

Spokane Weekend • Warm Wear • Winter Trails

# Washington TRAILS

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

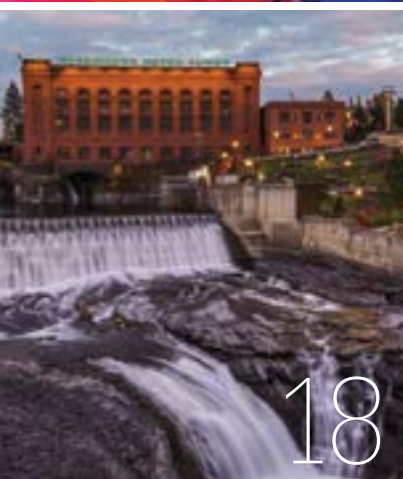
## Northwest Exposure!

Jan+Feb 2015





10



18



26



28

**Jan+Feb 2015**

## NW Explorer

### Meet Beautiful Existence

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### Your Northwest Exposure 2015 calendar is inside!

See all the winning photos of last year's photo contest. Plus, get tips on Leave No Trace, trail courtesy and more to help you, and others, have a great year of hiking.

# 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 wildlands 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.*

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**Owner & Publisher**  
WASHINGTON TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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## An Ancient Call for a Modern Need

*During the production of this issue of Washington Trails, Executive Director Karen Daubert was on a life-list trip to trek in the mountains of Nepal. The following is a guest message from WTA's board president, Stephen Tan.*

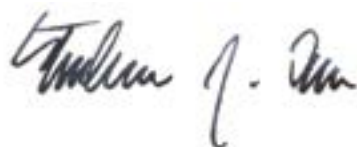
In 2003, amateur archaeologists on a volcano in southern Italy discovered human footprints. Laid down and fossilized in ash and pumice some 345,000 years ago, the prints track in opposite directions, indicating the oldest-known human footprints on the oldest-known human trail.

The notion that our existence and our footpaths are equally ancient is hardly a revelation. For as long as humans have roamed the earth, we've looked to others to show the way. Some explorer, pioneer or wanderer sets a course, and we follow. That's our nature.

Of course, these days we do most of our following in ways that would bewilder our volcano-walking ancestors: on asphalt roads, steel rails and airborne flight paths. We appreciate these conveniences and all the things that allow us to live our modern lives. But progress can stir a need for simplicity. It can drive us to seek out experiences so elemental we find it difficult to explain why we do so.

That need is part of our nature too. We pay a price when we ignore its call, and even then that call resonates through our lives and our culture. Many of our most enduring stories and traditions document our journeys to answer it. A prince in south-central Asia sheds his royal comforts, settles in under a fig tree and awaits enlightenment; a writer from Boston finds the pace of 1840s America so overwhelming he flees to a nearby pond; a recent Emory graduate meanders west, burns his cash and walks into the Alaskan bush with little more than a rifle, a sack of rice and a few Jack London novels. These actions can seem by turns extreme, self-indulgent, idealistic or out of touch. Still, we understand.

At Washington Trails Association, our work is rooted in that common understanding. We build trails, maintain them, promote them and speak for them. As we enter a new year, we're renewing our commitment to this core work and laying the groundwork for a new strategic plan. We're exploring how to make our trails more broadly accessible to those who have yet to discover them. We're improving our online presence and searching for other ways to strengthen our community of hikers and trail users and to better connect with our members. We do this work in service of a primitive need we all share. It is our calling, to help you answer yours.




### WTA Wraps Up 2014:

**TOP:** WTA Executive Director Karen Daubert presented to Gov. Jay Inslee and others at the 50th anniversary of the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office. The RCO supports trail projects throughout Washington.

**MIDDLE:** In December, WTA hosted its annual Seattle Hiker Potluck. We were joined by Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, and Washington State Parks, to discuss priorities for trails and recreation in 2015.

**BOTTOM:** Lee Young (left) and Craig Jackson were inducted into WTA's Crosscut Saw Club in recognition of completing their 500th trail work party.

