including trail funding, hiker safety and wilderness protection. WTA is committed to leaving a rich legacy of trails and wild lands for future generations to enjoy.

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.

Board of Directors

President	WENDY WHEELER JACOBS
VP, Advocacy	STEPHEN TAN
VP, Board Development	CRAIG MCKIBBEN
VP, Communications & Tech	ROB SHURTLIFF
VP, Finance	ANDREA BAINES
VP, Fundraising	STEVE PAYNE
Secretary	CAROLE BIANQUIS

Directors At Large

LISA BLACK	BRUCE BURGER
PERRY BURKHART	JEFF CHAPMAN
AMY CSINK	JOE GREGG
DAMIEN MURPHY	BILL POPE
TITTI RINGSTROM	KATE ROGERS
ADAM RYND	MASON WHITE

WTA Senior Staff

Executive Director	KAREN DAUBERT
Development Director	KATE NEVILLE
Development Manager	LISA UNSOELD-CHANG
Finance & Operations Director	MARJORIE KITTLE
Information Services Manager	CHARLIE KAHLE
Membership Manager	KARA CHIN
Communications Director	SUSAN ELDERKIN
Advocacy Director	ANDREA IMLER
Digital Content Manager	LOREN DRUMMOND
Washington Trails Editor	ELI BOSCHETTO
Outreach Manager	KINDRA RAMOS
Program Director	REBECCA LAVIGNE
Field Programs Manager	ALAN CARTER MORTIMER
Field Programs Manager	TIM VAN BEEK
NW Regional Manager	ARLEN BOGAARDS
SW Regional Manager	RYAN OJERIO
Youth Programs Manager	KRISTA DOOLEY

Washington Trails Association

705 Second Avenue, Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 625-1367 • wta.org

Northwest Office	(360) 739-2258
Southwest Office	(360) 722-2657
General Information	wta@wta.org
Membership Information	membership@wta.org
Volunteer Information	trail_teams@wta.org
Editorial Submissions	editor@wta.org
Advertising	advertising@wta.org

Washington Trails Volunteers

Copy Editors	JIM CAVIN, REBECCA KETTWIG
Contributors	TAMI ASARS, PAUL RAYMAKER CRAIG ROMANO, MAX SMITH, JOHN SOLTYS, SARAH SWANSON
Illustrators	REBECCA JENSEN, WHITNEY MAASS
Proofreader	MITZI SUGAR
Regional Correspondents	NATE & JER BARNES, KELSIE DONLEYCOTT DAWN ERICKSON, DAVID HAGEN LINDSAY LEFFELMAN, BRITTANY MANWILL ASHLEY MORRISON, MIKE MORRISON KRISTEN SAPOWICZ, AARON THEISEN HOLLY WEILER

Connect With WTA:



/washingtonhikers



/wta_hikers



/wtahikers



/WTAhiker



/washingtontrails#



Washington Trails Vol. 49.1*, Issue 3

Owner & Publisher
WASHINGTON TRAILS ASSOCIATION

Washington Trails (ISSN 1534-6366) is published bimonthly by the Washington Trails Association, 705 2nd Avenue, Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98104.

Annual membership dues, which include a subscription to *Washington Trails* magazine, are \$40. Single copy price is \$4.50. Periodicals postage paid at Seattle, WA, and at additional mailing locations.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Washington Trails Association, 705 2nd Ave., Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98104.



*Due to a years-old error in the sequencing of *Washington Trails*, all 2014 issues will be labeled as Volume 49.1 in order to get back on the correct track with Volume 50 in 2015.

Finding Your Passion

One of the reasons I love trails is that they are the ultimate “choose your own adventure.” I can choose a rainforest stroll one weekend, and an alpine scramble the next. It all depends on where my passion takes me.

WTA is the same way. Our organization is teeming with opportunities for pursuing trail passions and doing what comes naturally to you—all while making a difference for trails in Washington. If you're seeking inspiration, look no further than our multi-talented board of directors.

Board president Wendy Wheeler Jacobs' passion is her pursuit of logging more than 3,500 trail miles a year—many of those spent at a jog. She has become our resident trail running expert (you can check out her article on page 26). She also helps publish the national trail running calendar *Tribute to Trails*, whose proceeds help support WTA trail maintenance.

Board member Jeff Chapman is an avid horseback rider. When he's not hoofing it on trail—literally—he serves as a liaison between WTA and Back Country Horsemen of Washington. His efforts have helped secure one of our strongest organizational partnerships to date.

And there's board member Perry Burkhart, whose favorite trail companions are his eight goats. Because of his extensive knowledge of both trails and stock, Perry has been invaluable in helping WTA develop our position on four-legged trail users.

You don't have to be a WTA board member to bring your own trail passion and unique strengths to WTA. You don't even have to own a goat. The opportunities to get involved with WTA are as diverse as the trails we protect.

If your passion is writing, submit a trip report for an underreported trail in Washington. If you're organizational or have computer skills, join us in the office for everything from mail-stuffing parties to departmental support. And if you love talking to people, help us table at a community event to spread the word about WTA. You can check out wta.org/volunteer/other-ways-to-volunteer for more ideas and to sign up.

Whatever your passion and skills, WTA has a place for you—right at the intersection of doing what you love and making a difference. We can't wait to see more of you!

Karen Daubert



TOP: WTA Executive Director Karen Daubert (center right) and Crew Leader Gary Zink (far left) join Backcountry Horsemen of Washington (BCHW) leadership at their Annual Rendezvous.

MIDDLE: WTA was named to the Teanaway Community Forest Advisory Committee. The state-appointed committee will develop recommendations for managing the forest just outside of Cle Elum.

BOTTOM: WTA volunteer crew leaders practice their crosscut saw skills at Iron Creek on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in anticipation of a busy season.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Good Reads, New Guides

You may have met her on a trail, at a WTA event or on a work party. As a hiker, activist, archeologist, foodie, world traveler and WTA Fireside member, Janice Van Cleve leads a busy life—and still finds the time to stop and enjoy the simple things. She recently published a collection of short stories, *Sound and Summits*, inspired by her adventures in the Northwest.

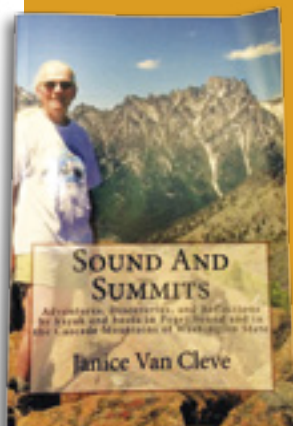
Each short story is presented in a style that harkens back to classic oral tradition, making for engaging campfire or rainy day reading. You can almost imagine Van Cleve sitting across from you reciting the stories herself.

Insightful and witty chapters relate nearly two decades of explorations by land and water around Washington under imaginative titles like “Throne of the Earth Mother,” “Dancing with Kayaks,” and “Mountain Moonlight.” Story topics range from the wonder of sea life on an ocean paddle, to the thrill of discovery venturing up an abandoned trail, to her aversion of sticky sleeping bag zippers when nature calls on rainy mornings in camp.

In addition to her reverence for nature, each story is chock-full of the humor and ironies that go hand-in-hand with most outdoor adventures—and all focused on familiar locations like Mount Si, Rampart Lakes, Puget Sound and the Olympic Coast. A light and entertaining read, *Sound and Summits* is available on Amazon.com.

If you're looking for more good reads, check out this issue's Bookshelf section on page 49. I've selected six recent and newly published

books ranging from backcountry cooking to night-time photography that are all worth a look—including the brand-new *Day Hiking Mount Adams and the Goat Rocks*, by guidebook author and *Washington Trails* contributor Tami Asars.



SIGNPOST

Eli Boschetto

editor@wta.org

Growing With WTA

If you've been keeping up with *Washington Trails* for the past couple of years, you've likely noticed some pretty regular contributor names bringing you many of the great hiking suggestions, weekend destinations, feature stories, photography tips, nature spotlights and book reviews. It's a real privilege to get to work with so many volunteers passionate about sharing their knowledge of hiking and the outdoors.

Of these volunteers, you're probably familiar with guidebook author Craig Romano, who is now sharing some of his favorite “trails less traveled” in each issue. But did you know that *Washington Trails* regularly features four more guidebook authors in nearly every issue: Tami Asars, Nate and Jer Barnes, and Aaron Theisen. In addition, we have a retired U.S. Forest Service employee, a former president of The Cascadians, a professional trail runner and many more impressive hiking resumes on *WT's* volunteer crew—all with some serious trail cred and big miles under their hiking boots.

But the real joy comes when a volunteer gets to turn their passion into their profession. That was my own case several years ago when I became *WT's* editor. As WTA continues to grow across the state, we have added a couple new positions to help manage the ever-increasing workload of advocating and maintaining trails, and making sure WTA's members and community are up to date on all of the news and information needed to get outdoors and get involved. And both of these positions have been filled by now-former WTA volunteers.

In the Seattle office, Cassandra Overby has joined the team as WTA's new Communications Associate. Cassandra is a professional copywriter and editor, who began volunteering with WTA as a writer and book reviewer. She will be helping to manage and integrate much of the tremendous amount of news and content that goes into WTA's many communications efforts, including the magazine, website and social channels. She will also be engaged in outreach efforts in the Seattle area.

In the Spokane area, long-time *WT* contributor and three-time Hike-a-Thon Holly Weiler has just become WTA's new seasonal Eastern Washington Regional Coordinator. Already extremely active in the area's outdoors community—including roles with the Friends of Mount Spokane and the Spokane Mountaineers—Holly will be coordinating communications and outreach events, as well as leading trail crews in and around many of Spokane's popular hiking areas.

On behalf of everyone at WTA, I would like to welcome Cassandra and Holly to the fold. We're all looking forward to working with the enthusiasm and energy that these two passionate hikers are bringing into the organization, as we all strive to promote what we love best: living and playing—and hiking!—in Washington.

HIKING TIPS FROM WTA:

Enhance Your Summer Hiking

Looking for ways to improve your hiking experience? Here are some tips from WTA staff on how you can enhance your trail adventures and get the most out of the summer hiking season.

"Ease into the season with low-elevation hikes or long city walks. Getting into shape reduces the risk of injuries that could leave you on the sidelines."

— Kate Neville, Development Director

"Have a better sense of where you'll be going by reading up on the natural or human history of the area before heading out."

— Kim Brown, Office Manager

"Always have a back up plan in case conditions change due to wildfires or weather. Then you won't need to panic or stay up for hours the night before a scheduled departure planning a new trip."

— Andrea Imler, Advocacy Director

"Bring a friend from work, school or your neighborhood who has never or seldom hiked out on trail. Pick a trail that is new to you so you can share in discovering views or whatever is around the next curve."

— Mason White, Board Member

"Keep your gear organized. Stockpile supplies like fuel canisters, hand sanitizer and energy snacks. Having everything organized in your gear closet makes it easy to just grab and go."

— Cassandra Overby, Communications Associate

"Use poles! There's a reason all those 90-year-olds hiking the Alps are using them. A good pair will last forever—your knees won't."

— Bruce Burger, Board Member



Facebook Question:

What are your most memorable wildlife experiences on trail?

Rebecca Jensen On a trail work party at Mount Rainier, a gray fox tried to steal someone's flannel shirt that had a snack in the pocket!

Karissa Johnson Otters in a stream in the Hoh rain forest.

Lee Jacobson Running into a bear (literally!) in the Enchanted Valley, on the way up to Anderson Pass in the Olympics.

Jennifer Niessen Wing A pine marten lying in the middle of a trail, sunning itself like a cat.

Doug Phillips Spotting two cougars on Church Mountain—after we had walked right under them!

Rob Leetz A bull moose midway between Little Joe Lake and the Thorp Mountain Lookout. Unexpected, but a thrill.

Joshua Om A wolverine on Mount Adams!

Colleen Suter Watching a big black bear happily eating blueberries on the hillside above the LaCrosse Basin in the Olympics.

Check out this issue's Hike It section for trails with great wildlife viewing opportunities.

Want to join the Facebook conversation?

Visit [Facebook.com/washingtontrails](https://www.facebook.com/washingtontrails) and get trail news, featured hikes and a chance to chime in on our questions of the week.



WTA VOLUNTEER PROFILE: Top Trip Reporters

Nearly every Saturday is a hiking day for geologist-turned-archeologist **Anne Boyd** (aka Eastside Anne). That's incredibly good news for other hikers who hope to keep an expert eye on conditions and natural wonders along the Kettle Crest, in the Selkirks or among the channeled scablands of Eastern Washington. The fun, welcoming vibe during a day of trail work at Lake Liberty first moved Anne to become a member of WTA. But with a knack for writing adventure stories, and a desire to give back to other WTA hikers, Anne also gives back in her richly detailed—and much-needed—reports.

When **Shan Shan Huang** and **Martin Bravenboer** (aka mbravenboer) were thinking of making Washington their home, wta.org first connected them to Artist Point's incomparable views. Those views not only helped the couple decide to move here, they convinced Shan Shan, who "grew up in a densely urban environment in China and never had the opportunity to touch anything remotely wild," that she could really enjoy hiking. Now, the WTA Fireside members find regular respite from their busy professional lives in the Cascades, searching new trip reports for new places to explore and returning the favor with inspiring reports of their own.

Learn more about the adventures of these members at [wta.org/toptripreporters](https://www.wta.org/toptripreporters).

COMMUNITY

In Photos

As hikers, we love wildlife. Here are a few photos we wanted to share. Elk near the Cedar River Trail, by Jim Flynn; Starfish at Second Beach, by Claire Mitchell; Mountain Goat at Robin Lake, by Nathaniel Middleton.



Join the WTA Community

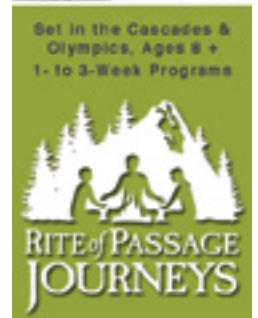


Show Your Trail Cred!

Proudly display your support for WTA on the trail and around town with WTA logo performance tees and caps.

Every purchase helps fund trail work across the state.

Shop today at
wta.org/shop



HIKING NEWS

Across Washington

SAVED!

On April 15, 2014, President Obama signed the Green Mountain Lookout Heritage Protection Act, allowing the popular lookout in the Glacier Peak Wilderness to stay.

Two years ago, a judge ordered the U.S. Forest Service to remove the Green Mountain Lookout when a group charged that the process to restore it violated the Wilderness Act. The legislation to save the lookout was championed by Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell and Reps. Suzan DelBene and Rick Larsen. Passage of the bill into law also provides a small morale boost for the nearby Darrington community, which was hit hard by the Oso landslide in March.

Like a sentinel, the Green Mountain Lookout has watched over the Glacier Peak backcountry for more than 80 years. Originally built in 1933 by the Civilian Conservation Corps as part of a fire detection system across the North Cascades, the Green Mountain Lookout housed a seasonal fire spotter. In 1968 Glacier Peak Wilderness was expanded to include the lookout. In the mid-1980s as airplanes took over the primary fire detection role, lookouts were used by wilderness rangers who patrolled the forest and provided history lessons to eager lookout visitors. Green Mountain Lookout is one of the few remaining lookouts in Washington to carry on that role today.

More than 600 lookouts once occupied Washington mountaintops. When aerial fire detection took precedence, many of the lookouts were removed by land managers concerned about visitor safety and cost of maintenance. In 1987, an effort was made to protect the remaining few. Green Mountain Lookout, and five other wilderness lookouts on the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, was added to the National Register of Historic Places. In the years following, Green Mountain Lookout was adopted by the Friends of Green Mountain Lookout group to “preserve and maintain” the historic structure.

The hike to Green Mountain Lookout has been called one of the best view hikes in the state. Prior to the washout of the Suiattle River Road, hundreds of people trekked up to the lookout, enjoying lush green meadows, wildflowers and jaw-dropping vistas of nearby peaks. Once the Suiattle reopens later this year, hikers will be able to make the pilgrimage to the lookout once again—this time to celebrate that an important piece of Washington’s history will remain atop Green Mountain for future hikers to enjoy.

Help Olympic National Park Plan for Wilderness Management

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK – Planning staff with Olympic National Park want to hear from the public regarding its draft plans for managing the park's official wilderness area (comprising 95 percent of the park) on everything from trails to bear canisters to self-registration stations.

In 2013, Olympic National Park reviewed comments submitted by the public during the initial development phase of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan. They also collected additional data and conducted a visitor use survey. Now that the park has produced its Wilderness Stewardship Plan Preliminary Draft Alternatives document, it is looking for help from hikers and others to inform the planning process.

Currently, there are three new "Alternatives" or options for managing Olympic Wilderness:

Alternative B puts an "emphasis on the reduction of the human imprint."

Alternative C puts an "emphasis on the protection of natural resources."

Alternative D puts an "emphasis on managing visitor use and recreation to provide visitors with a greater range of wilderness experiences."

There is also a "no action" alternative (Alternative A), which is defined as a continuation of existing management practices.

The Wilderness Stewardship Plan adopts a new zone approach to managing trails, campsites, day and overnight backcountry permits and other features in wilderness. Each alternative defines wilderness management a little differently, but all three have proposed changes that could impact hikers in the park, such as requiring bear canisters throughout the park and removing self-registration stations within Olympic Wilderness. The alternatives also dictate the level of maintenance for trails and historic structures like the Enchanted Valley Chalet, which is dangerously close to collapsing into the East Fork Quinault River.

Since this is an early draft, the options may change or increase before the next round of input from the public.

WTA is analyzing the Preliminary Draft Alternatives and will be providing feedback to the park, with an eye toward ensuring that hikers continue to have access to great trails. Stay tuned to find out more about the Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

Let your voice be heard.

Here are two simple steps for how you can take action:

Step 1: Learn about the initial proposed changes.

Details on the draft alternatives can be found on the park's website (nps.gov/olym), and we'll make sure to keep you up-to-date in WTA's *Signpost* blog.

Step 2: Raise your voice when the time comes.

Join WTA's **Trail Action Network**, and as the process develops over the year, we'll make sure to let you know when it's essential to weigh in. Sign up at wta.org/tan.

GET OUT
FAST
STAY OUT
LONGER



The ultimate energy bar for adventure:

- Made in the Pacific NW
- All natural ingredients
- Nutrient dense
- Three delicious flavors


mazamabar

order today at mazamabar.com

On the Brink

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK – Park officials are planning an expedited environmental analysis in hopes of soon moving the Enchanted Valley Chalet out of imminent danger, even as the migrating East Fork Quinault River continues to undercut the historic building's foundation. The fast action is only intended as a short-term fix to avoid further damage to the historic building while park staff continue to explore options for a long-term solution.



Photo by Andrea Imler

NW Forest e-Pass is Here

OLYMPIA – Now hikers can purchase and print a Northwest Forest Pass for any trailhead in Washington and Oregon. The new e-Pass is a convenient option for spur-of-the-moment adventures on trails in Washington's national forests, from the Gifford-Pinchot to Mount Baker-Snoqualmie.

The pass is valid at all Forest Service trailheads in Washington and Oregon with developed facilities. This includes most trailheads in the Cascades, Olympics and the Columbia River Gorge. The e-Pass costs \$5 per day, the same as a traditional pass purchased at a ranger station or other outlet.

To purchase the e-Pass online, visit discovernw.org/store_recreation-passes_1PASS/. You will need your car's license plate number and the date you plan to hike. The form will also ask which forest area you are hiking in, but you can change your mind about where you plan to hike after you print it. The e-Pass must be printed within two days of purchase, even if you're not hiking until after that. Then just display your e-Pass in your vehicle at the trailhead.

Currently, e-Passes are only available for single day use. For multiday trips, you will need to purchase and print multiple single-day e-Passes. An annual e-Pass is not yet available.

If you plan to hike on trails in National Forest lands more than once, you may want to consider purchasing an annual Northwest Forest Pass for \$30. The pass is available at National Forest offices and visitor centers and via private vendors or online. Annual Northwest Forest passes may also be purchased at the downtown Seattle WTA office or on wta.org.



Middle Fork Road Closed for Repaving Project

SEATTLE – Ask anyone who has driven the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Road (FR 56) what their experience was like, and they'll probably tell you about the car-swallowing potholes and tire-sucking mud. Others will talk about the time their car axle broke or multiple tires went pancake flat.

Soon those experiences will be a thing of the past. The long-awaited paving project on the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Road will begin in May and continue over the next three summers. Ten miles of the Middle Fork road will be paved from the end of the current pavement at the Mailbox Peak trailhead all the way to the Middle Fork Campground. The project is scheduled to be completed in August 2016.

By paving the road, hikers will have easier and safer access to their favorite places. Each year, more than 100,000 hikers and other recreationists venture to the Middle Fork to hike, camp, kayak and fish. The Middle Fork Valley—in the backyard of North Bend and only a 45-minute drive from Seattle—is incredibly scenic, with jagged peaks, towering old-growth trees and a raging river along the road. It is the main access road for a number of popular hiking trails, including Mailbox Peak, Granite Creek, Middle Fork Snoqualmie River and Taylor River.

The paving project will not only mean better access for hikers, but is also a win for the river and fish. Water quality in the Middle Fork valley will improve due to a decrease of sediment runoff that currently flows off the dirt road and into streams. Old road culverts (those metal pipes that run under roads to allow streams to continue flowing downstream) will also be replaced and made more fish-friendly so trout can migrate upstream. WTA sees this project as a win-win for hikers and the environment.

Impacts on Your Trip to the Middle Fork

Construction will begin around the time you are reading this issue of *Washington Trails* and will continue through October of this year. The following information can help you plan your visit to the Middle Fork during this time. Alternatively, consider the project a good reason to explore a new set of trails, maybe the Issaquah Alps, the Teanaway region or along U.S. Highway 2.

Scheduled Closures on the Middle Fork in 2014

Closures on the Middle Fork Road are scheduled to begin on May 5 and extend through October 31. The Lake Dorothy Road will be closed for the duration of the project. The Mailbox Peak Trail, and all trails beyond Mailbox, will be inaccessible during the closure.

Lake Dorothy Road to Middle Fork Campground

Road closed: 12 noon Monday – 12 noon Friday

Road open: 12 noon Friday – 12 noon Monday

(Up to 60 minute delays may occur.)

