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Get Out, Give Back: Washington Trails Association Celebrates 20th Annual Hike-a-Thon

SEATTLE — Washington Trails Association (WTA) is celebrating the 20th anniversary of Hike-a-Thon, a community fundraiser where hikers support WTA by spending time outdoors. Throughout the month of August, Hike-a-Thoners hike, walk, run, and backpack to raise funds that directly support trails in Washington, all while sharing their stories with the hiking community.

“Since 2003, Hike-a-Thon has brought hikers together around a shared love for trails,” said WTA CEO Jaime Loucky. “WTA is a nonprofit organization that’s powered by hiker support. Funds raised by Hike-a-Thoners go right back into our work to build a sustainable, inclusive, and thriving future for trails in Washington — from leading crews to take care of trails across the state, to advocating for funding for public lands in congress, to helping youth get outdoors through our Outdoor Leadership Training program for educators. I can’t think of a better example of hikers coming together to give back to trails across the state.”

Hike-a-Thoners can register any time in July or August. It’s free to participate, and anyone who raises $25 or more receives a Hike-a-Thon 2023 t-shirt. Participants customize their own fundraising webpage (hosted by WTA) and share the page with friends, family and anyone else wanting to support trails in Washington. Hikers can participate individually or as a team, and can raise one-time donations or dollar amount pledges per mile or per hike.

“I’m a proud Hike-a-Thoner, and so are most of our Board members,” said WTA Board President Matt Martinez. “It’s such a unique fundraiser because it enables our community to support WTA while doing what we love: Spending time outdoors!”

Hike-a-Thon is open to everyone regardless of age, hiking experience, or time spent in Washington. WTA encourages first-time Hike-a-Thoners to join in the fun. All you need to do is sign up and get outside at least once in August.

“The Northwest hiking community itself is great, but the Hike-a-Thon community takes that greatness to a new level,” said Mai Ling Slaughter, a Hike-a-Thoner since 2019. “These are members who are giving back to make sure trails exist for everyone, and for years to come. It’s a commitment not only to paying it forward, but also to making our amazing trail system more valuable by using it wisely and sharing its beauty with the world.”
“It’s a great opportunity to meet new people and find new trails to explore,” said Gillian Callison, who has participated since 2016. “Especially great when you’re new to hiking. There are lots of people in the community with helpful tips and tricks.”

“I love how supportive everyone is of each other,” said Hike-a-Thoner Lu, age 12, who has participated already for five years in a row in the “Under 13” category. “The entire community really just wants to see everyone succeed and reach their goals.”

Longtime Hike-a-Thoners Scott and Deeann Means have been participating for more than a decade.

“It is fun to belong to a group of people working to achieve a challenging goal — especially when it is for a great cause,” they shared together.

Prizes are awarded to individuals and teams in numerous categories — such as number of miles hiked, amount of money raised, and number of trips reports posted on WTA’s online Hiking Guide or Trailblazer App.

WTA invites everyone to sign up for Hike-a-Thon and get outside and give back to trails. Register at https://give.wta.org/campaign/hike-a-thon-2023/c488241.

About Washington Trails Association
Washington Trails Association (WTA) is the nation’s largest state-based hiking and trail-maintenance nonprofit. Our mission is to mobilize hikers and everyone who loves the outdoors to explore, steward and champion trails and public lands. We have a 50-year legacy of engaging the hiking community to ensure Washington’s trails stand the test of time. With more than 26,000 members and an online community of over 300,000 and growing, we are connecting people to the outdoors — from everyday adventures to backcountry explorations. Each year, 4,500 WTA volunteers perform over 160,000 hours of trail maintenance across the state. We mobilize hikers as public lands advocates, trail stewards, and on-the-ground experts sharing knowledge with fellow hikers. WTA’s strength is our community and our vision depends on fostering an inclusive organization where everyone feels welcome and represented. Together we can ensure there are trails for everyone, forever. Learn more www.wta.org.