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

### ***Fantastic Photographers***

*In the middle of this issue, you will find your Northwest Exposure 2015 calendar. Inside, we present the winners of the 2014 Northwest Exposure photo contest. We've also included some helpful trail tips, WTA event dates—including the third annual Washington Trails Day—and some other useful dates and info. We hope you find this calendar helpful in planning your year of hiking and other activities.*

*While we only get to select and showcase 15 winning photos in the calendar (and another 10 of my personal picks; one below, the rest on pgs. 16–17), we will be utilizing many more of your contest photo submissions in the coming year to help us illustrate the amazing hiking opportunities and wilderness areas that Washington has to offer. In addition to these photos, we rely on the generous contributions of photographers—both novice and pro—to help us fill photo needs for our magazine and website.*

*Whether you're a contest participant or a photo contributor, we thank each and every one of you for supporting trails by way of your camera lens and creative vision. If you're interested in joining the Washington Trails photography team, send an email to [editor@wta.org](mailto:editor@wta.org).*

EDITOR'S CHOICE: "RRRRRRPP!" (That's "EEEEEP!" with a mouthful), by Jacqueline Kajdzik



## SIGNPOST

Eli Boschetto

[editor@wta.org](mailto:editor@wta.org)

## Just Go

*"Go Big or Go Home!"*

Several years ago, a popular outdoor publication (that I still occasionally write for) contacted me and asked what my biggest hiking accomplishment was. At the time, it was having hiked a 130-mile section of California's John Muir Trail. I had intended to hike the entire thing, but got sick along the way and had to end early. Knowing the kind of uber-hikers this publication usually profiles, I felt my own accomplishment paled in comparison. But it was mine, and I was proud of what I did.

Just before this issue went to press, the energy food company Clif Bar released a statement saying that they would no longer be sponsoring extreme climbers. Their rationale for changing their stance on extreme athletes was one of recognizing responsibility and not promoting exceptionally dangerous forms of recreation. In their statement they explain, "This responsibility extends to adventurers of all types—climbers, outdoor enthusiasts, [and] children." This was a bold move on their part, and it caused quite a stir in the climbing community.

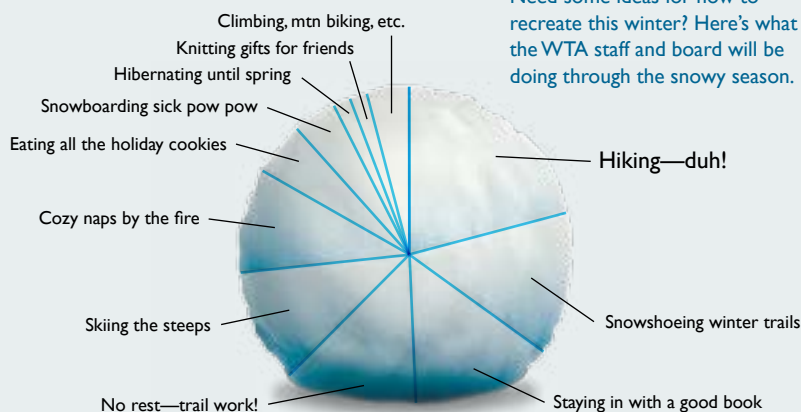
I applaud Clif Bar for their decision. It shows that—contrary to the modern hype of biggest, fastest, longest, highest—you don't have to go to the extreme (or put your life at risk!) to appreciate and enjoy outdoor experiences. You can find accomplishment and satisfaction in any adventure, from a moderate dayhike to a weekend backpack. You simply have to make it your own—and there's value in that.

~~*"Go Big or Go Home!"*~~

*"Just Go!"*

## WTA STAFF PICKS: Winter Activities

Need some ideas for how to recreate this winter? Here's what the WTA staff and board will be doing through the snowy season.



# WTA Starts Big in 2015

WTA is kicking off the new year with a huge **"THANK YOU"** to all who helped us reach our 2014 fundraising goal! We're thrilled to report that members contributed more than \$100,000 to trails during our year-end fundraising campaign. Your support will make it possible for WTA to tackle exciting new projects in 2015, like much-needed work on the Larch Lakes Loop in the Entiat Mountains and new trail projects on Antoine Peak near Spokane, Squak and Taylor Mountains near Seattle and at Vancouver Lake in Vancouver.

Support from individuals like you accounts for more than half of WTA's annual income. Thank you for doing your part to protect the trails you love! Learn more at [wta.org/support](http://wta.org/support).