CCC Trailhead to Middle Fork Campground

Road closed: seven days a week from July 28 to September 26

Get the latest closure news at wta.org/middleforkupdates.



Photo by Eli Boschetto

We extend our thanks to WTA's Corporate Partners

Rainier - \$25,000+



Olympic - \$10,000-\$24,999



Cascade - \$2,500-\$9,999



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

Therm-a-Rest® • MSR® • Emergent BioSolutions
LakeWenatcheeInfo.com • Seven Hills Running Shop



To find out how your company can support WTA's work for trails, please call us at (206) 625-1367 or email lisac@wta.org.

2014 Legislative Session: How Trails Fared

OLYMPIA – The short, 60-day legislative session ended in Olympia earlier this year with a few important bills that impact hikers making it across the finish line just in time. Here's a brief look at some of the bills that were signed into law by Governor Inslee.

Trail Standards to be Developed for State Lands

This legislation (ESHB 2151) requires the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop an official recreational trails policy that causes the least impact to the land, provides environmental and water quality protection and maintains the lowest construction and maintenance costs that are reasonable.

The bill also states that DNR should use the U.S. Forest Service trail standards as guidelines for developing their own best management practices and maintenance guidelines.

Public participation in developing new trails systems and enhancing current ones is also encouraged through the legislation. WTA looks forward to continuing to work with DNR and other stakeholders on the development of the recreational trails policy.

Palouse Falls Named Washington's State Waterfall

Scenic Palouse Falls, located in southeast Washington, has become Washington's official state waterfall. Formed by the ancient Missoula Floods, the falls formation is more than 10,000 years old and contains a series of three waterfalls, with the main waterfall plunging more than 180 feet. Palouse Falls is located within Palouse Falls State Park, a popular day-use area with a walking path and scenic viewpoints. Yellow-bellied marmots, various reptiles and a host of wildflowers make their home here.

Grade school students in the town of Washtucna first proposed Palouse Falls as the state's official waterfall, which led to the Legislature's passing a bill to make it so. Way to go, kids!

State Parks to Benefit from Partnerships

In an attempt to help state parks produce more revenue to support operations, the Olympia Legislature passed a bill allowing for some advertising to take place in state parks. The guidelines for the advertisements are fairly strict.

Ads cannot detract from the integrity of the park's natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources and outstanding scenic vistas. You might start to notice small signs thanking park donors or event sponsors, but you won't see any parks being named after software companies or come across beverage billboards on your next hike.

You can keep up with the latest news affecting hiking and trails in Washington on WTA's *Signpost* blog, or by signing up for WTA's *Trail News* e-newsletter. Visit wta.org for more info.



Lands like the Yacolt Burn State Forest (top) can look forward to a new trails policy to enhance visitor experiences while protecting their environments. Palouse Falls (middle) has been named Washington's official state waterfall. Washington State Parks will be creating new partnerships to help fund park operations across the state, including the extremely popular Deception Pass (bottom).

Photos from top by: Ryan Ojerio, Nathaniel Morse-Dayton and Arpad Jasko.

We celebrate trails every day at WTA. But on June 7, as part of National Trails Day, we join thousands of other volunteers across the country to give back to the trails we love to hike. Come celebrate on one of these work parties.



PITCH IN on June 7 and join WTA on one of these trails near you:

- ▶ **Horseshoe Bend**
(Mount Baker)
- ▶ **Asahel Curtis**
(Snoqualmie Pass)
- ▶ **South Fork Skokomish**
(Hood Canal)
- ▶ **Mount Rainier**
(Mount Rainier National Park)
- ▶ **Evans Creek Preserve Family-Friendly**
(Sammamish)
- ▶ **Vancouver Lake Family-Friendly**
(Vancouver)

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

Show your support for trails and join WTA on June 7 on a trail near you!

Visit wta.org/volunteer



Photo by Tushar Sharma. Inset photos by Ginger Sarver and Pauline Cantor.

WTA AT WORK

Trail Maintenance



By Anna Roth

The Value of Vo

WTA Crews Are Crucial to Olympi

Last summer, a WTA volunteer trail crew spent five days working on the Lena Lake trail on the Olympic National Forest (ONF). They spent their time clearing the way from the trailhead to Lena Lake, a popular day hiking destination. Unfortunately, due to time constraints and other area commitments, they were unable to work past the lower lake, leaving more than 20 fallen trees across the trail to the upper lake, and requiring hikers to exercise trail acrobatics to continue up the path.

Under normal circumstances, and on nearly any other national forest in Washington, a paid U.S. Forest Service trail crew would have been dispatched to take care of the remaining obstacles. But ONF didn't have that option. Recent budget cuts have hit ONF especially hard, leaving it without a dedicated trail crew. Now, ONF relies entirely on WTA and other community partners to maintain its more than 250 miles of trail.

Filling In the Gap

"The service provided by WTA is invaluable," says Dean Yoshida, district ranger on ONF. "It accomplishes the bulk of our trail maintenance workload for the year."

In 2013, that translated to 10,000 volunteer hours on 24 trails across the forest.

However, WTA's commitment to ONF is not without cost. Although volunteers donate their time, they still need the proper tools, training and support. With the meager funds ONF receives, it reimburses WTA approximately one dollar

for every nine dollars worth of maintenance it receives—but additional funding is needed. To that end, WTA leverages financial support from the National Recreational Trails Program, the National Forest Foundation and WTA members.

This support allows WTA to play a major role in keeping ONF's trails open for hikers. Tim Van Beek, WTA's field programs manager explains. "Hikers in the ONF are fortunate to have a crew of dedicated volunteers who take such good care of the trails. The funding WTA receives from our members, as well as public and private funders, is essential to ensuring that we can support those crews."

Lush Forests=Lots of Maintenance

WTA's work in the Olympics is important not just because ONF doesn't have its own trail crew, but because the trails in the forest require more upkeep than other areas of the state. In large part, that's due to the extreme climate of the Olympic Peninsula, which can degrade trails very quickly. Creekside trails suffer from constant erosion, and the flora on the peninsula—fed by up to 200 inches of water per year—crowds in on all sides, requiring constant maintenance to keep routes passable. But WTA volunteers welcome the challenge.

"Because of the lack of a federal trail crew in the Olympics, there seems to be a sense of pride and ownership by many of the volunteers who keep the trails open," says Charlotte "Charlie" Romine, WTA's Olympic trail crew leader. "[We have] regulars who keep coming back. It's also good exercise,



Olympic trail crews at Lena Lake, Dosewallips and Dungeness work parties. Photos by Meagan MacKenzie.

Volunteers

ic National Forest

a great way to meet people and a way to pay back for using the trails.”

It's not uncommon for new volunteers to say they immediately feel welcome. In addition to regular maintenance from the Tuesday Crew and other weekly work parties, WTA tends to a wide range of jobs in the ONF backcountry. In 2013, volunteer crews spent 31 days at 10 backcountry locations, including nine days on the Duckabush River Trail, eight days on the Upper South Fork Skokomish and seven days on the Upper Dungeness Trail.

You Can Support ONF Trails

WTA's 2014 season in ONF is starting off strong, having already held work parties at Notch Pass, Mount Walker, Dry Creek and the Wynoochee Lakeshore Trail. Coming this summer, three Volunteer Vacations and eight Backcountry Response Team (BCRT) trips are scheduled in numerous locations all across ONF lands. Volunteer crews will be logging-out trails on the Duckabush, Dry Creek, Heather Creek, and Upper South Fork Skokomish. We're also building bridges and repairing puncheon on the Lower South Fork Skokomish, and fixing damaged tread on the Colonel Bob Trail.

And of course WTA will be back at Lena Lake, where crews will spend three days clearing those trees left behind last summer.

You are invited to sign up for a BCRT trip or join us on a Tuesday work party. ONF will be glad to have your help. Get more info at wta.org/volunteer.

WTA Volunteer Crews Support National Forests Across the State

WTA's volunteer crews work in national forests across Washington to help keep trails open and accessible for hikers. Here is just a sampling of some of the work going on this year.

Colville

Several BCRT crews will be working on trails in the isolated Salmo–Priest Wilderness this summer. This is the only care some of these remote trails see all year.

Okanogan–Wenatchee

OWNF's trail crew can't cover the expansive acreage of their district, so WTA will be helping out, visiting several backcountry locations in areas like the Horseshoe Basin and the Enchantments.

Gifford–Pinchot

WTA work parties will be in the Mount St. Helens, Indian Heaven and Mount Adams areas, lending their aid to trails that receive a heavy beating from Mother Nature annually.

Mount Baker–Snoqualmie

On one of Washington's most visited national forests, volunteer crews will be keeping dozens of popular trails like Blanca Lake and Franklin Falls clear and safe for the many hikers who visit each year.

You can be a part of it. For more information on WTA's work in Washington's national forests, or to sign up for a work party, visit wta.org/volunteer.



Still looking for a way to volunteer with WTA in the backcountry this summer?

Sign up for one of WTA's Volunteer Vacation and Backcountry Response Team (BCRT) trips.

West Fork Humptulips Volunteer Vacation
Olympics • July 12-19

Shedroof Divide BCRT
Colville National Forest • July 31-August 3

Klickitat Trail BCRT
South Cascades • August 21-24

Wild Sky Wilderness Volunteer Vacation
Central Cascades • August 30-Sept. 6

Find more trips and sign up at
wta.org/volunteer

By Andrea Martin

Western Wilderness Trail Corps

Filling a Need and Leaving a Legacy

Photo by Leslie Cox



“My most memorable experiences so far have been the result of participating in trail life,”

says Jackson Lee, one of the founding members of Western Wilderness Trail Corps (WWTC). The group, formed in fall 2013, is based at Western Washington University and is committed to getting college students outside to improve local trail systems.

Lee is no novice to trail work. He has been a dedicated WTA volunteer since National Trails Day 2010, when he learned about trail drainage at a work party at Lord Hill Park in Snohomish County. Lee went on to participate in youth vacations and WTA's trail internship program, and is now a seasonal crew leader, preparing to spend his fifth summer building and maintaining Washington's trails. He's also an avid hiker, with plans to thru-hike the PCT after finishing his bachelor's degree in environmental education.

Lee was inspired to become even more involved in trail life in the fall of his final year of college after noticing the decline of professional trail programs and subsequent growth of volunteer-based trail maintenance. Friends of his had been struck by a similar realization that people their age—around 18 to 25—found it difficult to participate in volunteer programs. Together, they worried that this “demographic rift” would result in an irreversible lack of interest in trail work by the next generation.

Jackson and his friends didn't want that to happen, so they

did the one thing they could think of: they started WWTC.

Unfortunately, even the best-laid plans can be disrupted by a government shutdown. The group's hopes of working in North Cascades National Park were quickly dashed by the sequestration and subsequent backlog of work for federal employees. But WWTC rallied and turned to a “hyperlocal” plan, ultimately building a partnership with Bellingham's Sehome Arboretum to complete the East Side Trail. With support from WTA's northwest regional manager, Arlen Bogaards, WWTC has now held five work parties at the arboretum.

“Jackson's drive to organize and lead trail maintenance trips is a testament to the impact WTA has had on him through his involvement as a youth volunteer,” says Bogaards. “His dedication to maintaining trails is highlighted through his continuing work with the college community.”

Lee's dedication is, in part, fed by his greater belief that the tangible results of trail work are highly valuable. And walking, working and sleeping on trails are all experiences that fuel his passion for environmental stewardship—something he hopes to encourage in others.

Even though Lee's time at Western is almost over, he has high hopes for WWTC. In the future, he and the other founding members would like to see their work incorporated into environmental education classes on campus. The group is also thinking much larger than just the Western campus; curriculum guides are being developed for use at other colleges and universities.

For Lee, it is all part of a journey that started with that first WTA work party at Lord Hill Park. From being taught to being the teacher, he has come full circle to create a new generation of trail stewards and a stronger community, one work party at a time.

To learn more about WWTC and to get involved, find the organization on Facebook or send them an email at wwwwilderness@gmail.com.



Don't Miss a Single Issue!

Is it time to renew your membership?
If you're not a member, are you ready to join?

Washington Trails Association is here to protect and preserve hiking trails across the state. *Washington Trails* and wta.org are your link to a wealth of hiking info to get you out and keep you updated on the latest hiking news.

Renew or join today at wta.org/join.



CAR CAMPING WITH KIDS

Your Quick Checklist to Getting Away

For families, car camping is the perfect way to connect kids with the outdoors and launch a lifelong love of hiking. Try spending at least two nights at a campground and using it as a springboard to discover a new area. If camping is new to your family, or if camping with kids in tow is new to you, here are some practical suggestions for making your trip successful, and ensuring a good time for everyone.

☐ **Pick your campground**

Look for areas you want to visit and research the campground options. Consider the amenities you need for your family: running water, showers and flush toilets.

☐ **Determine your group**

Camping can be more fun when you do it with friends. And the more adults you have along, the easier it is to share the workload. Having pals for the kids to play with will also ensure some adult-time to relax.

☐ **Make a reservation**

Camping on a summer weekend? Reservations are almost essential in state parks and many campgrounds on the west side of the Cascades. Walk-ups are sometimes available midweek, but plan ahead.

☐ **Involve the kids in planning**

What might your little ones be most interested in doing? Find activities for the whole family: hiking, biking, boating, clamming, wildlife viewing and quality campground time are all options.

☐ **Consider a dry run in the backyard**

Before heading off into the woods, build a camp in your yard for a practice camp out. This helps you assess your gear and helps orient younger kids to the experience of sleeping outdoors.

☐ **Pack the right gear**

Make sure to bring warm clothes, cozy sleeping bags and comfortable air mattresses on your trip. A rain fly for the tent or a tarp to hang over the picnic table can save the day if the trip turns rainy.

☐ **Bring lots of food**

Fuel up with everyone's favorite snacks and drinks, and don't forget to bring fixings for s'mores. At night, make sure you pack all of your food into your car—and check the kids' pockets for leftover snacks before bed.

☐ **Pack games, but leave the screens at home**

Card games, Frisbees and bikes are all great in-camp activities. Bring a nature field guide and try to find and identify wildflowers, berries or birds. For tent time, bring books instead of electronic devices.

☐ **Bring a first-aid kit, sunscreen and bug juice**

Pack items that might most be needed: band-aids, antiseptic wipes and tweezers. If there will be water play, bring enough sunscreen to reapply after swimming. Use child-safe insect repellent.

☐ **Embrace the experience**

Enjoy! Play like a kid, breathe in the fresh air and have fun. Kids share in the excitement of those around them.

☐ **REPEAT**

When the trip is over, start planning the next trip. Talk about new adventures and get them excited to head out again.

WTA AT WORK

Families Go Hiking

By Susan Elderkin



Photo by Kevin Farrell

FAMILY-FRIENDLY CAMPGROUNDS

White River

(Mount Rainier National Park)

Deception Pass State Park

(Whidbey Island)

Steamboat Rock State Park

(Central Washington)

Denny Creek Campground

(Snoqualmie Pass)

Cape Disappointment State Park

(Southwest Washington)

For more family campgrounds, and hikes nearby, visit wta.org/camping.

By Andrea Imler

Washington's Trails: The History and Heritage

“As this was the third party which had visited the mountains since I came here to live, we thought it best to cut a path through the woods.”

What pioneer Ethan Allen was eloquently describing was the reason behind the construction of the oldest known hiking trail in the United States. That trail, known as the Crawford Path, begins at the Crawford Notch on the Mount Clinton Road and ends at the summit of New Hampshire's Mount Washington. Built in 1819, it is still in use today.

Throughout history, trails have served a variety of purposes. Long before European colonists set foot in America, Native Americans created extensive footpath networks that connected villages, enabled trade and led to productive hunting grounds. Some of the paths were so well-sited that they became some of Washington's earliest roads. You can still follow portions of these heritage-rich trails like the **Lower South Fork Skokomish River Trail**.

As European-Americans settled into their eastern seaboard roots, the urge to head west and discover the wild frontier took hold. The famed Lewis and Clark Expedition utilized existing Native American trails in its journey west. Its successful passage encouraged others to follow. First by foot, and then by wagon, thousands of settlers followed the Oregon Trail across the vast American frontier. By the mid-1800s, the California Gold Rush beckoned even more hardy souls westward.

Trails for Innovation

The landscape of trails and their use changed again with new developments in transportation and resource extraction. Coal and mineral mining brought men seeking fortune to remote wilderness areas. Trails were built to accommodate the miners—their horses and gear—and to move materials. Next to appear were railroads, large and small, to increase the efficiency of mining operations and boost migration

locally and from afar. Some of these old trails can still be traveled today. In the Glacier Peak Wilderness, the **Phelps Creek Trail** to Larch Knob, above Spider Meadows, is a remnant of an old mining route.

By the late 1800s, with the onset of the Industrial Revolution, the use of trails and the perception of them changed yet again. With machines doing more of the labor, workers had more free time for leisure. This period also saw the creation of more city-based jobs and therefore a transition from life in the country to life in the city. Now instead of escaping from the country to the city for entertainment, workers and their families left the cities for the hills for outdoor leisure and recreation.

Trails for Inspiration

In the early 1900s, a yearning to learn more about the mysterious lands beyond their back doors—added to a budding appreciation for adventure—prompted a number of expeditions into the wild unknown. Here in Washington, the *Seattle Press* Expedition ventured into the rainforests of the Olympic Peninsula, taking six months to cut a path across the Elwha Valley. The blaze marks they cut into trees for navigational purposes can still be seen along the trail today. Meanwhile, down in California's Sierra Nevada, John Muir roamed among ponderosa pines and scaled granitic mountainsides to make a case for preserving vast areas of wilderness. Muir's written words profoundly influenced America's love of nature and the desire to travel to these far-off places: “Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.”

The early part of the twentieth century brought dramatic progress to trails, including the introduction of long-distance trails. The Long Trail, running the length of Vermont was constructed between 1912 and 1930. In 1922 the first mile of the Appalachian Trail was blazed, and the entire trail was completed by 1937. Here in Washington, the U.S. Forest Service began to cut the Cascade Crest Trail from the Canadian border to the Columbia River. Between 1935 and 1938, the YMCA hosted backpacking relay trips to scout out a suitable way to link the Cascade Crest, Skyline and John Muir trails, which later became the Pacific Crest Trail.



Climbers on Mount Rainier, circa 1912, when people began wandering into the wilds in pursuit of adventure and inspiration. Photo courtesy of Mount Rainier National Park.

Trails for Recreation

When the Great Depression hit America in the 1930s, President Roosevelt introduced the New Deal and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Known as the "Conservationist President," Roosevelt not only saw the CCC as a way to create paying jobs during an economic downturn, he also saw it as a way to better engage America in the outdoors. In fact, the CCC became the most well known New Deal effort, and its notoriety brought increased attention to outdoor recreation, trails and the need to protect our natural resources. You can still check out an old CCC base camp at Camp Shepard near Chinook Pass, then hike the **Snoquerra Falls Trail**.

It wasn't until the 1960s and 1970s that the golden age of backpacking was ushered in. Major legislation was passed during this time, including the Multiple-Use Sustainable-Yield Act, which made outdoor recreation one of the U.S. Forest Service's priorities, and put it on equal footing with timber production and other public lands uses. The Wilderness Act became law in 1964 and preserved millions of acres of wilderness, and the National Trails System Act officially designated the Pacific Crest and Appalachian Trails as National Scenic Trails. Newer materials like nylon and aluminum started appearing in tents and backpacks, making hiking and backpacking gear lighter and more compact, which enabled hikers to explore more remote locations with easier loads.

Looking at the present day, we see an increased interest in the outdoors due to national initiatives like "No Child Left Inside," which is bringing greater attention to getting kids outside, off the couch and away from video games. A greater recognition of America's obesity epidemic also encouraged people to hit the trails as an affordable way to get exercise and enjoyment. Each year, 90 percent of Washingtonians take part in walking, hiking, climbing and mountaineering activities. Outdoor recreation contributes to our state's economy to the tune of \$22.5 billion each year.

Trails for the Next Generation

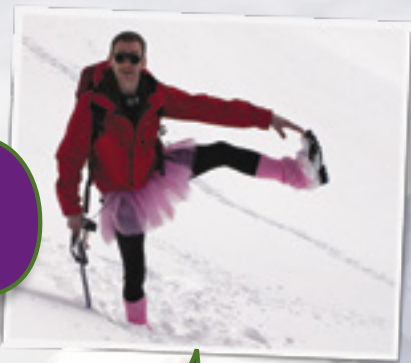
This all sounds great for hikers, right? Unfortunately, there's a mischievous nymph lurking in the shadows.

In the current economy, our national forests and state parks can barely afford to maintain their trails. In fact, only 25 percent of national forest trails are being maintained to Forest Service standards nationwide. Fortunately, organizations like WTA, Back Country Horsemen of Washington and others have stepped up to the challenge and provide thousands of hours of volunteer trail maintenance to help keep our trails open. But many trails linger unmaintained and at risk.

Trails have played a crucial role in shaping civilization. Today, this provides a window into our nation's history and our heritage and allows people to escape from their day-to-day lives and explore nature for themselves. We owe it to ourselves and our ancestors to protect and fund these trails for generations to come. The moment we lose our trails, we lose a piece of ourselves.



» Hike Up Your Skirts



HOW TUTUS AND TRAILS MAKE THE BEST MOTHER'S DAY TALES

Each year on Mother's Day, something magical happens at Mount St. Helens. At almost 6 a.m. on the dot, sleepy mountaineers begin making their way up the normally imposing, often snow-covered volcano in herds.

They chatter relentlessly between themselves, for once excited about sharing the trail with hundreds of other climbers. Strangers don't exist—only potential friends. Laughter echoes from the stony parking lot to the snowy summit. As the sun comes up, it illuminates a scene unlike any other—a backcountry costume ball of sorts. Gone are the Gore-Tex jackets and windproof mountaineering pants. In their place are elegant ball gowns, glittery tutus and suggestive fishnet stockings. And that's not even the half of it. The women also are dressed to kill.

If it sounds like Mardi Gras on the mountain, you've guessed correctly. It's also one of the most beloved traditions in Washington mountaineering. For nearly 30 years now, climbers of all ages, genders and abilities have attempted to summit Mount St. Helens on Mother's Day weekend—and ski, snowboard, sled or glissade down—in honor of moms everywhere.

— By Cassandra Overby —



THE LADY WITH THE PINK FLAMINGOS

Most outrageous traditions have their roots in outrageous people, and the Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climb is no exception. The festive event owes its shine to Kathy Phibbs, a Northwest mountaineer who was equal parts climber and firecracker. Phibbs cofounded the all-volunteer nonprofit Women Climbers Northwest in 1983.

"[Climbing] was a pretty male-dominated activity at the time and she really wanted to encourage women to take on more leadership in activities in the outdoors," says Colleen Hinton, the current leader of the organization. "And [Phibbs] had a really fun approach to it. She wanted it to be a fun experience for the women out there, not as serious as the men's alpine clubs that existed at the time."

The carrot-topped woman with the crooked smile brought her inimitable sense of humor to the task. She donned costumes, started zany traditions and even developed her own Ten Essentials.

"Kathy was a big fan of wearing tutus on climbs because they didn't get in the way of much," Hinton explains. "She also started a tradition of planting pink flamingos on summits and taking [them] on camping outings. So we would all carry pink flamingos on the backs of our packs."

In the spring of 1987, just after Mount St. Helens reopened to climbers (following its 1980 eruption), Phibbs led a group of four other women up the mountain in costume. At the summit they chanced upon a reporter from the *Seattle Times* who memorialized the encounter in an article for the newspaper.

"After climbing 4 ½ rugged hours to the top of the nation's most famous volcano, no one expected a party," wrote Eric Nalder. "But there, at 8,300 feet on the treacherous rim of Mount St. Helens, [was] a woman in a red chiffon dress and [four] can-can dancers ... [The] five happy women climbers did a can-can dance for the benefit of photographers. One of them, Kathy Phibbs, a 29-year-old climbing guide, had scaled the mountain on cross-country skis. For [her] the climb was a nostalgic return to the mountain. In 1975 on her first climb, she was in high school and the mountain was a perfect, unerupted cone."

The photo of Phibbs made the front page of the *Seattle Times*. "It was just a very fun photo of her in a red chiffon dress with a pillbox hat posing on the top of Mount St. Helens with her telemark skis ... looking very festive," explains Hinton. "It captured who she was." With that one photo, the idea of climbing Mount St. Helens in costume caught the imagination of a state, and a tradition was born.

Climb Snapshot

DISTANCE: 12 miles, round trip

ELEVATION GAIN: 5,500 feet

HIGHEST POINT: 8,364 feet

STARTING POINT: Marble Mountain Sno-Park

MAP: Green Trails #364S

PERMIT: Mount St. Helens Climbing Permit, \$22

Photos by Colleen Hinton, Jamie Levin, Eric Rosenberg, Kyel Russell, Michael Torkildson and Mike Warren. Background photo by Andrew Johnson.



Tales From the Mount

In a cruel twist of fate, the very sport that made Phibbs' soul sing was also the cause of her death only a few short years later. She died in a climbing accident in 1991 after falling from Triple Couloir, an ice climb in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. She was only 33 years old. More than 20 years have passed since then, but Phibbs' light continues to shine; her lighthearted legacy lives on. Indeed, it has taken on a life of its own.

In 2013, the Mount St. Helens Institute issued a record-breaking 667 climbing permits for the Saturday of Mother's Day weekend. Since its inception, it's estimated that more than 10,000 people have participated in the iconic holiday climb. That's 10,000 unique trail stories. We were able to speak with many folks who have participated in the climb in recent years. Here are a few of our favorite stories.

Wearing a Dress for Mom

Although the Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climb started as an exclusively female event, it quickly became a magnet for mountaineering males who wanted to dress up and have a good time, too. Now, men—even the manliest of men—are among the climb's most enthusiastic contingent. Kyel Russell is one of them. In 2011, he and two U.S. Navy buddies (photo top) decided to climb Mount St. Helens in honor of their mothers.

As Russell explains it, it was payback of sorts. All three guys had gotten into some pretty wild and adventurous things in their twenties—bungee jumping, skydiving and rock climbing. Instead of pressuring them to choose tamer, less risky activities, their moms had been supportive. As a way of saying “thank you,” Russell and his friends decided to dedicate a Mother's Day adventure, and a photo collage, to their moms.

They started like most Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climbers do—with choosing the perfect outfit. “We went dress shopping at Goodwill,” says Russell. “There was a little bit of uneasiness in our group at first, with regards to dressing up like women.”

The unease didn't last. Before long, Russell and his two military friends were trying on a variety of dresses, asking women for fashion advice and posing for pictures. They even learned a little something in the process.

“At 25 years old I learned that those little white straps on the inside of dresses aren't for wearing,” reveals Russell. “They're for hanging them up.”

Although the weather forecast for Mother's Day weekend 2011 was terrible—so much so that many climbers cancelled at the last minute—

Russell and crew did make it to the top of the iconic volcano. In their photos from that day, they grin at the camera from the summit—dresses fluttering in the wind, large, tattooed shoulders

squeezed into spaghetti straps and beers cracked—with a flowered “hey mom” sign cradled in their arms.

“[Our moms] were pretty happy about it,” says Russell. “Every time I talk to one of my sisters or my brother they say, ‘You know you're Mom's favorite, right?’”

Sharing a Mountain Adventure

Russell is not the only one whose participation in the Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climb has earned him major brownie points. In 2013, Jamie Rose Levin planned the ultimate mother–daughter adventure as a way to celebrate Mother's Day together.

“In 2011, I [did the climb] with my then boyfriend, now fiancé,” says Levin. “My mom really loved the pictures (photo middle) and the thought of doing it in a dress. It didn't work out in 2012, but the point was to do it again and take my mom.”

Levin's mother, 56 years old and an active skier, trained in preparation for the climb.

“My mom did a practice trip with a guide service in Colorado,” says Levin. “Then the day of [our climb] we rented her some equipment and taught her the movements she would need ... the basics of using a beacon and a shovel, and what to do in case of an avalanche. Things like that.”

For Levin's mom, a Colorado resident, climbing Mount St. Helens was her introduction both to mountaineering and to some of Washington's best views. “My mom had been on one small hike at Wallace Falls,” says Levin. “This was her first time on a volcano.”

The trip was a hit. “She was excited to spend Mother's Day with me,” proclaims Levin. “And also get a peek inside the world that I normally live in with backcountry skiing. It was fun to show her what this experience was like. She had a blast seeing everyone in dresses. I think we'll definitely try to do it again in the coming years.”

Starting a New Family Tradition

Like Levin, many people become regulars of the Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climb. That's certainly the case with Bree Loewen. She's a member of Seattle Mountain Rescue and a five-time climb participant. Although Loewen typically does the climb with friends, in 2006 she started a new family tradition by inviting her mom along for the hike.

“Some of [my mom's] friends are in Search and Rescue too,” said Loewen. “She knew one of the ladies fairly well and they were pretty much evenly paced.”

Mother and daughter camped at the trail parking lot together overnight, then hiked at their own paces on the day of the climb. They were treated to sunny and warm conditions. Although the snow was a bit slushy, there was a good boot track up the mountain.

“My mom had a blast,” describes Loewen. “She wore a pretty batik wrap. I think it took us about eight hours round trip—with lunch on the top—but my mom had been doing a lot of hiking beforehand to get in shape. She doesn't ski, so she sledged down

“We went dress shopping at Goodwill. There was a little bit of uneasiness in our group at first, with regards to dressing up like women.”

Kyel Russell, U.S. Navy

ntain

on a plastic trash bag. That actually works pretty well. I really wanted to put her on one of those round disks, but she would've just taken off."

Because it was such a great mother-daughter experience, Loewen hopes the Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climb will become a family tradition. She's waiting for the day when her own daughter, now five years old, will be old enough and strong enough for the event.

"My mom had a blast! She wore a pretty batik wrap. She doesn't ski, so she sledded down on a plastic trash bag."

Bree Loewen
Seattle Mountain Rescue

"That's a lot of elevation gain," says Loewen. "You have to have pretty strong legs. Right now we hike Rattlesnake Ledge, and that's about the right distance for us."

Although Loewen's daughter is not ready to continue the family tradition of climbing Mount St. Helens on Mother's Day, it's already something that's on her radar.

"I know that [this year] when we get all dressed up and head out the door, she'll be like, 'I have to stay at grandma's?'"

The Ultimate in Trail Camaraderie

While most people initially participate in the Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climb to honor their mothers and create lasting traditions, many come back because of the climb's overwhelming sense of community. According to Eric Rosenberg, the experience is in a class of its own.

"[My favorite part of] hiking Mount St. Helens in a dress is the bonding and camaraderie with fellow hikers who are doing the same novel thing," shares Rosenberg (photo bottom).

"What really [strikes] me is that when on a normal hike—if there are a lot of other hikers on the same trail—you tend to complain to yourself or your hiking companion that the trail is too busy and you wish you had the mountain to yourself." He continues, "But on the Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climb it's the opposite. You want there to be lots of other people wearing dresses, partially so you don't feel quite so silly yourself, but also because there is the instant bond you have with hundreds of complete strangers when you see them trudging up the snow wearing their finest Sunday dress and ski boots, just like you."

"It's a wonderful time for you to get to know people and chat, and it's a wonderful time to get to know a lot of the rest of the community," Loewen echoes. "Usually, when we're in the mountains, we like solitude. But this is a time where you want to see all of your friends. You get 500-plus people all climbing together, and you're not upset because there are so many people on your route. You're just excited to see everyone and get to know [them]. And that's really fun."



FLOCKING THE MOUNTAIN: A HOW-TO GUIDE

Despite the fun and frivolity of the event, it's important to remember that the Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climb is a challenging and potentially hazardous endeavor. For the best memories and the best experience on trail, it's important to know what to expect and how to prepare.

Although the winter climbing route via the Worm Flows Trail is nontechnical, it's not for the faint of heart. The route boasts 12 miles of trail and 5,500 feet of elevation gain. Think trekking up to Camp Muir, only with a longer approach. Overall, expect a 7 to 12 hour round trip (10 hours is the average), depending on how you get down the mountain. Glissading or skiing down offers a significant time advantage but can be more dicey than simply trekking down with snowshoes. Because the route involves scaling an active—albeit resting—volcano, as well as open snowfields, you need to give special consideration to several factors.



FOOTING: Volcanoes can be difficult to climb because of the variety of terrain that climbers encounter: volcanic ash, craggy lava rocks and lots of exposure. Terrain can be soft with rocky rubble and tough to walk in. You may feel like it's two steps forward and one step back. Sharp rocks can cut boots and skin. This challenging and changing terrain is more likely during the summer months. For the Mother's Day climb, the mountain is usually still blanketed in deep snow. All this underscores how important it is to wear appropriate footwear. This includes sturdy hiking boots and either snowshoes, crampons or other traction devices depending on the conditions.



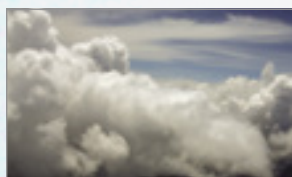
AIR QUALITY: When climbing Mount St. Helens in summertime, the final push to the rim is up a loose and steep ash slope. On Mother's Day, there is often snow. Volcanic ash (i.e., silica, or glass) can be extremely abrasive, as well as harmful when inhaled. High winds, as well as the churning boots of climbers, can blow ash around and make it airborne. It is advisable to wear a dust mask (N95 type) or bandana to cover your nose and mouth to protect your lungs. Protective eyewear is also recommended. Wraparound glasses or goggles can help prevent ash from blowing into your eyes. Dry blowing snow, while not as harmful as ash, can still be an irritant.



ELEVATION: As you climb toward the rim of Mount St. Helens, you are making your way up to 8,300 feet on a fairly strenuous incline. You'll likely be exerting a lot of energy propelling yourself up the mountain. In summer, this can be scrambling up rocky ridges and slogging up loose, sandy ash. In snowy conditions, you'll be slipping and gripping your way up, which will result in lots of heavy breathing. Climbers don't die from elevation sickness on Mount St. Helens, but common effects of altitude are dehydration, headache, nausea and dizziness. It is important to pace yourself accordingly and avoid overexertion.



NAVIGATION: Climbing with such a large number of people can present some tempting opportunities for going on autopilot and following the crowd. Resist the temptation, and don't assume that the people in front of you know where they are going any more than you do. There are several ridges on the Mount St. Helens route, and navigation can be tricky—especially if low clouds suddenly blanket the mountain. Bring your own map and compass, or GPS, and know how to use them. Remember, even when hiking with hundreds of people, you are responsible for your own safety.



WEATHER: The weather on Mount St. Helens can be unpredictable, and oftentimes it changes very quickly. It's not uncommon to start on a clear, bluebird morning and be completely socked in by clouds only a few hours later. Don't wholly rely on the weather forecast. Conditions might look rosy the day before your climb, then become impossible the day of. Past hike participants suggest camping at the trailhead parking lot the night before the climb and assessing the conditions in the morning. Also, some people choose to do the hike on Saturday rather than Sunday if the conditions are expected to be better.



AVALANCHE SAFETY: Even in perfect weather, avalanches on the mountain can be a concern, especially in spring months when warmer temperatures are loosening snow packs. It's important to monitor the avalanche conditions on the route prior to starting the climb. Call the Mount St. Helens Institute or visit its website (mshinstitute.org) for conditions updates, or visit the Northwest Avalanche Center website (nwac.us) for warnings. Before setting out, review the basics of avalanche safety, and pack the appropriate equipment. Know how to react if an avalanche suddenly occurs, and stay alert while climbing.



VOLCANIC ACTIVITY: Remember, Mount St. Helens is an active volcano. Know the eruption warning signs and monitor the proper channels for alerts of volcanic activity. The displays at Johnston Ridge are great for learning more about volcanoes and the signals of an impending eruption. If possible, plan a visit before your climb. Also, take note of any information about current volcanic activity or warnings for climbers at trailheads. According to the USGS, there are usually seven days between the detection of early warning signs of volcanic activity and an eruption. If warning signs do occur, the mountain will be closed to climbing.

Photos, from top: Tracy Durnell, Christopher Tack, Jill Green, Eric Rosenberg, Jackson, Wikimedia, Lyn Topinka/USGS; Background photo by Kyel Russell

ALL DRESSED UP WITH SOMEWHERE TO GO

Once you know what to expect on your Mother's Day climb, it's time to start your preparations. Similar to any hiking outing, you should dress accordingly and carry your Ten Essentials. In the spirit of the tradition, here are some additional considerations, as well as a checklist of what to do and when.

THE PERFECT OUTFIT: One of the best parts of preparing for the Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climb is choosing the perfect outfit. It's common to wear traditional outdoor clothing underneath your fun attire. After all, you'll be climbing in the snow and you still need to stay warm. But get creative with your top-layer dress and accessories. Most people go shopping with their hiking buddies for these; it's part of the tradition. Get into it! Try on the most ludicrous clothing you can find and accessorize, accessorize, accessorize. But go early, because thrift stores often sell out of women's large and extra-large clothing as the hike approaches. On the morning of the hike, continue with tradition and have an "outfit unveiling" with your group. And don't forget to compliment other people—friends and strangers alike—on their outfits. It's one of the best ways to build rapport with other people on the trail.

PERMITS: Once you've gotten the perfect outfit, it's time to purchase your permit for the climb. Permits are always required to go above 4,500 feet on Mount St. Helens, but Mother's Day weekend is the last weekend that the number of climbers is not restricted to 100 per day. All permits (\$22) must be purchased at least 24 hours in advance and can be ordered online through the Mount St. Helens Institute (mshinstitute.org). You can pick up your permit the day before or the morning of your climb at Lone Fir Resort in Cougar. The resort is located approximately 13 miles from the Marble Mountain Sno-Park, where most people camp the night before the hike. The permit office is open from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. daily, April 1 through October 31. Bring your receipt (not just your confirmation number) and your ID to pick up your permit. If you switch the date of your climb, you'll need to buy a new permit.

GEAR: In addition to having the right outfit and the right permit, having the right gear is essential to enjoying your Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climb. Even in all the lighthearted frivolity, you will still be dealing with extreme mountain conditions. See our recommended gear guide on this page.

THE MOUNT ST. HELENS MOTHER'S DAY MANIFESTO

There is one thing we didn't put on the packing list that is an absolute requirement for enjoying the Mount St. Helens Mother's Day climb. It's not something tangible. You can't put it in your pack or wear it on your body. But you can sport it proudly: joie de vivre. In layman's terms: silliness, playfulness and a great big smile.

At the end of the day, this climb isn't about bagging another summit. It's not about challenging yourself on an open snowfield or attempting to backcountry ski. It's not even about bragging rights—although you may feel like you have some after posting all of your amazing (and ridiculous) photos to Facebook. This climb is about fun. Over-the-top, laugh-out-loud, flamboyant fun. Treat it as such.

Wear your outfit proudly. Compliment others loudly and often. Make one new friend—or ten. It's not often that you get an opportunity to share a volcano with hundreds of cross-dressing mountaineers. And whatever you do, don't forget to call your mom on Mother's Day.

Lastly, if you're feeling especially fun, tie a pink flamingo to your pack and plant it on the summit of Mount St. Helens in honor of the amazing woman who birthed such an incredible tradition. Kathy Phibbs, this one's for you. ♦

Gear List:

- ☐ The Ten Essentials
- ☐ Sturdy hiking boots
- ☐ Snowshoes or traction devices
- ☐ Goggles or sunglasses
- ☐ Gaiters (to keep snow out)
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Something to slide down on: skis, sled disc, garbage bag
- ☐ Mandatory: "Hi Mom" or "I Love You Mom" sign
- ☐ Recommended: Bandana or dust mask (N95 type)
- ☐ Optional: Climbing helmet

Weeks Before:

- ☐ Go dress shopping
- ☐ Order your permit

Days Before:

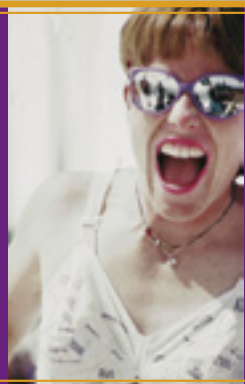
- ☐ Watch to see if the mountains are getting a lot of snow
- ☐ Pick up your permit
- ☐ View a video tour of the climbing route
- ☐ Visit the Johnston Ridge Observatory

Day of:

- ☐ Check NOAA (noaa.gov) for a mountain-specific forecast
- ☐ Check MWAC (mwac.us) for avalanche warnings
- ☐ Check the Forest Service for Mt. St. Helens climbing updates
- ☐ Call ranger to verify conditions

Kathy Phibbs' 10 Essentials

- ✓ Chocolate
- ✓ Flip-flops
- ✓ Mystery novel
- ✓ Lawn chair
- ✓ Pink flamingo
- ✓ Pesto
- ✓ Dog
- ✓ Cognac
- ✓ Tutu
- ✓ Salsa



*For more information on climbing Mount St. Helens, including a helpful resource list and information links, please visit wta.org/sthelens.

The act of trail running often intrigues and perplexes hikers. Why would anyone want to rush through unique and beautiful areas, when they can be hiked leisurely and savored? On the flip side, trail running grants a feeling of exhilaration that comes from rapid movement through nature's obstacles. The challenge of working a little harder can actually make an effort's rewards even more gratifying.



Get Out and

Run

By Wendy Wheeler-Jacobs
Photo by Glenn Tachiyama



Not convinced? There is a logical reason you might want to trail run, too. Simply put, you cover more ground in less time. This unlocks a broader set of destinations that you could previously only reach with a weekend or multiday backpack. For example, a trip that would normally take you all day to hike now has you home before dinner. In addition, you'll carry less gear than what you would in a typical day or overnight pack and wear more nimble footwear so you'll feel less cumbersome moving down the trail.

Add to that, trail running is a great way to get an overall body workout. The uneven surfaces are demanding on your core as you work to retain posture and balance. Many trails provide good hill workouts which build leg strength, while rocky or rooted trail surfaces help build strong feet and ankles. Carrying water bottles can even work your arms like mini bicep curls. Even more, the continuous aerobic activity builds endurance and cardiovascular strength.

Though trail running can be a more demanding exercise than hiking, you can ease into the process at your own pace, doing as much or as little as you like. As with most sports, it's easier to start slow and progress as you build familiarity and skill.

Fuel Up: Food and Drink

Trail running is a great way to burn calories. But in order to maintain a consistent exertion effort, you'll need to replace enough calories to provide your body the fuel it needs. "Bonking" is the term runners use for the physical and emotional crash experienced when your internal energy is used up. Quick energy from simple sugars like gels or candy is helpful for short runs or a burst to get you up the next hill. Longer runs require more low-glycemic foods that take a little longer to go through your system. These can come from fruit or whole grain granola bars.

If you are sweating a lot on your run, you may also want to consider an electrolyte replacement drink or simply a snack with a little salt, like crackers or potato chips. Experiment with different food types and forms to determine what works best for you. For instance, if you plan to keep moving while snacking, a bar is going to be much easier to handle than a bag of trail mix.

Water intake needs vary greatly by individual but also due to environmental conditions and overall level of exertion. A general starting point is 20 ounces per hour, but it is best to always take more than you think you will need. Your body will tell you when it is thirsty, but no need to wait until then. Recovering from a "bonk" or even mild dehydration can ruin the rest of your trail experience. If you have concerns about running out of water on your trail, consider carrying a small water purification device or tablets. (See more about hydration and filtering products in this issue's gear section.)

Gear Up: Ten Essentials

Before you hit the trail, you'll want to prepare yourself for the experience so that it is as enjoyable as possible. As

with most outdoor activities, choosing the right gear will help keep you both comfortable and safe.

If you have already amassed a collection of hiking clothing and gear, much of that should work for starters. The continual motion of trail running can cause chafing, so a closer inspection of seams and straps is recommended. Similar to hiking's Ten Essentials, there are basic essentials you should consider carrying on your trail runs. Of course, you'll want to add personal essentials and items specific to your adventure. And though you may not need all these things on your back for a loop around your county park, as your runs get longer or further away from civilization, you will want to include them in your day pack.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Food | ☐ Water |
| ☐ Wind/rain shell | ☐ Sunglasses |
| ☐ Bandana | ☐ Cell phone or camera |
| ☐ Map | ☐ First-aid kit |
| ☐ Head lamp | ☐ Pack to put it all in |

Get Going: Time to Run

Warm Up: When you are ready to give it a try, start with a trail you already know. Only run as far as you are comfortable, and begin to familiarize yourself with your fuel and gear choices. Expect your trail runs to be performed at variable speeds depending on trail conditions, ascents and descents, altitude and how you feel. You'll eventually find your pace, but be aware that even on the same trail it can vary.

Though you are embarking on a trail "run," don't expect to be running all of the time. Even during trail races, many runners walk the steep uphill or sections with difficult footing. A general rule is if you can walk it faster than you can run it, walk. Walking can also provide a good break to eat or drink. Take as many walk breaks as you need, especially when you are first starting. Continuing to move (vs. sitting) will provide a rest break while not allowing your body to cool off or stiffen up.

When you are ready to move on to longer trails, gradually increase your distances by simply running slower, or at a pace that you can sustain for a longer time. Before long you'll be ticking off the miles.

Running Form: Running should feel natural and free. There isn't a much better feeling than sailing along a winding trail with the cool mountain air in your face and

birds chirping above. (See more about chirping birds on page 30.) There are a couple places where a little practice will make you more efficient and potentially safer.

When descending, it is human nature to lean back but this could result in your legs coming out from underneath you, especially in slippery conditions. Shorten up your stride and keep your feet underneath your frame. When climbing, use your arm swing to propel you forward, and try to keep your arms from crossing in front of your body and turning your energy into a twisting motion.

Trail Etiquette: You will likely overtake other trail users during a run more often than while hiking. Since you'll be coming up on them more rapidly than they will anticipate, call out ahead to avoid startling them at close range. This is especially necessary if you are coming up behind a horse and rider. This goes for game too, as you'll come up on critters much faster and can easily surprise them (as much or more than they may surprise you), so know what animals to expect in the area.

For oncoming hikers—especially those with big backpacks—and horses, it is common courtesy to step off the trail to allow them to pass. Though technically, mountain bikers should yield the right-of-way, be prepared to step off the trail for them as well. Individual trail rules may vary, so be aware of the expectations.

Plan Your Run, Run Your Plan: Don't throw your usual caution to the wind just because you are moving a little faster. In fact, you'll have to consider that moving faster is more likely to trigger falls and the potential for injury. Run with a friend, or leave a plan with someone so they know where you are and when to expect you back, just like you would on a hike. While cell phones are great to take photos for your trip reports, they are not always reliable as a safety device in the backcountry.

We all know how to run, and have all done it at some point in our life. Now give it a try on one of your favorite trails. You may find that experiencing trails in this new way will bring you a newfound enjoyment—in addition to more trail miles in your log. ♦

Wendy Wheeler-Jacobs has been running on trails since childhood and started racing in trail ultramarathons in 2004. She averages 3,500 trail miles per year. Wendy is also a member of WTA's board of directors, currently serving as president. Her favorite trail run is the Enchantments.

Hooking Up >>

A quick and easy way to learn more about trail running is to hang out with other trail runners. Check with your local running stores, as many offer organized group trail runs where you can familiarize yourself with trails and meet others who travel at your pace. They can also turn you on to some of the latest gear and may even offer demos.

Visit wta.org/hikinggroups to find trail running groups and organizations near you.

Where to Run >>

Green Trails Maps show the distance, topography, elevation and trail use type. As you look for new trails on a map, keep in mind that mountain bike-friendly trails tend to be runnable with good tread, and more gradual hill climbs and switchbacks. This generally means you can spend more time running and less time looking out for obstacles.

For even more suggestions, search the WTA trip report database for running trails (enter "trail run" in the search field). Or, download a list of Wendy's favorite trail runs at wta.org/runningtrails.

Hat, Gloves and Glasses

Make sure you keep your extremities comfortable. You actually want to overcompensate in keeping your head and hands warm. We all sweat through our heads, so a hat is an easy way to regulate temperature. Your hat should have a brim to shade you from the sun and heat in the summer. Try the **Sunday Afternoons Eclipse Cap**. It features a folding brim, vent panels and UPF50 sun protection. If your hands get cold, you'll find it much more difficult to access food packages or zippers, and it's just plain uncomfortable. An inexpensive pair of cotton gloves may be enough for most spring runs, and you'll be glad you have them. Sunglasses may also be necessary depending on the exposure, and some eye protection is always a good idea.

Accessories

You'll want one or more means to carry your essentials. For the short runs, an **Ultimate Direction Fastdraw Bottle** with a handheld can suffice to stash your phone and a snack, but once you start spending more than a couple of hours on trail, you'll want a pack. These come in many shapes and sizes, so you'll want to read the reviews and try a few on for fit. You'll need to decide on bottles or a hydration pack, internal volume and pocket and strap configurations. Many of these choices are personal. When shopping for a pack, make sure it is designed for trail running (and not mountain biking, for instance) so it won't bounce all over when you run downhill. Consider the **Ultimate Direction Ultra Vesta**. It features four front pockets so snacks are easily accessible. Some companies, like Ultimate Directions and Gregory, have even designed separate men's and women's pack lines that help complement different body geometry.

Socks

These are another important part of the equation, and should be designed to keep your feet dry and blister-free. Gone are the days of the calf-high cotton tube socks. You can spend up to \$30 (gulp!) on a decent pair of socks engineered for fit and comfort. Synthetics, wool and wool blends each have their own benefits, so experiment to find the best combination for your conditions and fit in your trail shoes. What works well in the heat and dust may or may not be the same as what works on soggy winter days. **Balega** makes only high-performance running socks and provides a plethora of choices at reasonable prices.

Runner's Gear: Head to Toe

Apparel

Just as for hiking and other outdoor activities, layered clothing is a good strategy. For your top half there are short-sleeve shirts, long-sleeve shirts and even sleeves alone. Long sleeves with thumb holes help keep your wrists warm on chilly mornings. The buttery-soft **Zoot Performance Run Microlight Hoodie** provides moisture wicking and looks good too. For all gear, especially items going against your skin, choose a wicking synthetic fabric or wool. Ladies, this includes your sports bras. A cold, clammy undergarment is not enjoyable. Give the new **Handful Sports Bra** a try—they have come a long way from the traditional smashers. Gear for your lower half should provide mobility with as little binding as possible. Your legs will be constantly moving and should stay relatively warm in minimal gear. However, having something that covers your legs is nice in overgrown brush, nettles or poison oak.

Shell

A light wind- and rain-resistant jacket is an important essential that should go with you on all long trail runs. They are ridiculously light and scrunch down to the size of your fist, so there is no excuse to not stash one in your backpack to bust out when you top that windy ridge or make a lunch stop. When you have been sweating, you will get chilled quicker than usual, sometimes even when you transition from an uphill to a downhill stretch. You'll always want to carry one more layer than you are wearing, and be prepared for that surprise thunderstorm or just for higher altitudes. The **Helly Hansen Feather Jacket** is extremely lightweight and provides a hood and its own self-storing pocket so you can easily carry it with you.

Shoes

Start with a pair of trail running shoes designed to tread on the surfaces you'll frequent most. If you plan to spend time on pine needles and mud, look for good sole traction. If you plan to be running in rocks and scree, toe protection should be a priority. Trail running shoes come in many varieties and from multiple brands. If you have a brand you are already comfortable wearing, that is probably a great place to start. If not, the recently-released **Vasque Ultra SST** is a high-tech ride with extra cushioning for rough terrain and steep downhills, while the **Newton BOCO AT** provides both deep tread and rock protection, while repelling the spring rain.



Go Birding!

An introductory guide to birding in Washington by Sarah Swanson and Max Smith, authors of *Must-See Birds of the Pacific Northwest*



An early morning concert of birdsong awakens you in your tent. A hawk floats overhead on an afternoon thermal. Birds are always out there when you are hiking and camping, but do you really know what you're seeing? Knowing more about birds, their habitats and behaviors can deepen your awareness and appreciation of the places you visit.

That morning concert was likely a symphony of many different species, including resident birds like Pacific Wrens and migrating birds like Western Tanagers, who may have just made the long journey from the rainforests of Central America to their breeding grounds in Washington. That "hawk" may actually have been a migrating Golden Eagle, navigating along a mountain ridge scanning for prey. When you can recognize and appreciate the diversity of the birds around you, nature takes on a whole new dimension.

Learning to identify birds can provide the thrill of the search and the satisfaction of solving a mystery. Using clues like habitat and time of year, combined with plumage characteristics and songs, you can put names to the birds that you encounter on your favorite trails. Each new bird that you correctly identify is an exciting accomplishment, and the pursuit can quickly become addictive.

Once you are attuned to the birds around you, you'll start to notice all the amazing things they do. American Dippers plunge into icy mountain streams to grab caddis fly larvae; Common Nighthawks dive through the evening air in feather-rattling courtship displays; Bushtits craft stretchy, tube-sock-like nests from spiderwebs and lichen. Watching the behavior of birds as they search for food and raise their young is more riveting than any televised nature documentary.

Getting Started

As with any new pursuit, the keys to getting better at birding are studying, learning from experts and getting lots of practice. Begin with common birds to hone your identification skills so that you'll be ready when you find a rarity. Song Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, Red-tailed Hawks and Northern Flickers are a few to start with. A trip to your neighborhood park or even your own backyard can provide plenty of species to check out.

When trying to identify a bird, size is a good place to start. Relative size like "smaller than a crow" or "larger than a duck" is much more useful than "medium-sized." Next, note the color, or

From afar, Lewis's Woodpeckers are often mistaken for crows. They catch insects midair or on the ground, and store acorns in tree hollows for winter months. They are commonly seen in burned pine forest, oak woodlands and on the borders of shrub-steppe.

Illustration by Lindsay Holladay

colors, of the bird, as well as any stripes or spots. Concentrate especially on the head, because birds often have distinctive facial markings, and the shape of their bills can be very helpful when you are trying to separate warblers from finches or ducks from grebes.

Habitat can also provide a helpful piece of the ID puzzle. Are you in a forest or a desert? Is the bird near water or at the top of a tree? Some birds exhibit behavior that can be just as useful a clue to their identity as their plumage. Brown Creepers creep up trees while Red-breasted Nuthatches head down. Turkey Vultures hold their wings in a V shape while Bald Eagles' wings are held as flat as boards.

If all of this sounds overwhelming, just take it one bird at a time and realize that you don't have to memorize the field guide to get enjoyment from watching birds. If you are ready to make big improvements in your birding skills, though, it's time to call in the experts. Washington has 25 local Audubon Society chapters across the state and many of them offer free walks and day trips led by experienced birders. Spending time birding with someone who knows birds, and can explain what they are seeing, is one

of the best ways to learn—and the enthusiasm of a group of birders who have found a great bird is contagious.

Once you are able to start identifying birds, the next step is to list them.

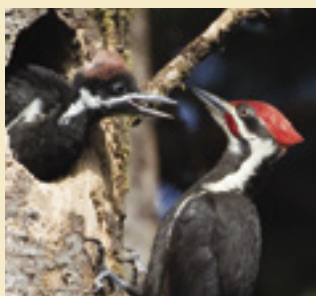
Many birders like to keep a "life list" of all the birds they've seen in their lifetimes. You can also keep lists for each state or county you visit, a yard list (what you see in your own yard), or a list of birds seen from hot springs. Get as creative as you like. Listing can be a competitive pursuit for some, but bird lists can also just be personal notes to remind you of your favorite experiences.

Birding by Ear

Despite the term "bird-watching," listening to birds can be just as enjoyable and informative as watching them. Birding by ear is an important skill because you often hear many more birds than you see, especially while hiking through a forest. It may seem that birds

TIP: *Technophiles will enjoy the many Web sites and apps devoted to the finding and identification of birds.*

Notable Northwest Birds



Pileated Woodpecker

This is a super-sized woodpecker that screams for attention with a loud, piercing call and a flaming red crest. With their strong, sharp bills, Pileated Woodpeckers dismantle logs, stumps and trees to find ants and beetles to eat.



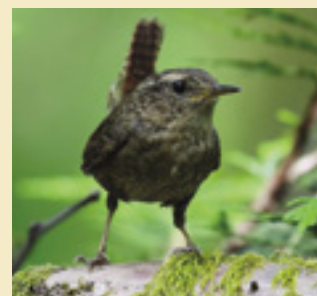
Varied Thrush

This distinctly Northwestern thrush is notable for its bright orange plumage and haunting whistle. Varied Thrushes are found in forest edges at low elevations during the winter and at high elevations during the summer breeding season.



Common Nighthawk

An airborne Common Nighthawk announces its return from wintering grounds in June with a distinctive "meernt" call and a "vrrum" sound made by their long, pointed wings while flying in a diving territorial display.



Pacific Wren

Formerly known as the Winter Wren, the Pacific Wren sings its long, complex song during most months of the year. These tiny birds occupy damp, low-elevation forests, where they forage and nest among ferns and moss-covered logs.



American Dipper

Our only aquatic songbird, American Dippers dive and swim in cold, clear streams to capture fish and aquatic insects. Pairs construct mossy, toaster-sized nests attached to stream banks or the undersides of bridges.



Belted Kingfisher

With their loud chatter, huge bills and shaggy crests, kingfishers are hard to miss as they perch at the edges of rivers, lakes and bays looking for a meal. After spotting a fish, they dive beak-first into the water, loudly smacking the surface.



Harlequin Duck

These tenacious diving ducks raise their young in rushing Cascade Mountain streams and then spend the winter in the storm-tossed sea. The dazzling males have chestnut and blue plumage adorned with brilliant white patches.



Golden Eagle

Golden Eagles are skilled hunters of the open country, pursuing prey as large as young bighorn sheep. In spring and summer, look for these giant birds of prey near their huge stick nests tucked into rock outcroppings and cliffs.

TIP: When you attend birding field trips, ask for mnemonic devices that will help you recall specific bird songs on future excursions.

are singing to attract our attention, but they are actually using their songs to stake out a territory and attract a mate. Both males and females make short calls, often a simple “chip,” to remain in contact with their mate or fellow members

of a flock. While in the forest, you can use calls and songs to find birds and then identify them by sight. As you gain experience birding by ear, you will be able to identify more and more species by sound alone. Knowing even a few bird songs will make you look like a wizard to those who haven’t figured them out yet.

Learning the multitude of songs and calls of our region’s birds can seem a daunting task to the beginning birder, but there is a lot of help out there. You can familiarize yourself with various birds’ styles of songs and calls by listening to CDs, websites and mobile apps, or by taking a birding by ear class from your local Audubon Society. Of course, nothing really teaches you the songs

like being outside and hearing them being performed by the birds themselves. Go out in the spring, when birds are singing constantly to establish territories and perform courtship displays. Join field trips with experienced birders who will help you match a song to its maker. For example, once you know that the Olive-sided Flycatcher’s song resembles an enthusiastic exclamation of “Quick, three beers!” you’ll always recognize this bird when you hear it singing from the edge of a forest.

Gear to Get You Going

Though you may have an occasional face-to-face encounter with a bird, you will usually need binoculars to turn that distant speck into a recognizable species. Even inexpensive binoculars are a big improvement over nothing at all since they can magnify far-off objects. If you enjoy watching wildlife, investing in decent waterproof binoculars is certainly worth the money. Depending on the quality of the lenses and optical coatings, you can pay from a few hundred up to several thousand dollars for a good pair.

Go Birding: Yakima

Yakima is an ideal place for a getaway that combines birding opportunities with proximity to hiking and wineries. It is situated at the intersection of the dry canyon country and the piney forests of the Cascade foothills. In this location, you can see Ibises in the morning and Golden Eagles in the afternoon with lots of other birds along the way. May and June are the best months to see birds actively singing and nesting.

Here are some of our favorite birding spots around Yakima. For a full account of the area’s opportunities, check out the birding weekends section of *Must-see Birds of the Pacific Northwest*.

Yakima Sportsman State Park

This park is right in Yakima but offers close views of striking birds like Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Black-headed Grosbeaks and Wood Ducks. An interpretive nature trail circles a small pond and miles of trails take you along the floodplain of the Yakima River.

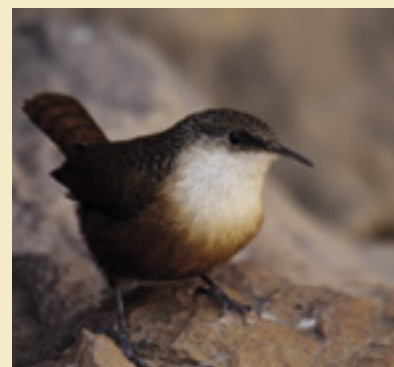
Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge

This refuge south of Yakima is a watery oasis in the desert that draws large numbers of birds. Brightly colored Cinnamon Teal share ponds with cryptically plumaged American Bitterns. Huge American White Pelicans spiral in flocks overhead and Long-billed Curlews probe the adjacent fields. A drive along the roads that crisscross the refuge is a birding safari. Plan your trip for late spring or early summer; if you wait until July to visit, the birds will be quieter and the weather hotter.

Wenas Basin

This large area west of Yakima and south of Ellensburg takes you from dry canyons into the Ponderosa pines of the Cascades. A variety of habitats gives you higher bird diversity, so you are bound to see some new species if you spend a day exploring this area. Driving the roads through the area is bound to turn up some birds, but you can get out and hike at Umtanum Creek or the Skyline trail along the Yakima Canyon rim. Look for bright aquamarine Lazuli Buntings in creekside vegetation, soaring Golden Eagles and Prairie Falcons in the canyon, and noisy California Quail all over the place. A bumpy gravel road (Audubon Road) will take you west of Wenas Road into the pines of the Wenas Campground, site of the annual Audubon campout, where you might see elusive White-headed Woodpeckers, noisy Red Crossbills and many more birds.

A bevy of unique and interesting birds can be found around central Washington’s canyons, shrub-steppe and wetlands. Look for Canyon Wrens (top), Wood Ducks (middle), and Western Meadowlarks (bottom). Other areas for watchful birding include Cowiche Canyon, Bethel Ridge and the Oak Creek Wildlife Area.



Photos by Scott Carpenter, courtesy of Timber Press

If you find yourself becoming an insatiable birder, you may want to check out the array of spotting scopes that can afford even better views of distant birds. With magnifications of 20x–80x they can make that faraway falcon (and the duck it's eating) seem breathtakingly close. The downside to this viewing power is the added weight and the necessary tripod. This makes scopes better suited to car trips than hiking.

TIP: *As with hiking boots, making the cheap choice in binoculars can give you regrets later. Models that are not waterproof will inevitably become fogged-over, expensive paperweights.*

To identify all these birds that you can see with your new optics, you'll need a field guide of some kind. Some of our favorites include the guides to North American birds by Peterson, National Geographic or the newly revised "birding bible" by David Sibley. Smaller, local field guides can be found, which narrow down the number of birds that you have to look through. For bird identification without the added weight in your pack, check out bird ID apps for your phone (sidebar). Another useful piece of gear is a notebook for recording your bird sightings and making sketches of birds that you couldn't identify or wanted to remember for later.

Where to Go Birding

You have a good bit of knowledge and the proper equipment and now you are eager to find and identify birds by sight and sound. Now if only you knew where to go! Good news: birds are everywhere, and any hike will likely produce fascinating and beautiful birds to observe. Certain places, however, will have more birds than others.

Each bird species prefers areas with specific plants. As a result, areas with many types of plants support a large variety of birds. Rivers and creeks, with their abundant aquatic insects and dense riparian vegetation, also attract high concentrations of birds, especially during the nesting season. Lakes and ponds that remain unfrozen are great places to find ducks, geese, herons and other waterbirds. High-elevation sites offer beautiful vistas, but sparse birding. These alpine areas are, however, great places to look for migrating raptors flying overhead in the fall, catching a boost from mountain updrafts.

TIP: *To see as many birds as possible, visit places where multiple plant communities, such as wetlands, grasslands, and forests, meet.*

You can't go wrong looking for birds in one of our region's many national wildlife refuges, which offer lakes, forests, fields and streams, nature trails and observation blinds. Be sure to take along a Washington Discover Pass. This is a must-have for parking at state parks and wildlife areas.

Enjoy Birds!

At its best, birding is a way to immerse oneself in the wonder of nature. Recently, we found ourselves waiting alongside a country road at sunset, hoping for a glimpse of some reported Short-eared Owls. When they finally emerged, flapping low across the field and performing wing-clapping displays, we were entranced. Over an hour later, as the air grew colder, we couldn't stop watching them and listening to their catlike shrieks, even to put coats on. This feeling of awe keeps us coming back for more and will get you hooked once you start noticing the amazing lives of the birds all around you. ♦

SARAH SWANSON and **MAX SMITH** have been birding together since they met at the University of Oklahoma. In 2005, they moved to Sarah's native Oregon for the big trees and beaches. Since then they have led birding trips, directed nature camps for kids, studied birds and, most recently, written their first book, *Must-See Birds of the Pacific Northwest*. They travel as much as possible to see birds and sample the Pacific Northwest's wonderful beers and wines.

Birding Tech

Though you don't need technology to enjoy birds, there are some excellent web sites and mobile apps that can help you build your skills and find the birds you're looking for.

Web Sites

Birdweb.org – A comprehensive birding site from Seattle Audubon. Offers info, photos and sounds for each of Washington's bird species, as well as maps and descriptions of prime birding locations across the state.

eBird.org – This site lets birders log their sightings using a simple interface. Observations are compiled to make searchable maps and customizable graphs of bird occurrence. Use it to record your bird checklists, find target birds or explore birding hotspots for your next trip.

Tweeters – This listserv has postings about Washington bird sightings and other bird-related topics. You can subscribe or read online at birding.aba.org/maillist/WA.

Mobile Apps

Larkwire – Learn bird songs and calls with games, and focus on certain groups of birds

Merlin Bird ID – Uses the eBird database to help you identify the birds you see

BirdLog – Enter your sighting checklists on the go from your smartphone

BirdsEye – Checklists to show you locations where birds have been recently seen

The Great Washington State Birding Trail – Driving directions to 375 birding sites on seven driving loops that span the state, as well as access to online bird ID resources

Field Guides – iBird, Audubon, Sibley, National Geographic and Peterson all offer field guide apps that provide photos and info with added bird sound capability

NOTE: *Playing a recorded bird's call, especially in breeding season, may be harmful if done near the bird in question.*

Get the Book

For fascinating information about local birds, and tips on where and how to find them, look for Sarah Swanson and Max Smith's book: ***Must-See Birds of the Pacific Northwest***. In addition to beautiful photography and lucid descriptions of 85 birds

in chapters like "Killer Birds" and "Colorful Birds," the book describes eight weekend birding trips in Oregon and Washington with site recommendations and birds to look for. Find information about book events and Sarah and Max's birding adventures on their Must-See Bird blog, on Facebook/ MustSeeBirds, and on Twitter @MustSeeBirds.





Washington's Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness ranges from deep canyons to high prairies to mountain peaks, and is punctuated with an abundance of native flora and fauna. Photo by Holly Weiler

SIDEBAR, FROM TOP: Alpine Lakes Wilderness, by Jason Zabriskie; Olympic Wilderness, by Crystal Leis; Juniper Dunes Wilderness by David Hagen; Washington Islands Wilderness, by James Jones.

WILDERNESS

Everywhere

Picture "wilderness." What do you see? Rugged, snow-capped peaks? Dripping, moss-laden rainforests? Barren, arid deserts?

Indeed, those wild areas protected under the 1964 Wilderness Act are most celebrated due to their natural state, but wilderness is so much more. Wilderness has been called a "living laboratory." It's also been called a museum. In wilderness, researchers have identified new plant species, explored nature's soundscape and night skies, and discovered Native American artifacts. Wilderness permits scientists to study everything from glaciers affected by climate change to seasonal butterfly populations. Aldo Leopold may have said it best: "The outstanding scientific discovery of the 19th century is not television, or radio, but rather the complexity of the land organism."

The Wilderness Act of 1964 was designed to encompass the broad diversity of America's wildlands. A look at protected wilderness lands across the country reveals a staggering variety of wild places protected for their ecological, geological, scientific, educational, scenic or historic value. According to the Act, the land need only be "untrammeled ... and which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable."

This has made possible the preservation of the postcard-perfect alpine peaks of the Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness in Colorado, the high mesas and deep canyons of the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico, and the old-growth forest and massive glaciers of the Mount Rainier Wilderness right here in Washington. It has also preserved wild lands outside of the states, as in the tropical island forest of the El Toro Wilderness

in Puerto Rico, also an internationally designated Biosphere Reserve.

There is not a single formula by which wilderness can be appointed for preservation. Wilderness can be large or small. The Pelican Islands Wilderness in Florida consists of a mere 5.5 acres of wetland set aside for bird habitat, while the Wrangell-St. Elias Wilderness in Alaska is more than nine million acres preserved for boreal forests, arctic tundra and wildlife habitat. Wilderness doesn't need to be in remote, far-off places. Mount Olympus, Twin Peaks and Lone Peak wilderness areas in Utah form the southeast border of Salt Lake City. From their high peaks, hikers can peer down on the cityscape of some two million residents. Wilderness areas don't even need to be completely untouched by human hands. The Birkhead Mountains Wilderness in the hardwoods of North Carolina contains remnants of its namesake 19th century homestead, including old farms, mining operations and long-abandoned roads.

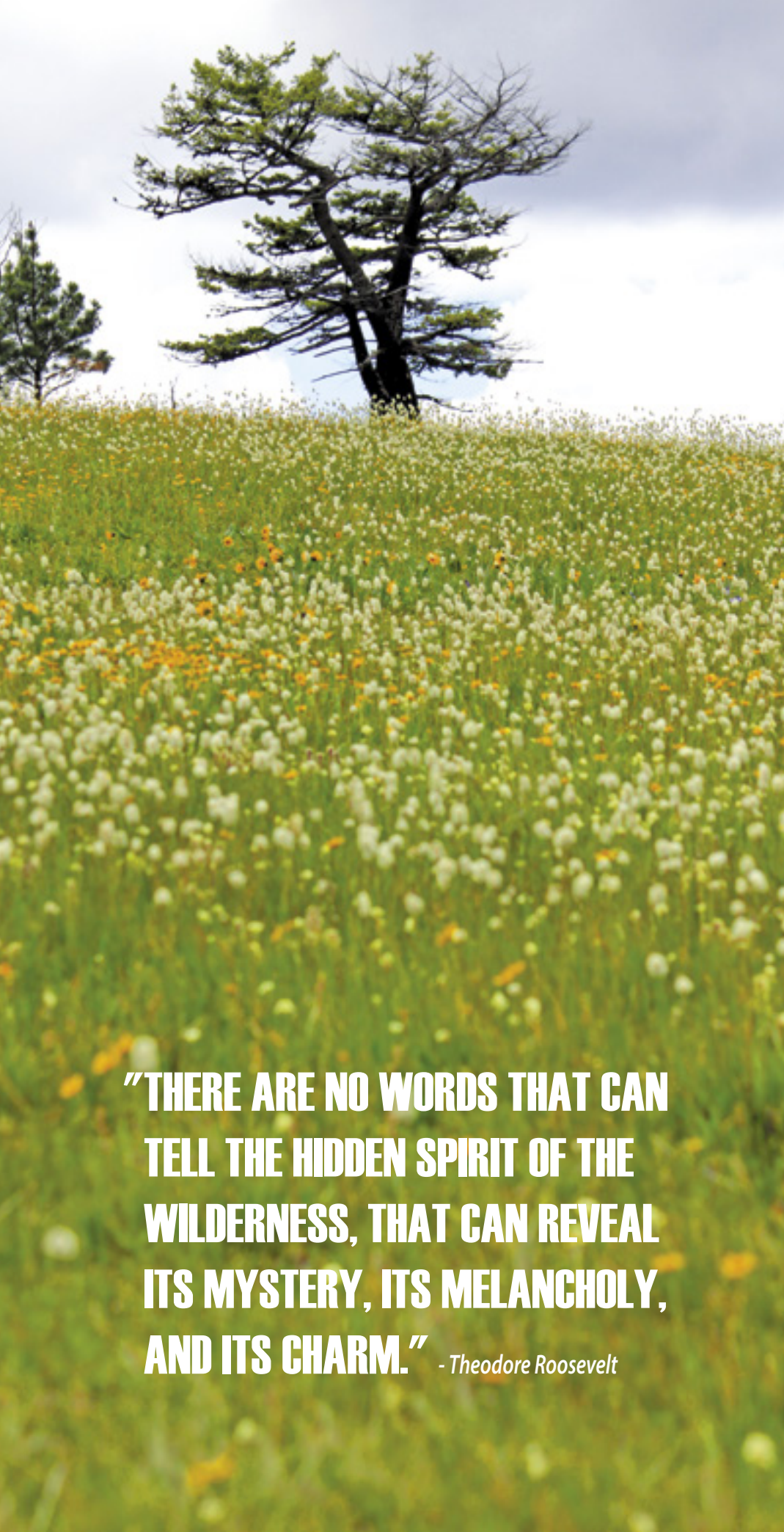
Closer to home, Washington's own wilderness areas reflect many of the diverse landscapes and environments seen across the country. We have not only the rugged granitic spires and glittering lakes of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness and the lush, moss-draped rainforests of the Olympic Wilderness, but also a surprising array of natural and cultural heritage wilderness, from close-in spaces to virtually inaccessible refugia for rare flora and fauna.

Several wilderness areas in Washington protect habitats that not only are unique landscapes, but also

By Aaron Theisen

Introduction by Andrea Imler





**"THERE ARE NO WORDS THAT CAN
TELL THE HIDDEN SPIRIT OF THE
WILDERNESS, THAT CAN REVEAL
ITS MYSTERY, ITS MELANCHOLY,
AND ITS CHARM."**

- Theodore Roosevelt





San Juan Wilderness

The San Juan Islands Wilderness encompasses the vast majority of the 84 reefs, rocks and diminutive forested islands that constitute the San Juan Islands National Wildlife Refuge in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. In addition to providing breeding and feeding grounds for a bevy of bird species such as black oystercatchers and glaucous-winged gulls, the islands are an invaluable way-station for more than 200 species of migratory birds. Here, harbor seals repose on the low rocks, and porpoises, pilot whales and orcas patrol the surrounding waters. To protect the valuable marine habitat, public access is limited to Matia Island; the remaining sites may be enjoyed from a safe distance by wildlife-watchers in kayaks or other small watercraft.

Wonder Mountain Wilderness

At just over 2,000 acres, Wonder Mountain Wilderness is one of the tiniest wilderness areas in the western United States. But this small wonder provides intrepid travelers a true backcountry experience: no trails access or cross the steep, heavily forested slopes of western hemlock, Douglas-fir and silver fir, so off-trail navigation skills are a must. But explorers who reach 4,848-foot Wonder Mountain or one of the four miniscule, unnamed lakes will certainly have it to themselves. Access is so challenging, and traffic is so light, that flora and fauna surveys of the area have not even been completed, allowing modern-day adventurers to make a few discoveries of their own.

preserve rare or threatened species or environments. The Juniper Dunes Wilderness near the Tri-Cities protects the largest sand dunes in Washington and the northernmost reaches of western juniper, a gnarled tree native to the Great Basin. In contrast, the Pasayten Wilderness shelters boreal bogs more commonly associated with Canadian tundra—and within a stone's throw from expanses of sagebrush steppe. In the far northeast corner of the state, the Salmo-Priest Wilderness protects rare inland temperate rainforest, where 60 inches of annual precipitation soak cedars and mosses in the wettest spot in Eastern Washington.

Washington wilderness areas also recognize important cultural sites, such as the Indian Heaven Wilderness in southwest Washington. Here, native tribes gathered to hunt, trade, socialize,

pick huckleberries and race wild horses among the meadows and marshes on the southwest flanks of Mount Adams. Wilderness can even protect areas that are off-limits to the public. The Washington Islands Wilderness off the Olympic Coast and the San Juan Islands Wilderness in the Strait of Juan de Fuca preserve sensitive seabird breeding areas and can be enjoyed by human visitors only at a distance.

Like many landmark government documents, the Wilderness Act is flexible, but it is also powerful. That it has encompassed sea stacks and sand dunes, oak savannah and alpine peaks, both across the nation and within our state, speaks to its flexibility. That it offers these protections in perpetuity attests to its power. And about that, there's no room for interpretation. ♦

Noisy–Diobsud Wilderness

Although Noisy–Diobsud Wilderness shares a border with the southwest corner of North Cascades National Park, its traffic is light even by the scant standards of one of the least-visited national parks in the country. The smallest of eight wilderness areas in the Mount Baker–Snoqualmie National Forest, Noisy–Diobsud, named for the two creeks that radiate north and south from its heart, still boasts massive vertical relief, ranging from 2,000 feet to 6,234 feet. With the only trail access provided by the short Anderson–Watson Lakes Trail, the high-inaccessible peaks of Noisy–Diobsud tend to be the province of experienced mountaineers.

Wenaha–Tucannon Wilderness

The Wenaha–Tucannon Wilderness encompasses almost 200,000 acres of rugged ridges, flower-filled meadows and deep river canyons in the Blue Mountains of southeast Washington, which has been recognized as one of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the Northwest. More than 200 miles of hiking trails that receive little use outside of elk-hunting season allow for multiday excursions and ensure solitude. Blue-ribbon fishing, some of the state's premiere wildflower walks and unparalleled wildlife watching—elk, black bear and cougar, among others—encourage lingering.

The four wilderness areas highlighted here showcase the surprising scope of wilderness protections in Washington, from the flower-profuse tablelands of Wenaha–Tucannon Wilderness in southeast Washington to the remote reefs and rocks of San Juan Islands Wilderness in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. But as important as their biological diversity is their demonstration that wilderness can be accessed and enjoyed in a myriad of ways, whether it's on 200 miles of hiking trails or via binoculars from a small watercraft.

AARON THEISEN is a Spokane-based outdoors and travel writer. In addition to being a Washington Trails regional contributor and helming this year's series on the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, he is currently working on the forthcoming trail guide *Day Hiking Mount St. Helens* for Mountaineers Books. Closer to home, Aaron enjoys exploring the Inland Northwest with his wife and 2-year-old son.

Wilderness Trails

There's no better way to experience and appreciate the diverse wilderness areas in Washington state than to get out and explore them. Try one of these trails, or any of the hundreds of others, and maybe you'll discover a new favorite.

WATSON LAKES

WILDERNESS: Noisy–Diobsud

DISTANCE: 6 miles, round trip

ELEVATION GAIN: 1,400 feet

ELEVATION PEAK: 4,900 feet

MAPS: Green Trails 466

Escape to a picturesque alpine lake with big mountain views in Mount Baker's back yard.



DIAMOND PEAK

WILDERNESS: Wenaha–Tucannon

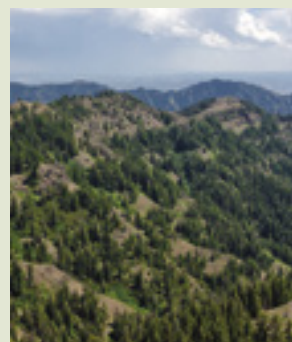
DISTANCE: 5.8 miles, round trip

ELEVATION GAIN: 1,300 feet

ELEVATION PEAK: 6,380 feet

MAP: USGS: Diamond Peak

Take in vast panoramic views from this high point in Washington's Blue Mountains.



HIGH LAKES

WILDERNESS: Wonder Mountain

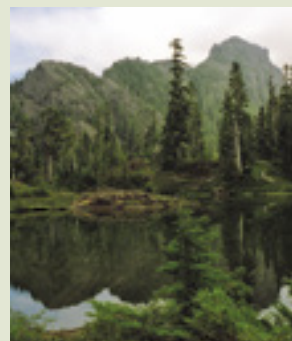
DISTANCE: Variable

ELEVATION GAIN: Up to 1,800 feet

ELEVATION PEAK: 4,850 feet

MAP: USGS: Mt. Olson, Mt. Tebo

There are no trails to get you in there, so any journey is bound to be an adventure.



MATIA ISLAND

WILDERNESS: San Juan

DISTANCE: 1 mile, round trip

ELEVATION GAIN: 100 feet

ELEVATION PEAK: 100 feet

MAP: USGS: Mt. Constitution

Before you hike, take a paddle around the islands for a different kind of wilderness adventure.



Photos, from top: Mike Morrison, Kyle Funke, Marc Sterling and Buff Black



Central Oregon's ALE TRAIL

By Brittany Manwill

Boasting more than 300 days of sunshine per year, Central Oregon lures adventurers with its high desert climate and extensive opportunities for recreation. At the heart of this outdoors mecca is Bend, complete with a booming entrepreneurial culture and the unofficial title of microbrew capital of the U.S.

Located east of the Cascade Range along the Deschutes River on U.S. Highway 97, **Bend** (1) is a mere 4 hours from the Portland–Vancouver area. Originating as a logging town in the early 1900s, Bend is now recognized as a gateway for every type of outdoor recreation. Hikers, backpackers, campers, mountain bikers, fishers, rock climbers, rafters and golfers all flock to Bend to enjoy the dry sunny days and cool nights. From the center of town, visitors are presented with striking views of Mount Bachelor, the Three Sisters and Broken Top, while the sweet scents of ponderosa pine, juniper and sagebrush fill the air.

When jobs disappeared with the housing crash a few years ago, the residents of Bend had to figure out a new way to make a living. This combination of passion and desperation resulted in an explosion of entrepreneurship, focused on local food and drink and outdoor adventure. Downtown, you'll struggle to find big name chains. Instead, introduce yourself to some of the local coffee shops, restaurants, bakeries, art galleries and specialty stores. By the time you're pulling into town, it will likely be lunchtime. Grab a quick bite at **Pizza Mondo** (pizzamondobend.com) or sample one of the local creations from **Zydeco Kitchen** (zydecokitchen.com).

After lunch, hop back in your car and head towards the three smoke-stacks that mark the Old Mill District. Like most of the Pacific Northwest, Bend's early claim to fame was a thriving timber industry headquartered here along the river. Now, the mill operation is gone, but the structure remains the town's main landmark and shopping area.

When you're ready to stretch your legs, drop off your car at any of the parks along the Deschutes River near Old Mill, and take a stroll along the 4-mile **Deschutes River Trail** (DRT). The DRT alternates between paved and dirt sections and offers signage about the local geography and wildlife. Bend is pretty dog friendly, so feel free to bring your furry friend. You do need to keep Fido on a leash, but there's an off-leash dog park along the river if your active pup needs a quick romp with other dogs.

GEAR UP: If you need to pick up any supplies, **REI** (rei.com) sits directly under the smokestacks in the Old Mill District. Nearby **Mountain Supply** (mountainsupplybend.com) is a local company and another great source for gear and information on NW Colorado Avenue.

When your dinner bell starts ringing, head for the **Deschutes Brewery** on NW Bond Street (deschutesbrewery.com). Since the brewery's debut in the late 1980s, Bend has fully embraced the microbrew culture. In fact, Bend boasts more breweries per capita than any other city in the country. Deschutes Brewery still does the majority of its brewing right here in Bend. With complimentary samples and tours of its bottling facility, this intro to the microbrewery culture is well worth the stop. For a self-guided walking tour of several of the city's other popular breweries, download the Bend Ale Trail app on your smartphone.

If you happen to time your weekend getaway with the first Friday of the month, head downtown in early evening for the **First**



Friday Art Walk (downtownbend.org/events). Local businesses stay open a little later to feature local art and offer tastings of beer and wine. When you're hungry, drop in on any of the tasty restaurants downtown. **Pine Tavern** (pinetavern.com) or next-door **Bend Brewing Company** (bendbrewingco.com) are both excellent options for sampling regional producers. Afterwards, relax on a park bench at nearby Drake Park, or catch a local production at the old Tower Theater.

When you're ready to call it a night, there are plenty of great places to stay. The **Seventh Mountain Resort** (seventhmountain.com) boasts the closest lodging to Mount Bachelor and makes an excellent launchpad for your weekend's adventures. If a hip boutique location in the heart of downtown is more your style, check out the **Oxford Hotel** (oxfordhotelbend.com). Families and groups will appreciate the vast availability of vacation homes in nearby Sunriver and Black Butte resorts.

CAMP OUT: You'll find plenty of camping opportunities along the Cascades Lakes Highway [2]. There are at least half a dozen lakes, many of which host campgrounds and fishing lodges. Popular choices include Elk Lake, Devil's Lake, Todd Lake and Sparks Lake. Most campgrounds are first come first serve, so pitch your tent early.

The next morning, fuel up for a big day with locally roasted coffee and fresh pastries from Backporch Coffee Roasters on NW Newport Avenue. After breakfast, stock up on hiking snacks and local energy bars from nearby Newport Market before heading north on US 97 toward the little town of Terrebonne and nearby **Smith Rock State Park** (3; oregonstateparks.org). One of Oregon's most popular state parks, Smith Rock is well known for its unique rock formations and world-class climbing. It's also home to miles and miles of hiking trails.

For a nice introduction to the volcanic landscape, try the 3-mile **Misery Ridge Loop Trail**. From the parking area, descend The Chute to the Crooked River. Cross the bridge and follow the River Trail for 1.6 miles. At the fork, veer right and upward on the Mesa Verde Trail to the base of Smith Rock's most noticeable landmark, Monkey Face. Enjoy head-on views of this 350-foot-tall volcanic pillar as you start up the Misery Ridge Trail at 2 miles. Take some time to appreciate the sweeping western views of Cascade volcanoes, including Mount Bachelor, the Three Sisters, Mount Washington, Mount Jefferson and even Mount Hood. There are several side trails along the way, so make sure to grab a map at the visitor center and explore to your heart's content.

After your morning hike, you've likely worked up an appetite. Head back into Bend and grab lunch and a microbrew at local **10 Barrel Brewery** on NW Galveston Avenue (10barrel.com). Don't sweat it too much if it's a long wait for a table. Just grab a beer from the outdoor bar and enjoy the wait on the open-air patio. Try an Apocalypse IPA and a Pubhouse Burger, or split one of their specialty pizzas. For more variety, head down the road to **The Lot** on NW Columbia Street.



TOP: Go for a cheesy pie and local brew at Pizza Mondo.
MIDDLE: Visit the Old Mill District on the Deschutes River.
BOTTOM: Put in some trail time at Smith Rock State Park.
SPREAD: From the top of the Misery Ridge Trail at Smith Rock, take in wide views over the Bend area.
Smith Rock photos by Eli Boschetto



TOP: Running right through Bend, enjoy a hike alongside, or a float down, the tranquil Deschutes River.

BOTTOM: The Green Lakes, on the flank of South Sister, makes a perfect long day hike or weekend backpack.

Photos by Eli Boschetto

Here, you'll find a variety of tasty food trucks complete with a covered outdoor beer garden.

After you've refueled, trade your dusty hiking clothes for a swimsuit and pair of Crocs. Join the locals and tourists for a relaxing float down an extremely calm section of the Deschutes River. Starting at **Riverbend Park** near Old Mill, rent a tube and float through the Old Mill District and into historic Drake Park. The whole float takes about two hours (make sure to walk your tube around the well-signed spillover) and is a great way to kick back and relax in the sunshine. Exit the river at Drake Park, where a shuttle will take you back to where you started.

If you'd rather catch a break from the dry desert heat, head south just a few miles out of town to the **Lava River Caves** (4; visitbend.com). These underground tubes were formed from an eruption more than 80,000 years ago. The trail is a flat (but rocky) 2-mile round-trip stroll. The natural lava tunnels are a near-constant 45 degrees year-round, so pack a jacket. Also, make sure to either bring your head lamp or rent a lantern at the trailhead.

SUMMER HIKE: For trips later in the season, consider a big day hike to **Green Lakes** [5], on the eastern flank of South Sister. This 12-mile round-trip starts on a forested trail along Fall Creek, then breaks out into lava fields and the Green Lakes basin with spectacular views of the Three Sisters and Broken Top. Get an early start to beat the crowds and the heat.

For dinner, head to **Crux Fermentation Project** (cruxfermentation.com), located in a tucked-away spot between the Old Mill and US 97 on SW Division Street. Try Crux's beer sampler to taste six of their handcrafted brews, served at your table on a tray made from old wine barrels. Order one of the refreshing dinner salads, or go a different route and try the uniquely impressive 2x4 Quesadilla. Grab a spot outside and enjoy watching the sun set behind the Three Sisters—it's one of the best views in Bend.

On your last day in Central Oregon, enjoy a leisurely breakfast at **Chow** (chowbend.com) as you map out your plans for the day. Before heading back home, take time to explore any of the other incredible options that the area has to offer. Head south to La Pine and spend a day touring **Paulina Lake** and nearby lava flows at the **Newberry Crater National Monument** (6). Or head east to explore the **Ancient Juniper Trail** (7) in the Badlands.

From gorgeous alpine lakes to local brews, a short weekend trip isn't long enough to take advantage of everything Bend has to offer. It is, however, long enough to understand why so many people are determined to turn a typical Central Oregon weekend into their everyday lifestyle. ♦

BRITTANY MANWILL is a regular Washington Trails contributor and the founder of Mazama Bar. Previously a Washington resident, Brittany now lives in Bend, Oregon, running her energy bar company. When she's not writing about her favorite trails, she's either whipping up a fresh batch of energy bars or training for half-marathons.

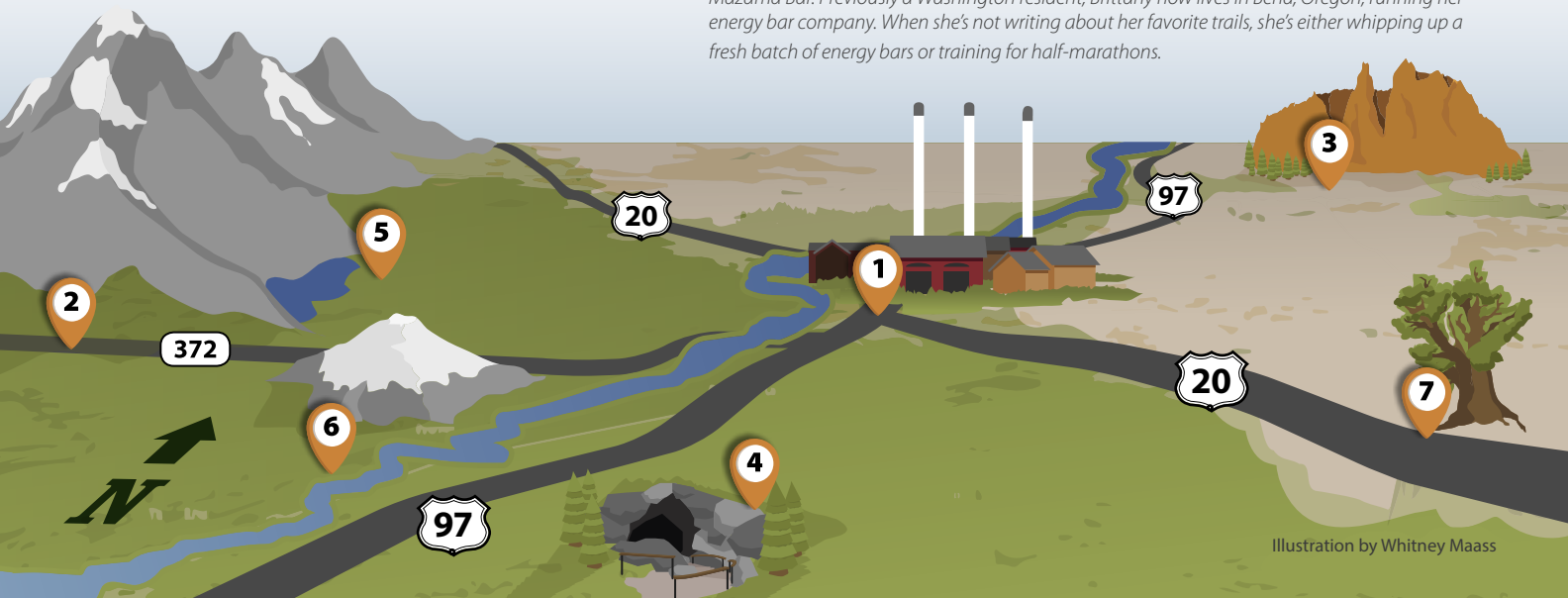
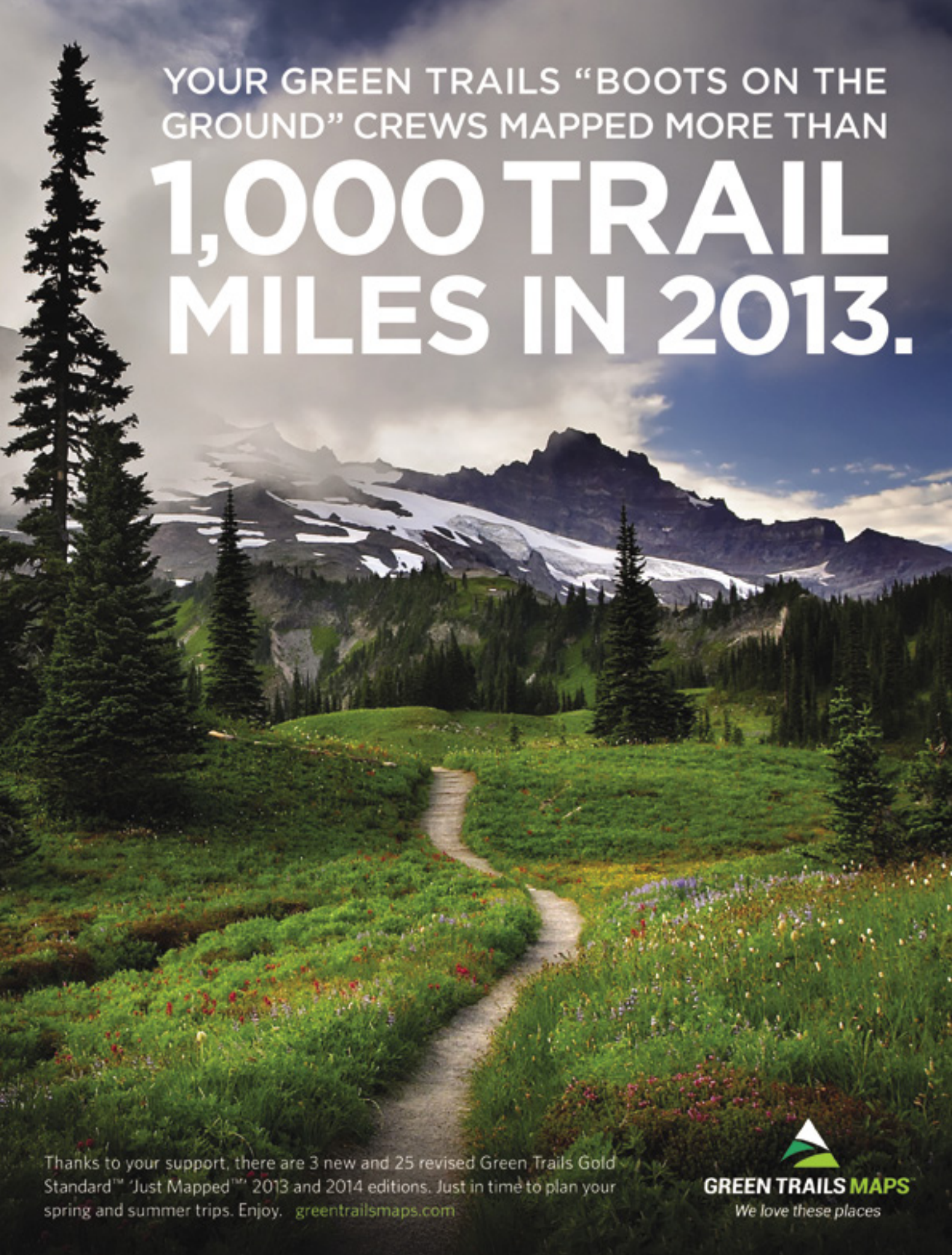


Illustration by Whitney Maass



YOUR GREEN TRAILS “BOOTS ON THE
GROUND” CREWS MAPPED MORE THAN
**1,000 TRAIL
MILES IN 2013.**

Thanks to your support, there are 3 new and 25 revised Green Trails Gold Standard™ ‘Just Mapped™’ 2013 and 2014 editions. Just in time to plan your spring and summer trips. Enjoy. greentrailsmaps.com



GREEN TRAILS MAPS

We love these places

By John Soltys & Eli Boschetto

Staying Hy

Water. You can't live without it. It's one of hiking and backpacking's Ten Essentials. It's probably the most essential Essential.

Your body relies on water for more than you probably realize. It's not just a thirst quencher on warm days or following a big climb. Your body requires water to keep functioning at peak performance. Dehydration—the lack of water—can have detrimental, even life-threatening, effects on your body and performance. Recent studies have indicated that being just 3% dehydrated can decrease strength by 19% and increase fatigue by 70%. Your body also relies on staying properly hydrated to lubricate joints, aid in digestion, regulate your blood pressure and keep your brain functioning properly.

Here in the Pacific Northwest, there's usually an abundance of accessible water in creeks, rivers and lakes to help keep you hydrated on your favorite trails and camping in your favorite locations. In order to stay hydrated in the backcountry—as well as cook and keep yourself clean—you not only need a method of ensuring safe drinking water, but the ability to transport it and keep it easily accessible. Fortunately there are filters, bottles and packs for every type of adventure, whether you're hours from the tap or days into the wilderness.



The MSR MiniWorks EX is a classic hand pump filter and long-time favorite. For high-tech filtering, the SteriPen Ultra purifies one liter in two minutes. \$90–\$100

Clean Drinking

The act of scooping up a cold drink of mountain stream water embodies the joys of being one with nature. However, many mountain streams and lakes contain bacteria and protozoa that can make you sick. Really sick. Giardiasis, the most common waterborne disease in the United States, is caused by a protozoan parasite that can cause severe digestive symptoms after ingesting. It is the result of water contaminated by human or animal waste. To prevent your water from making you sick, it's important to kill or deactivate anything that's in it.

Depending on the kind of hiking you do, there are numerous filtering or purifying options available. They range from pump and gravity filters that employ charcoal cleaning elements, to chemical additives that purify contaminated water, and ultraviolet devices that kill bacteria and viruses. Lacking a filtering method, you should boil your water for at least five minutes. If you don't purify your water in the backcountry, you are at the mercy of nature—and nature is not always merciful.

EASY DOES IT Chemical disinfection involves adding a chemical to the water that kills anything in it. Iodine is cheap and kills many infectious agents, but has an unsavory flavor. A more tasteless chemical treatment is chlorine dioxide (not the same as commonly known chlorine). **Potable Aqua Chlorine Dioxide Tablets** are tiny and lightweight, but each use requires four hours of treatment time. One package of tablets can treat up to 30 quarts of water. A similar option is **Aquamira Water Treatment Drops**. Simply combine the two solutions from the portable 1-ounce bottles, add to your water bottle, wait 15–30 minutes and drink up. These treatments are especially favored by ultralight hikers. If you'd rather not add chemicals to your water, you can treat it with bacteria-killing ultraviolet light. **SteriPen's Ultra Water Purifier** is a 5-ounce penlike device that you insert directly into your water bottle. It will purify one full liter in less than two minutes, and flashes a little smiley-face symbol when it's ready to drink. Each charge is good for treating up to 20 liters.

FAVORITE FILTERS The alternative to chemical treatments are pump devices that force water through a filter (usually charcoal or ceramic elements) that purifies the water of contaminants. Pump filters can last for years and years, and generally only need an element replacement every few seasons depending on use. These are typically the most effective for use in cleaning backcountry water sources. The trade-off is that they're bulkier and heavier. The popular (and team favorite) **MSR MiniWorks EX Filter** weighs under a pound, attaches directly to your widemouth Nalgene bottles and bladders, and requires about 85 strokes to filter a liter of water. Newer minifilters attach to, or are directly integrated into, drinking bottles. These tiny filters generally weigh only a few ounces and can be used to drink without any pumping. The **LifeStraw Water Filter** is 9 inches long and ideal for drinking from a bottle or straight from the source, while **Sawyer's Mini Water Filter** screws onto its companion 16-ounce water pouch and most Platypus bladders.

hydrated on Trail



For quick drinking and minimal gear weight, the Sawyer Mini Water Filter attaches to its own soft bottle. The ultra-compact LifeStraw Filter works with any bottle. \$22–\$25



Hard-sided bottles like the CamelBak Eddy and Nalgene Wide-mouth will keep your water safe and secure. The insulated Hydro Flask is great for keeping soup hot on cold hikes. \$7–\$35



Soft-sided bottles like the Platypus Softbottle come in several sizes and weigh next to nothing. The Vapur Microfilter Bottle is a combo soft bottle with integrated drinking filter. \$8–\$70

Drink Up

Once your water is clean, you need something to put it in. Your water supply is one of the heaviest things you carry in your pack. Just one liter of water weighs 2.2 pounds. In order to minimize your water weight but maximize your water supply, choosing the right containers is key—we've come a long way since those clunky Army canteens. These days, hiking water bottles come in a plethora of sizes, shapes and colors to accommodate most individual preferences.

Hard-sided bottles are advantageous in that they can take a lot of abuse and maintain their carrying capacity. Dropped on the trail or smashed in your pack, they hold up well. Most can even accommodate hot and cold liquids. The only downside is that when they're empty, they still take up the same amount of space. That's where soft-sided bottles and bladders come in handy. When they've been drained of their hydrating contents, they can be flattened out or rolled up and stashed, and weigh next to nothing. Their disadvantage is not having the same rugged durability.

CLASSIC BOTTLES You probably have one. Or two. Or several. The classic 32-ounce **Nalgene Wide-Mouth Bottle** has been around for years. It's so prevalent, some filters are designed to screw directly onto it. Its BPA-free Tritan copolyester construction makes it practically bombproof, ensuring that your liquid sustenance will still be contained, even if dropped on a rock or tumbled down a mountainside. For drinking on the go, both the 25- and 34-ounce **CamelBak Eddy Bottles** feature their distinctive flip-up bite valve and an integrated straw so you can keep the bottle level for drinking without obstructing your view by tilting it up in front of your face. It's also made of Tritan copolyester, so go ahead and toss it around. For toting along a warm drink or soup, the 24-ounce **Hydro Flask Insulated Bottle** is a *WT* favorite. This double-wall vacuum-insulated stainless steel bottle kept our soup hot on the trail for more than five hours. The smaller mouth opening also helps minimize spills and makes drinking easier.

SOFT BOTTLES If you're counting ounces or watching space in your pack, hydration bladders may be the solution for you, with their range of applications. The standard **Platypus SoftBottle** comes in 17- and 34-ounce sizes, and each weighs in at just over and under an ounce, respectively. They feature a small-mouth opening for easy drinking and a contoured shape for easy holding. If you really want to go hassle-free, try the **Vapur MicroFilter Anti-Bottle**. With an integrated water filter, this 34-ounce bottle just needs to be filled from a lake or stream; then pop the top and drink up. The 3-ply construction makes this a very sturdy soft bottle, and another *WT* trail-tested favorite. When in camp, packing along a larger soft bottle or bladder will save you from making multiple trips to the nearby water source. **MSR's Dromedary Bag** can hold 10 liters of water you can conveniently keep in your camp for cooking, cleaning and drinking. The innovative three-way cap makes for easy filling, pouring and drinking, and you can even attach a shower kit to increase its utility.

TRAIL MIX

Gear Closet



For short day hikes or multi-day treks, a pack with an integrated hydration system allows for easy drinking on the go. New Osprey and Gregory packs even have external reservoir ports for easy refilling and no compromise to internal storage space. \$150–\$200

Packing Water

One of the easiest ways to stay hydrated on the trail is with a water reservoir and drinking tube. CamelBak was the first to produce such a system and today offers a variety of models for all manner of outdoor activities. Over the past several years, most other pack companies have gotten on board with this efficiency and include a reservoir system, or the compatibility to add one. All you have to decide is what kind of system best suits your activity of choice.

BEST PACKS Two of our favorite hydration day packs are the **Arc'teryx Chilcotin 20** and **CamelBak Arete 18**. Each contain a 2-liter reservoir and provide enough storage space to carry your Ten Essentials and other items for everything from short day hikes to winter snowshoe romps. The Chilcotin features a unique structure and wrap-around hip belt design that works well in keeping the pack stable and close to the body, while the Aeroform shoulder straps and back panel keep weight low and comfort high. The Arete sacrifices the extra features to keep the

weight down, making it a fast and light day or summit pack. A sweet feature is the Quick Link tube system that lets you connect a filter or flow meter accessory. Plus, you can turn it inside out and have a hydration sleeve you can add to any overnight pack.

For larger loads, look to the **Osprey Kestrel** and **Gregory Savant**. Both packs feature externally-accessible hydration sleeves ready for your reservoir. Now you won't have to dig through the rest of your gear when it's time to refill. In addition to the hydration system innovation, both packs have all the features you'd expect from these quality pack companies: solid harnesses and suspension systems, integrated raincovers and enough pockets to keep all your gear organized. The Kestrel, available in sizes from 28 to 48 liters, also features a handy exterior mesh pocket for stowing quick-access items, while the Savant, available in sizes from 38 to 58 liters, features a roll-top lid pocket for added water repellency. ♦

Hydration Supplements

When you hike, you sweat. When you sweat, you lose not only water, but also minerals like salt and potassium. This leads to dehydration. Dehydration leads to fatigue, headaches and lightheadedness. You can fight dehydration by drinking water, but unless you replace the minerals you're losing you'll still be affected and your performance will suffer.

Thankfully, there's a large selection of portable supplements you can add to water that will help you to stay hydrated in a tasty way. We reviewed several of the leading portable drink supplements. Here are the ones we liked the best.

QUICK FIX **Nuun Active Hydration** comes in small tablets and contains 360 mg of sodium and 100 mg of potassium. It comes in a variety of flavors, but the lemon-lime flavor is very light and refreshing. Cost per 16 oz: \$0.50

HOT OR COLD **Skratch Labs** offers an Exercise Hydration Mix in five flavorful varieties. There's even an apples and cinnamon flavor to drink hot. Each contains 120 mg of sodium and 20 mg of potassium. Cost per 16 oz: \$1.00

TRAIL ENERGY **Zipfizz** is an effervescent drink with 60 mg of sodium, 905 mg of potassium and 100 mg of caffeine. There are six different flavors that will tickle your nose. Cost per 16 oz: \$2.00

CARBO BOOST **Hammer HEED** has a high-energy supplement in four flavors that blurs the lines between a simple electrolyte replacement and an energy drink. It contains only 62 mg of sodium and 16 mg of potassium, but packs 25 g of carbohydrates. Cost per 16 oz: \$2.00

FLAVOR PUNCH **Accelerade** is a supplement that tastes like a fruit juice and acts to keep hunger at bay. It contains 220 mg of sodium and 21 g of potassium, 21 g of carbohydrates and 5g of protein. It comes in five flavors. Cost per 16 oz: \$1.00

Whatever supplement you choose, make sure it helps replace the minerals you're losing when you sweat.

Tent City

TRAIL MIX

Gear Shop

Ready to get away from the crowds at the car camps and spend a few nights in the backcountry? Or is it time to replace your old, leaky, weather-beaten tent? Washington Trails' editor recently got to test drive several of this year's new tent offerings. Models were reviewed for weight and packability, ease of setup, living space and gear storage, and resistance to the elements—all things you should be looking for when considering a new tent purchase. Here are four of his favorite models. Perhaps this will help take some of the guesswork out of your tent shopping.

- ▶▶ Choose a tent for the kind of backpacking you plan to do, e.g. weekends or long treks; fair weather or all weather.
- ▶▶ Determine how many people—as well as four-legged friends—will be occupying the tent for space requirements.
- ▶▶ Consider features like number of doors, size of storage vestibules and ease of setup.
- ▶▶ Target your tent weight to average 3 pounds or less per occupant. You can divide up pieces to reduce the load.
- ▶▶ Select a price point that you are comfortable with, that will give you the features you're looking for.

EDITOR'S CHOICE Mountain Hardwear Optic 2.5

Billed as an entry-level backpacking tent, the Optic 2.5 gets high marks for its oversized interior space and large vestibule areas. Setup is easy with two main poles and a third peak pole for added headroom. Unique to the Optic, the two extra-large doors are situated in the front and on the side, with a fly design that provides a 180-degree view outside when open. At 6 pounds, it's a bit on the heavy side, due in part to its solid construction and weather-resistant fabrics. This is an ideal tent for a couple with a small child, or for bringing Fido along. \$250

Score: 4.3/5

Bonus Points: 180° view; roll-up side door



ENTRY-LEVEL NEMO Galaxi 2

It may look like a typical tent, but the Galaxi 2 is packed with sweet features for extra trail comfort. A smart hub connector keeps the poles together for a fast and easy setup. The interior space is roomy for two people, with two doors, large gear stash pockets and a ceiling Light Pocket for a headlamp. Under the weatherproof rain fly, two huge vestibules keep gear and boots protected from the elements. At just over 5 pounds, it's a choice weekend getaway or new-to-backpacking model at an attractive price point. \$250

Score: 3.7/5

Bonus Points: Light Pocket; footprint included



INNOVATIVE Sierra Designs Flashlight 2UL

The Flashlight 2UL from Sierra Designs is part of their new design direction. The 3.5-pound integrated tent-rain fly assembly sets up as one unit, so there's no fussing with separate pieces. The pole structure is minimal, and the main poles can even be swapped out for trekking poles, further reducing pack weight. Interior space is roomy for two people, with lots of headroom. The two side doors—protected from the elements by overhanging awnings—feature zip-up/down storm flaps for added protection or additional ventilation. \$360

Score: 3.1/5

Bonus Points: Sheltered gear closets



ULTRALIGHT Big Agnes Fishhook UL2

Big Agnes continues its tradition of awesome backpacking tents with the zipperless Fishhook UL2. It sets up quick with a simple, color-coded pole and tab assembly on both the tent and the rain fly. Interior space is generous for two people plus gear, with good headroom and four gear stash pockets. Instead of using a typical zipper (eliminated to reduce weight), the single large door closes with easy-to-manage hook-and-loop fasteners. Weighing in at just over 3.5 pounds, it keeps pack weight down for light and fast travel. \$400

Score: 4.4/5

Bonus Points: Color-coded poles and tabs



By Tami Asars

Northwest forests are teeming with life—much of which may go overlooked or unseen. On your next hike, look out for the little things and discover something new on your favorite trails.

BIRD: Townsend's Solitaire

The beautiful voice of the Townsend's solitaire is one that will stop and make you listen, but because of his grey-all-over coloring, you may not pick him out too easily! If you do, you'll note a very distinct white ring around his eyes. This well-camouflaged dweller of the high western mountains feeds primarily on juniper berries and nests near the ground, usually in decaying stumps. He sings his loud, fluty song throughout all seasons, but in the fall and winter he uses song primarily to defend his winter territory. Look for Townsend's solitaires in open coniferous forests where juniper patches are found in the high country, especially on the east side of the Cascades.



BEAST: Bobcat

A mascot popular with sports teams for its ferocity, the bobcat quietly lives and walks amongst us here in Washington. The bobcat is about twice the size of an average housecat and has small, black-tipped tufted ears and a short bobbed tail. Like most felines, the bobcat is a stealth hunter, seeking a variety of prey such as rabbits, rodents and birds. Largely solitary and territorial, he marks his boundaries with claw marks and spraying and will fight to protect his turf. Females use hidden dens to have a litter of one to six kittens that open their eyes by the ninth or tenth day after birth. Kittens hunt by themselves within 5 to 6 months and remain with their mother for up to one year.



BLOOM: Avalanche Lily

Shortly after the snowfields begin to melt in the high country, the white sunny face of the avalanche lily pops up in damp, subalpine meadows and across open sections of woodlands. Not to be confused with its cousin, the yellow glacier lily, the avalanche lily has delicate white petals with a deep yellow base. Years ago, the indigenous Northwest tribes harvested its corms, or bulbs, for food. It can be seen and enjoyed at the edge of snowlines and glaciers in Washington until midsummer.



TAMI ASARS is a writer, photographer and career hiker. She has spent her lifetime exploring the trails and backcountry in Washington, from the Olympic Coast to the Okanogan. Tami is the author of Mountaineers Books' *Hiking the Wonderland Trail*, and the new *Day Hiking Mount Adams and the Goat Rocks*. You can follow the latest with Tami at tamiasars.com.

Photos by Tami Asars

Looking for wildlife on the trail? Check out this issue's Hike It section on page 50, featuring eight trails known for great wildlife viewing opportunities. You can also find out where the birds are flocking, beasts are roaming and blooms are blossoming on WTA's Trip Reports. Get the latest info from hikers in the field at wta.org.

By Paul Raymaker

THE GREAT DEBATE

RAW vs. JPEG

What is it? What's the big deal? Those are probably what most casual photogs respond with when asked about shooting RAW images versus shooting JPEG images. Well, knowing the difference between the two is important, so let's find out why.

First, the basics. RAW format is the literal raw, unedited data that the sensor in your camera gathers to make a photograph. In order to make the raw file usable for printing or sharing on the Web, it needs to be converted using software like Adobe Photoshop, iPhoto, or Apple Aperture. JPEG format is the raw data with image processing "magic" applied and converted into a universal image format. If you have your camera set to shoot in JPEG, all the processing magic happens inside the camera without the need to futz with a bunch of computer software. In the film days, shooting in RAW and processing your own images would be like developing film in your own darkroom, while shooting in JPEG would be like taking your film to Costco and getting prints made.

For most people, shooting photos in JPEG format is perfectly fine for posting snapshots on Instagram or Facebook. But if you're reading this article, you probably want more out of your photos, and knowing the difference between RAW and JPEG will help you get the results you want. There are advantages and disadvantages to shooting in RAW or JPEG, so let's put the two head-to-head and see which format wins.

Share-ability: When shooting in JPEG, photos are instantly ready to share with friends, family and fans by email or on the web. When shooting in RAW, images will need to be processed and converted before they can be shared.

Winner: JPEG

Size-ability: RAW files contain all the data that the camera sensor captures, resulting in really big files. When shooting in JPEG, the camera compresses the raw data, resulting in much smaller file sizes for easy web and email use.

Winner: JPEG—however, memory cards and computer storage are cheap nowadays, so the smaller file size isn't a huge advantage anymore.

Tweak-ability: When shooting in JPEG, the camera does all the tweaking for you. This might seem convenient, but if you don't like how your JPEG photo looks straight from the camera, it's not as easy to correct because much of the data in the photo was lost during compression. When you shoot in raw, you can adjust the exposure and white balance, you can lighten shadows, darken highlights and fix color. RAW images are also sharper than JPEGs.

Winner: RAW—BIG TIME!

Despite JPEG taking the first two categories (though the second was negligible), the overall winner is RAW, for its ability to fine-tune images to perfection and not having to settle for quick snapshots. Even if you want to share your photos quickly, most cameras that shoot in RAW format also allow shooting in RAW and JPEG at the same time.

After all the effort you put into hiking to a beautiful spot, waiting for great light and capturing beautiful scenes, why not take the final step to make just the right adjustments to your images to show everyone just how stunning that scene was. With a little practice, processing your RAW photos will become second nature.

PAUL RAYMAKER is a geologist who discovered nature photography while spending a summer in the mountains of Colorado. Since then, he hasn't put his camera down. Nature photography is Paul's passion, his goal being to show others the beauty that surrounds us, and encouraging others to care for their environment. Having recently moved from Seattle to St. Louis Park, Minnesota, Paul is still a WTA member and regular contributor to Washington Trails.



These photos from Kelly Butte show the improvements that can be made to an image by tweaking a RAW file. The upper image is a JPEG straight from the camera. The lower image is an edited RAW photo with adjustments made to exposure, improved shadows and highlights and corrected white balance.



HACKING YOUR TORTILLAS

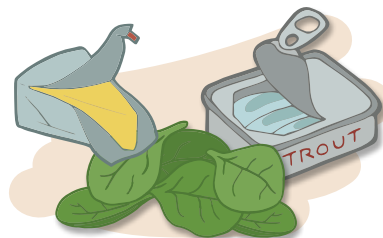
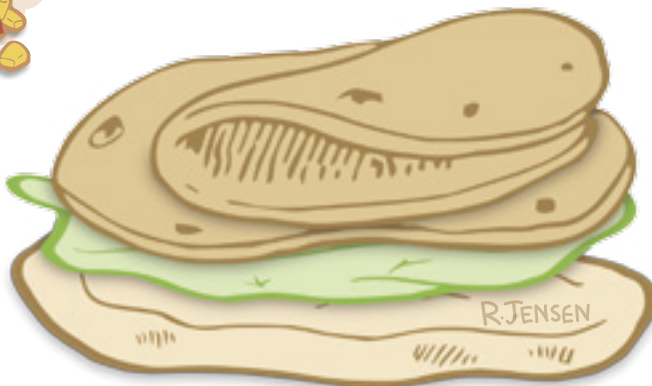
They're a universal meal pocket. You can put peanut butter and jelly in them, tuna fish and beef jerky. They're an instant lunch or dinner with minimal cleanup. But maybe you're tired of the same old, same old. Here are some creative flavor combinations to mix up your backcountry menu, courtesy of WTA's online community. Oh, and if you have dietary restrictions, try a cabbage leaf or piece of naan instead.



Mediterranean Wrap

- ▶ Chicken
- ▶ Garbanzo beans
- ▶ Sun-dried tomatoes
- ▶ Freeze-dried corn
- ▶ Balsamic dressing

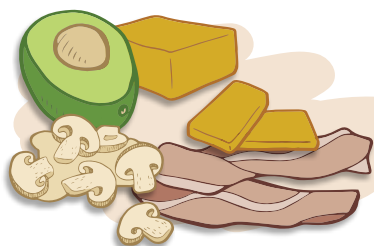
By Shannon Schultz



Better than Tuna

- ▶ Smoked trout
- ▶ Laughing Cow cheese
- ▶ Fresh spinach

By Mike Wilson



BACM = YUM

- ▶ Bacon
- ▶ Avocado
- ▶ Cheese
- ▶ Mushrooms

By Sona Atanesyan

Sweet Potato Spread

- ▶ Mashed sweet potatoes
- ▶ Grilled chicken
- ▶ Cinnamon
- ▶ Black pepper

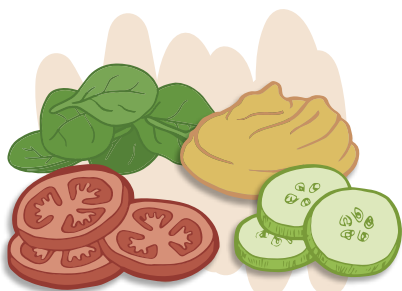
By Scott Boyd



Veggie Delight

- ▶ Hummous
- ▶ Sliced tomatoes
- ▶ Sliced cucumber
- ▶ Fresh spinach

By Kelly Tuski



Mexi-Crunch

- ▶ Pinto beans
- ▶ Diced green pepper
- ▶ Diced onion
- ▶ Shredded cheese
- ▶ Fritos corn chips
- ▶ Hot sauce

By Cory Lee Nielsen



Seattle fabrics

Outdoor & Recreational Fabrics

Special Orders • Shipping Anywhere

• Gore-Tex®
• Ultrex®
• Supplex
• Polartec®
• Lycra
• Spinnaker

• Taffeta
• Ripstop
• Oxford
• Packcloth
• Cordura
• Ballistics

• Sunbrella®
• Textilene
• Closed Cell Foam
• Mosquito Netting
• Canvas
• Grommets

• Outerwear Patterns
• Zippers
• Hardware
• Webbing
• Heat Sealable Fabrics
• Banner Fabrics

OPEN MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY

9 a.m to 6 p.m.

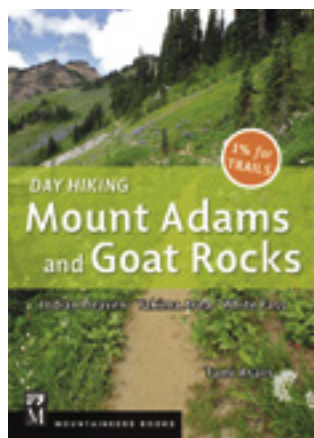
www.seattlefabrics.com

(206) 525-0670

FAX (206) 525-0779

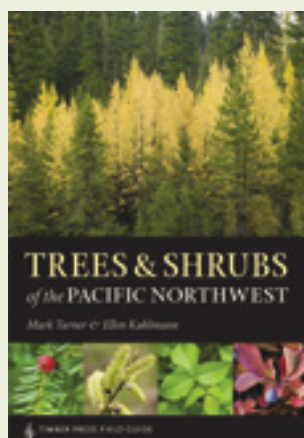
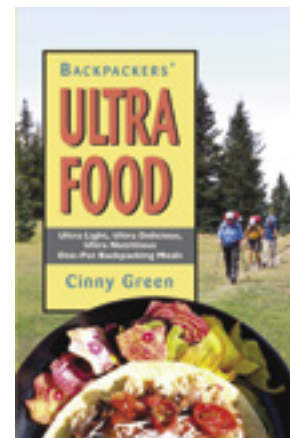
8702 Aurora Ave. N.
Seattle, WA 98103

Looking for a new place to go hiking? Need help identifying a tree or berry you've recently seen? Want to improve your outdoor photography, or your backcountry menu? Check out any of these great new resource books, hand-picked by WT's editor.



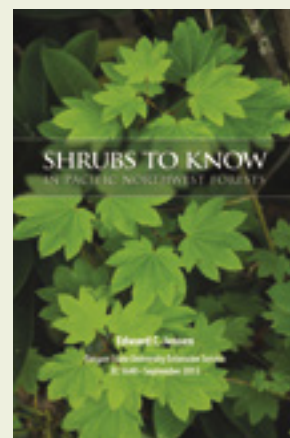
Just released is the newest volume in Mountaineers Books' popular Day Hiking series by guidebook author and Washington Trails contributor Tami Asars. *Day Hiking Mount Adams and Goat Rocks* features more than 80 hikes around southwest Washington. Explore high passes on the Pacific Crest Trail, secluded lakes, sprawling meadows and old fire lookout sites. Each hike description contains all the trail beta you'll need to get out and go.

Ever get stumped trying to meal-plan for your backpacking trips? No more, with *Backpackers' Ultra Food* by Cinny Green. Not only does this handy volume contain lots of tasty, easy-to-make backcountry meals, but it also offers creative solutions to expand your menus like "soup bark" and "salsa leather." There's also helpful information on choosing the right foods to fuel your trip, packing efficiencies and assembling a simple and lightweight backcountry kitchen.



You might be familiar with *Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest*. Here's the newly published companion volume, *Trees and Shrubs of the Pacific Northwest*, by Mark Turner and Ellen Kuhlmann. This comprehensive volume features more than 1,200 color photos detailing the names, habitats, sizes, seasons, ranges and characteristics of 568 species of woody flora found throughout Washington and Oregon. A must-have resource.

Oregon State University's new pocket-sized *Shrubs to Know in Pacific Northwest Forests*, by Edward Jensen, is perfect for carrying along the trail to help you identify some of the more prolific ground cover seen along Washington's trails. Chapters focus on names, range and habitat, and feature illustration keys for easy identification. More than 500 color photos, accompanied by detailed descriptions, will help you identify nearly 100 different species—including the tasty ones!



Have you ever wondered how photographers capture those amazing nighttime shots of the moon, star trails and the Milky Way? Here's your answer. *Photography Night Sky* by Jennifer Wu and James Martin details the tips and techniques needed to photograph the night sky, including setup, exposure and the right amount of finishing touches to turn your nighttime photos into stunning spectacles of the cosmos. Now you have a reason to carry that tripod.

Want to take your outdoor photography from amateur to pro? The gorgeous book *Photographing Washington* by Greg Vaughn gives you the inside tips and info you need for shooting spectacular landscapes across our beautiful state—from the rugged Olympic Coast to the heights of the Cascades to the sprawling Channeled Scablands. Easy-to-read chapters give you the where, when and how for great photo opportunities—and work you'll want to show off!



HIKE: Cussed Hollow

South Cascades

Trekking quietly is easy on this gentle woodland trail, allowing you to take advantage of prime wildlife spotting.

Nestled in the forests in the upper Cussed Hollow Valley, this lower elevation hike thaws more quickly than some of the other trails in the area, attracting ground-foraging wildlife such as the forest grouse and their prey.

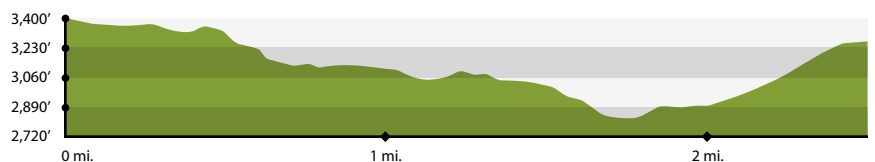
Grouse are present in 34 of Washington's 39 counties. The western slope of the Cascades is home to the sooty blue grouse. Males have blue-gray feathers, complemented by orange and white accents. Females are smaller and less flashy, mildly decorated with brown and gray coloring. To spot one, tread softly and listen for a "whoomp!" calling sound. Look for areas of disturbed soil and stray feathers where the birds are known for "graveling."

You may not be the only one camping out for grouse-gatherings. The brush offers good coverage for sneaky bobcats, who crouch and watch their prey before pouncing on the chicken-sized birds. While bobcats are reclusive by nature and mostly quiet, when they do make noise, it can be rather upsetting if you don't know what to expect. A noisy bobcat often sounds like a woman screaming or a baby crying.

Ready for some wildlife spotting? Set out on the woodland trail, crossing over and around several tributaries on their way to Cussed Hollow Creek. Steadily descend into Cussed Hollow through western white pine, Douglas fir, and Silver fir trees before turning uphill around 1 mile. Pop out around the ridge at 2.5 miles. This is a good spot to turn back the way you came, straining your ears above the babbling brooks for the calls of the wild.



Photos: top and lower right by Bryan Corey; lower left by Ingo Bahn



CUSSED HOLLOW

DISTANCE: 5 miles, round trip

ELEVATION GAIN: 600 feet

ELEVATION PEAK: 3,400 feet

PERMIT: NW Forest Pass

DOGS: Not permitted

MAP: Green Trails 365: Lone Butte

TRAILHEAD

DIRECTIONS: From Cougar, head east on FR 90 for about 30 miles to Lewis River Campground. Turn left onto FR 93 and drive about 19 miles. The trailhead is on the right.

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/cussed-hollow

EAT HERE: The Cougar Bar & Grill may not look like much, but it serves up tasty burgers and cold beer—just what you want after a day on trail.

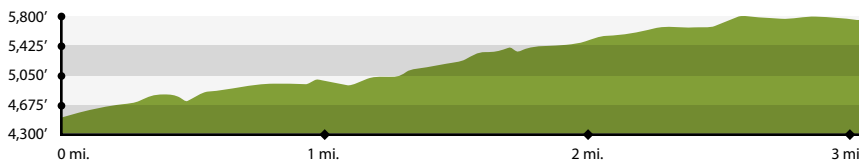


Hike by
Brittany Manwill



HIKE: Summit Lake

Mount Rainier



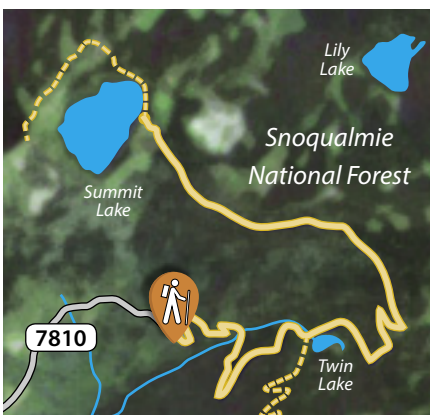
This popular summer trail offers wild-flower-filled meadows, a glistening alpine lake, big mountain views and wildlife sighting aplenty.

From the trailhead, the Summit Lake Trail begins by climbing up through a young forest still in the process of recovering from a recent harvest. Soon you enter more mature stands of fir and hemlock as the trail swings into long switchbacks up the mountainside. After about a mile of trail reach a junction with the Carbon River Trail and Twin Lake. A short, unmarked trail leads out to Lonely Twin Lake, which lacks both a twin and the impressive landscape waiting at Summit Lake.

Push on from the junction to one of the steeper sections of the hike, following the trail as it quickly ascends the ridgeline. Roughly 2.5 miles from the trailhead, emerge from the woods into the grassy meadows surrounding Summit Lake. If you're up for more, the trail splits into a loop, winding around the lake and up to the top of Summit Lake Peak. There is often wildlife found in the meadows, including bear, deer, marmot and elk.

The side trail to the Summit Peak is rough, steep and narrow, but the rewards are worth the extra effort. From the top, the deep blue of Summit Lake competes with the white flanks of Mount Rainier. Beyond that, an ocean of mountaintops spreads out in every direction, with far too many peaks to name.

Backpacking Tip: There are several campsites available around Summit Lake, offering up more exploration opportunities on the nearby Carbon River and Bearhead Mountain Trails.



SUMMIT LAKE

DISTANCE: 6.1 miles, round trip

ELEVATION GAIN: 1,300 feet

ELEVATION PEAK: 5,800 feet

PERMIT: NW Forest Pass

DOGS: Leashed

MAP: Green Trails 237: Enumclaw

TRAILHEAD

DIRECTIONS: From the Seattle-Tacoma area, work your way east to SR 410 to SR 165. Turn right on SR 165 for about 10 miles through Wilkeson and Carbonado to the Carbon River/Mowich Lake junction. Veer left onto the Carbon River Road for 7.5 miles to FR 7810, just before the Carbon River Ranger Station. Turn left onto FR 7810 for 6.5 unpaved miles to the trailhead.

Hike and photos by
Nate & Jer Barnes



HIKE: Island Center Forest

South Puget Sound

A quick ferry ride from Seattle brings you to Vashon Island's circuitous network of forested trails—ideal for trail running, mountain biking and nature walking.

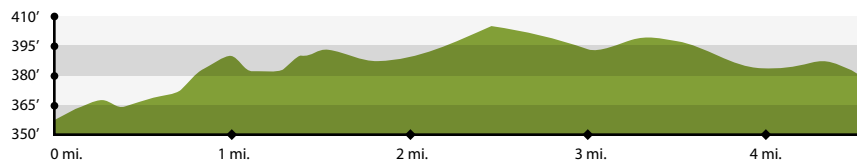
If heading into the mountains is your usual method of getting out in the woods, mix it up by heading to South Puget Sound's Vashon Island. From the Seattle area, drive southwest to the Fauntleroy ferry terminal, where you can drive onto the ferry and arrive at the Island Center Forest in about 30 minutes.

The Island Center Forest is an example of forest restoration in action, with dozens of baby saplings filling in the spaces between the sturdy second-growth Douglas-fir trees. The forest is teeming with wildlife, with more than 70 species of birds, owls and deer, plus the occasional equestrian.

There are two main entrances to the park, but start at the SW 188th Street trailhead as there's a picnic pavilion and a port-a-john there. The trails all connect, with short distances between junctions, so don't hesitate to choose your own adventure. Of course, make sure to have a free trail map with you so you won't get lost, as not all junctions are labeled.

Because of the flat nature of the trails, this excursion is ideally suited for trail runners, mountain bikers, hikers with little ones and dog walkers.

Look For: A variety of birds, including woodpeckers, buffleheads, sparrows, owls and ospreys.



ISLAND CENTER FOREST

DISTANCE: 9 miles, round trip

ELEVATION GAIN: 60 feet

ELEVATION PEAK: 410 feet

PERMIT: None

DOGS: Leashed

MAP: King County Parks Map

TRAILHEAD

DIRECTIONS: From West Seattle, take the Southworth Ferry to Vashon. Drive through the town and turn right onto 188th Street. Continue 2 miles to the King County Parks parking area.

INFO: kingcounty.gov/recreation/parks/trails/backcountry/islandcenterforest.aspx

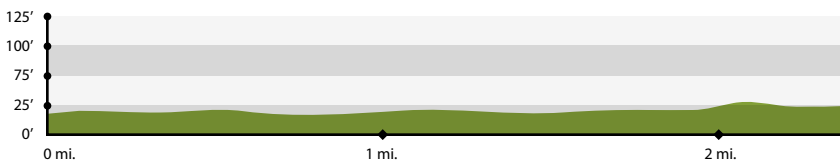
LOCAL FLAVOR: Visit the historic Hardware Store for stellar seasoned potatoes and mimosas.



Hike and photos by
Kristen Sapowicz

HIKE: Padilla Bay

North Puget Sound



A leisurely stroll in the Padilla Bay Shore Reserve is guaranteed to give you spectacular views of the bay, San Juan Islands and many local and migratory fowl.

From the parking lot, walk up a small hill and turn right on a gravel trail. The trail is flat and mostly gravel to a small paved portion at the north end. At the start of this trail you will walk beside one of the sloughs created by the incoming tides that are now controlled by dikes. Have your binoculars handy so you can look for the different species of birds that live and feed along the sloughs.

After about a half mile you will come upon Padilla Bay, where you head north as the trail winds along, giving you spectacular views of the San Juan Islands. Beware that there is little to no shade in summer and no buildings for cover to get out of the wind or rain. Be very vigilant along the bay with your binoculars, and if you are lucky you will come upon a blue heron feeding in the bay.

Benches along the trail offer places to sit and scan for birds as they blend into the scenery and can easily be missed. You may get lucky and see harbor seals, peregrine falcons, bald eagles or any of the numerous varieties of ducks and shore birds. The blue heron is the most noticeable one, who can stand perfectly still for long periods of time looking for marine life it feeds on. When you reach the north end of the trail, just turn around and head back. Don't forget to check out the farmland on the east side of the trail because a lot of fowl inhabit the grassy areas.



PADILLA BAY

DISTANCE: 4.8 miles, round trip

ELEVATION GAIN: minimal

ELEVATION PEAK: 25 feet

PERMIT: None

DOGS: Leashed

MAP: Padilla Bay Reserve Map

Hike and photos by
Mike Morrison

TRAILHEAD

DIRECTIONS: Drive Hwy. 20 from I-5 west toward the Anacortes/San Juan Ferries. Turn right on Bayview Edison Road and drive about 0.5 mile to the dike trail on the left. There is a small gravel parking lot.

INFO: padillabay.gov/recopportunities.asp

EAT HERE: Drop by the Farmhouse Inn for tasty country breakfasts and hearty comfort foods.



HIKE: Lake Ann

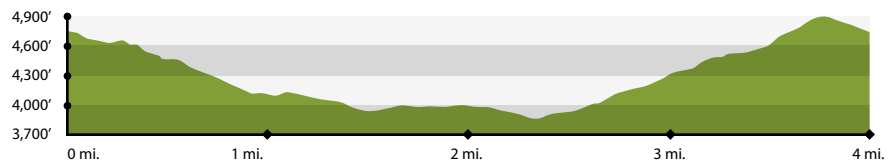
Mount Baker

The trail to Lake Ann offers unparalleled views of both Mount Baker and Mount Shuksan, along with a variety of native wildlife, from small critters to large mammals.

Begin by dropping down 800 vertical feet into the Swift Creek valley. The forested switchbacks are gentle, and the tall trees provide welcoming shade on warm summer days. Watch for squirrels and chipmunks skittering through the forest as you descend. Upon reaching the valley bottom, the subalpine forest gives way to grassy meadows filled with seasonal wildflowers and trickling streams. Though your immediate surroundings are beautiful and Mount Baker dominates the southern skyline, remember to scan the cliffs above for the distinct white silhouettes of mountain goats as they adeptly maneuver the rock face of Shuksan Arm. Proceeding through the meadow, you may possibly scare up a grouse or two before reaching a junction; stay left to reach Lake Ann.

The elevation that was lost at the start of the hike is now regained as you climb out of the Swift Creek valley, passing through thin forest and switchbacking across talus slopes in the company of pikas and marmots. Even if you don't see the animals themselves, you'll no doubt hear their shrill whistles.

After climbing 1,000 vertical feet, reach a saddle, then drop slightly into the lake basin. Sparkling Lake Ann is pretty, but the up-close views of Mount Shuksan and its Upper and Lower Curtis Glaciers are awe-inspiring. Soak in the views and listen for the sounds of ice breaking off the glaciers. Black bears are common in the area, so be sure to practice proper food storage if you're overnighing at one of the many sites encircling the lake.



Photos: top by Doug Diekema; lower left by Jason Facey; lower right by Charles Brill

LAKE ANN

DISTANCE: 8 miles, round trip

ELEVATION GAIN: 1,900 feet

ELEVATION PEAK: 4,900 feet

PERMIT: NW Forest Pass

DOGS: Leashed

MAP: Green Trails 14: Mount Shuksan

TRAILHEAD

DIRECTIONS: From Bellingham, drive Highway 542 east to the Mount Baker Ski Area. Continue another 1.5 miles to the roadside trailhead at Austin Pass.

INFO: fs.usda.gov/recarea/mb/recreation/recarea/?recid=17534

LOCAL FLAVOR: Graham's Restaurant in Glacier offers a nice selection of taps and tasty eats.



Hike by
Lindsay Leffelman

BACKPACK: Enchanted Valley

Olympic National Park



Enchanted Valley is celebrated for its abundance of early-season waterfalls, old-growth forests and prolific wildlife.

Begin at the Graves Creek Trailhead. At a signed junction, continue left on the wide, abandoned road through towering firs and cedar. Many animals inhabit the valley: bear, mountain lion, deer, elk, coyote, bobcat, beaver and river otter. Look for wildlife tracks in muddy sections along the trail.

At 2 miles the old road ends and you'll descend steeply through hemlock and fir to the East Fork Quinault. The Pony Bridge, at 3 miles, crosses the river over a narrow, picturesque gorge lined with maidenhair ferns.

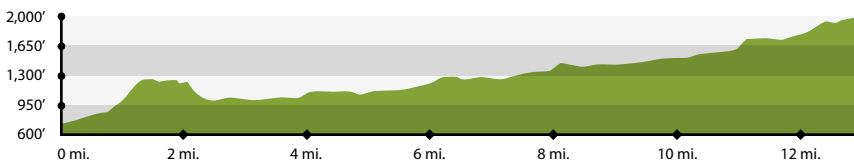
The trail continues over a series of ups and downs while paralleling the river. Large firs, spruce, alders and maples line the way. Be on alert for wildlife sightings in between the trees. Just past O'Neil Creek, at 6.7 miles, is O'Neil Creek Camp. The trail ahead crosses numerous streams including No Name Creek and Pyrites Creek, at 8 and 9.5 miles, respectively. There are a few campsites near Pyrites Creek. Use caution when crossing Pyrites Creek.

The trail continues climbing to the Quinault River Bridge at 12.5 miles. Once across, the trail meanders into the charming Enchanted Valley at 13 miles. In early summer, countless waterfalls stream down the sheer walls of valley. Bears are common in the valley area, so store your food properly at all times.

Enchanted Valley Chalet: Built in the 1930s, this beloved building is threatened by the migrating East Fork River. It might best be visited sooner, rather than later.



Photos by Eli Boschetto



ENCHANTED VALLEY

DISTANCE: 26 miles, round trip

ELEVATION GAIN: 1,330 feet

ELEVATION PEAK: 2,000 feet

PERMIT: Olympic Wilderness Permit

DOGS: Not permitted

MAP: Green Trails 166: Mount Christie

TRAILHEAD

DIRECTIONS: From Hoquiam travel north on US 101 for 35 miles. Turn right on South Shore Road. Continue for 13.5 miles to a junction at the Quinault River Bridge. Make a right turn, following for 6.2 miles to the end of the road.

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/enchanted-valley

HISTORIC LODGE: Visit the Lake Quinault Lodge for cozy rooms and tasty comfort meals.

Hike by
Kelsie Donleycott



HIKE: Sherman Point

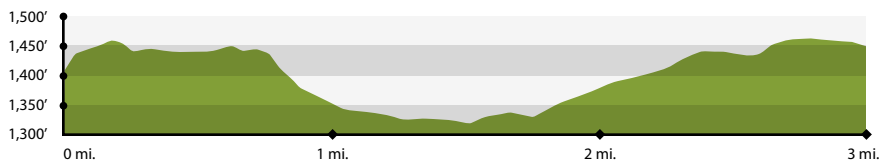
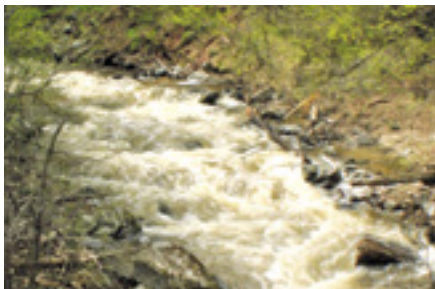
Colville National Forest

Easy access and a gentle grade make this a great wildlife-viewing hike for all ability levels.

The Sherman Creek Wildlife Area consists of more than 9,000 acres co-managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service for whitetail deer winter range. Begin the hike by crossing the old Mellenberger Bridge (misspelled Malenberger on the trail sign) in front of the parking area, with Sherman Creek cascading over the rocks far below. Once across, the hike begins on an abandoned roadbed. Trail signs, installed as part of an Eagle Scout project, lead the way to the Sherman Point Trail.

Turn left at the sign and follow the trail to several overlooks along Lake Roosevelt. Watch for weathered National Park Service markers on the trees and the sign pointing out an old ferry landing across from the mouth of the Colville River, a nice spot to pause for a picnic or try your fishing luck. Farther along the trail, a sign points out the striking Reed Slide Overlook with its sand cliffs gradually giving way to the forces of water and gravity. Whitetail deer abound, and near the water, one can sometimes glimpse bald eagles roosting in the trees or gliding over the lake. As the trail returns inland, watch for the sign pointing out the return route on the right just before reaching the irrigated fields (managed as part of the winter forage for the resident wildlife).

Look For: Whitetail deer, mule deer, bald eagles, turkeys, waterfowl and songbirds.



SHERMAN POINT

DISTANCE: 3 miles, round trip

ELEVATION GAIN: 200 feet

ELEVATION PEAK: 1,475 feet

PERMIT: Discover Pass

DOGS: Leashed

MAP: USGS: Bangs Mountain

TRAILHEAD

DIRECTIONS: From the Columbia River crossing heading west on SR 20, drive just over 2 miles to the Sherman Creek Fish Hatchery on Mellenberger Road. Turn left and drive a little over a mile to the parking area in front of the bridge.

INFO: wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/sherman_creek

NEARBY: Northern Ales Brewery in Kettle Falls



Hike and photos by
Holly Weiler



HIKE: Puffer Butte

Blue Mountains

Hike to a piney butte in Washington's rugged and isolated southeastern corner, surveying flowered slopes for coyotes, badgers, elk and wild turkeys.

Puffer Butte is located in Fields Spring State Park at the eastern edge of the Blue Mountains, teetering high above the sweltering Grande Ronde River Valley. The Puffer family, who homesteaded the area, frequently drove their cattle to the top of this butte when they observed Nez Perce peoples travel through the canyon below.

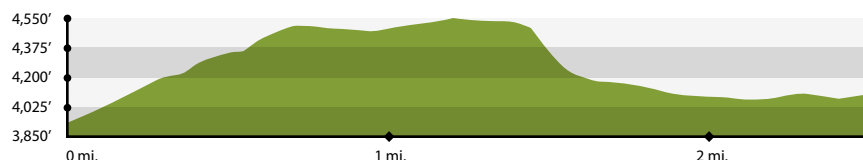
The trail begins in a forest of mature conifers with a lush understory of maple. At 0.2 mile continue right at a junction—you'll be returning on the left. Now start ascending, keeping your senses tuned for wildlife. Grouse and wild turkeys are profuse—and you'll probably be flushing them out of the brush.

Shortly after crossing a couple of service roads (doubling for ski trails in winter), reach a junction at 1 mile with a short spur bearing right to Puffer's wooded, viewless 4,500-foot summit. The views are ahead, so continue 0.2 mile to a sprawling meadow flush with wildflowers. Stare out across the Grande Ronde Canyon to Oregon's sky-piercing Wallowa Mountains, and east to Idaho's Craig Mountains hovering above the massive Snake River Canyon.

Of course, watch for wildlife too. Elk, deer and coyotes are abundant on these grassy slopes. The trail continues north, descending into the forest and reaching the Puffer Butte Lodge Environmental Learning Center. From here take the Spotted Bear Trail back to the main trail, from where it's 0.2 mile back to the trailhead.



TRAIL KEY		Rivers		Family Friendly
		Summits		Dog Friendly
		Viewpoints		Camping Available
		Wildlife		WTA Worked Here



PUFFER BUTTE

DISTANCE: 2.5 mile loop
ELEVATION GAIN: 600 feet
ELEVATION PEAK: 4,550 feet
PERMIT: Discover Pass
DOGS: Leashed
MAP: State Park Map

TRAILHEAD

DIRECTIONS: From Clarkston, drive south on SR 129 for 30.5 miles to Fields Spring State Park. Turn left into park and continue straight for 0.5 mile to the trailhead.

INFO: *Day Hiking: Eastern Washington* by Craig Romano

CAMPING: Spend the night in the park's small, quiet campground listening to owls and coyotes.

Hike and photo* by
 Craig Romano





Loowit Trail



Oftentimes, hiking an epic, life-list trail is an exercise in planning and logistics. Not so with the Loowit Trail around Mount St. Helens. This 30-mile loop (not including connector trails) around Washington's renowned volcano can be done in as little as a long weekend, and offers hikers a chance to venture into a primal landscape, violently touched by nature.

Trailheads: Accessing the Loowit Trail can be done from six primary trailheads around the mountain, each with its own advantages depending on where you're traveling from. From **Johnston Ridge** at the end of Spirit Lake Highway (SR-504), the loop can be accessed by a 6.1-mile connection using the Boundary and Truman Trails. The views of Mount St. Helens along this connector are stellar. On the east side, the Loowit Trail can be accessed via a 3-mile leg of the Truman Trail from the **Windy Ridge Viewpoint** on Road 25. Logistically, this is the best point for starting and finishing the loop. On the south side of the mountain, there are three trailheads: **Redrock Pass**, **Climber's Bivouac** and **June Lake**. The former starts from Road 8100 and climbs a healthy 1,700 feet over 3.6 miles, passing Butte Camp Dome; the latter two are the shortest, perhaps easiest, connectors from large trailhead areas on Roads 830 and 83, respectively. These 2.1- and 1.7-mile connectors climb gently through forest to connect to the Loowit Trail. From the trailhead at **Blue Lake** on the west side, a 4-mile connector climbs along Sheep Canyon.

The Trail: The Loowit Trail is not your typical jaunt through a Cascades forest. You will be circumnavigating a harsh landscape recently pummelled by one of nature's most powerful forces. And what the trail lacks in distance (in comparison to the longer Wonderland loop), it more than makes up for in challenges and in-your-face mountain views. You'll traverse wide plains of volcanic cinders dotted with lava bombs, scramble over rough and rocky lava flows and ford swollen streams and rivers cascading down from high snowfields and young glaciers.

Logistics: In addition to the exposure and challenging terrain around the flanks of Mount St. Helens, there are also a few restrictions to hikers. The 11-mile stretch traversing the Blast Zone, between Windy Pass and the South Fork Toutle River, is off-limits for camping. This makes starting at Windy Ridge on a counter-clockwise route one of the best options. Hikers must also stick to the trail. No off-trail travel is permitted. Suggested camping areas near reliable water can be found on the west side near Sheep Canyon, the south side near June Lake and the east side near Ape Canyon.

WATER TIP:

Access to water on the Loowit Trail is extremely limited. There are numerous streams flowing off the mountain, but many of them can dry up by mid-summer. Those that do keep running may not be safe to drink. If the water is milky-white, it means there is a high ash content (silica and other minerals), which can be harmful if ingested. Look for water that is running clear to top off your bottles for drinking. If you're pressed to use an unfavorable water source, filter it several times, including once through a folded bandana or shirt to remove as much of the suspended mineral content as possible. And carry lots of water, as there may be long stretches between sources.

BITS & PIECES

The 30-mile Loowit Trail can be hiked in as little as two days, making it an ideal weekend or long weekend getaway. For single-day trips, shorter trails visit some of the Loowit Trail's highlights.



HIKE: LOOWIT FALLS

DISTANCE: 9.2 miles **ELEVATION GAIN:** 800 ft.

From the Windy Ridge Viewpoint, descend on the Truman Trail to the stark Plains of Abraham to pick up the Loowit Trail west. The route contours the lower flanks of the mountain, below the gaping crater above. At a junction, take the left fork for a short climb up the Sasquatch Steps to the Loowit Falls viewpoint. Because of the unstable nature of volcanic terrain, the Loowit Creek Canyon, including the falls, is constantly changing. As the slopes continue to erode, Loowit Falls may get larger, or eventually disappear. Loowit Falls can also be accessed from the Boundary Trail at Johnston Ridge. This option is a 15-mile round trip.



HIKE: APE CANYON

DISTANCE: 11 miles **ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,400 ft.

This view-packed day hike begins at the end of Road 83 near Lava Canyon. The trail climbs steadily through one of the remaining stands of old-growth forest on Mount St. Helens. As you gain elevation, wide views taking in Mount Adams and Mount Rainier open up. At the crest of the trail, near the junction with the Loowit Trail, is the narrow slot of Ape Canyon—named so for the mysterious creature once sighted in the area in 1924. Wander north on the Loowit, across plains of light-colored cinders, with huge views of Mount St. Helens eastern flanks, where colorful summer wildflowers dot the barren landscape.

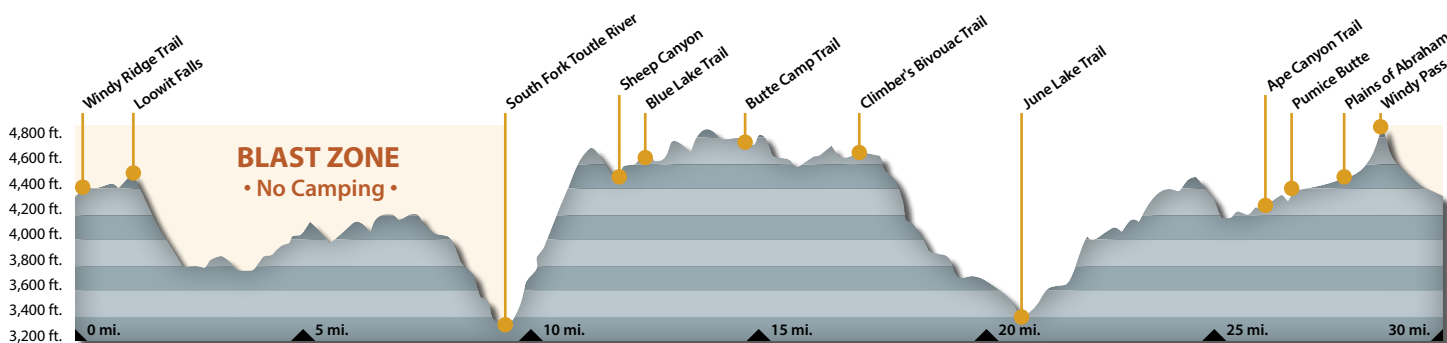


BACKPACK: LOOWIT TRAIL

DISTANCE: 30+ miles **ELEVATION GAIN:** 5,900 ft.

The Loowit Trail can be hiked from any number of connecting trailheads, in either clockwise or counter-clockwise direction. Plan your itinerary with specific overnight locations in mind in order to best manage the 11-mile camping restriction through the Blast Zone. Because of its exposure, with little vegetation, the Loowit Trail is constantly eroding and evolving. Carry a map and compass, and look for cairns and other markers leading the way. A detour has been established in the Sheep Canyon area where a recent washout took out a large portion of the trail. Take advantage of water sources, and use lots of sun protection.

PHOTOS: Opposite by Orion Ahrensfeld; Bits: Left by Jim Cummins; Center, right and lower by Eli Boschetto



Loowit Trail Stats

DISTANCE: 30-mile loop + 1.7 to 6.1-mile access

HIGHEST POINT: Windy Pass at 4,900 ft.

LOWEST POINT: South Fork Toutle River at 3,300 ft.

TRIP TIME: 2 to 4 days

BEST SEASON: June through October

MAPS: Green Trails 364S

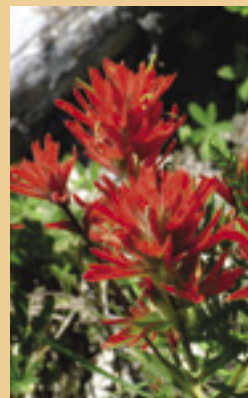
PERMITS: NW Forest Pass for trailhead parking

INFORMATION: www.fs.usda.gov/activity/mountsthelens/recreation/hiking

CLIMATE: With most of the trail fully exposed and dry, summer days can be quite warm and often windy, while nights can get cold. Pack layers, wear a hat and sunscreen, and stay hydrated.

WILDLIFE: Watch for snakes, lizards and small mammals scurrying about and sunning themselves on the rocks. Elk herds often roam the plateaus on the north side.

GUIDEBOOK: *Backpacking Washington* by Douglas Lorain provides a detailed description of the Loowit and adjoining Mount Margaret loop trails.





SEVEN REGIONS. SEVEN EXPERTS. SEVEN MINUTES. GO!

Take a fast, fun tour of hiking opportunities across Washington, meet fellow hikers and get tons for trail info. In honor of the **50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act** all of the featured regions this year will be wilderness.

June 4 at the Seattle REI

Doors open at 6 p.m. Event starts at 6:30 p.m.
Event is free but preregistration is required

RSVP at wta.org/hikethestate



IT'S LIKE SPEED DATING.
FOR TRAILS!