## NEW APPLICATION FOR YOUTH VACATIONS

**Exciting News!** WTA is unveiling a new registration process for our Youth Volunteer Vacations on Jan. 30, 2015.



To make youth vacation opportunities more accessible to every teenager who is interested in getting out and pitching in on Washington's trails, WTA is implementing a new application-based registration system. This new system will not only reduce the stress of the February registration frenzy but will also help to ensure that each of our youth vacations are as safe, fun and productive as they can be.

Learn more at  
[wta.org/teens](http://wta.org/teens)

From the cliffs of Cape Horn to the oak woodlands near White Salmon, trails in the Columbia River Gorge will receive more attention from WTA volunteer crews this year thanks to a grant from the National Forest Foundation. Construction on a new connector trail across this meadow at Coyote Wall begins in February.



New trail coming here!

Photo by Ryan Ojerio



## Inaugural Leadership Summit for WTA's Youth Ambassadors

To kick off the third year of WTA's Youth Ambassador Program, 12 teenage participants from all over the state joined in our inaugural Youth Ambassador Summit. The ambassador program trains youth volunteers to promote WTA volunteer opportunities to their peers. The weekend-long event last November included sessions on the history of WTA, tips and tricks for starting outdoor clubs and suggestions for introducing more youth to trails in 2015.

When asked why it is important for young people to get outside, Dorothy, 17, from Seattle, mentioned the transformative experience she had on her Youth Volunteer Vacation at Jade Lake. "I didn't even know that type of experience existed until I got out and did [it]," she says. "I think it's important for kids to get outside so they discover things they didn't know were possible [and] didn't know existed—and [so] they can find things they love to do outside."

Another ambassador at the summit, Hannah, 18, from Anacortes, shared: "Volunteering is important to me because it offers me a chance to experience a real-world thing that I'm really interested in. Before my trips, I wasn't exposed to the hiking community like I am now. I think it's definitely a lifelong thing that I want to stay involved with."

During the summit, each ambassador was challenged to take on several WTA-related projects during the school year, such as organizing a volunteer event, attending Hiker Lobby Day or developing an outdoor lesson for use on future Youth Volunteer Vacations. WTA's youth program will continue fostering these ambassadors for more great results in 2015.

To learn more about WTA's Youth Ambassador Program, contact Andrea Martin at [andrea@wta.org](mailto:andrea@wta.org).

## OLT KICKS OFF 2015 WORKSHOPS

Do you dream about taking your class or youth group on a hiking or camping trip? Make it happen this year! WTA will lend you free outdoor gear and provide trip funding. Get started by signing up for one of the 2015 Outdoor Leadership Training workshops.

Visit [wta.org/olt](http://wta.org/olt) for more information.

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*The hard work and effort that goes into trail maintenance with WTA has really taught me a lot about determination and how to accomplish large goals. As I have climbed through the ranks, from a novice volunteer to a trained and experienced ambassador, my confidence in myself has grown dramatically. My love for the outdoors can be mostly attributed to WTA and its amazing members.*

— Elise Still

# New Fund Will Have a Big IMPACT on Trails



*When people contribute to the Impact Fund they'll know that they are making possible new projects that are beyond the day-to-day. Projects supported through the fund will make significant strides toward achieving WTA's mission.* — Craig McKibben

For Craig McKibben and Sarah Merner, exploring the outdoors is a family affair. Spend a few minutes with Craig, and it won't be long before you hear about amazing hikes with his wife Sarah and their three children. His

adventurous spirit has led him to hike in Alaska, South America and Nepal. Closer to home, many of his favorite trails start in the Methow Valley.

Since Craig and Sarah retired, they have been giving careful thought to the legacy they'll leave for future generations of hikers. It has been especially important to them to invest in an organization with a mission that is close to their hearts—and with a strong track record of success.

With these goals in mind, Craig and Sarah have just established the **IMPACT FUND** at WTA. We're honored that they selected WTA for this transformative contribution. The Impact Fund will support special projects, like maintaining high-priority trails and creating new trail systems.

Whether it's responding to flood damage or taking advantage of a new opportunity to expand advocacy or education programs, the IMPACT FUND will be there to help WTA move quickly. In 2015 Craig and Sarah's support will help WTA repair trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness.

Craig and Sarah hope that through their gift and the contributions of others, the Impact Fund will grow to more than \$2 million within three years.

Learn more about leaving your own legacy for trails at [wta.org/legacy](http://wta.org/legacy).



WTA's Krista Dooley and Andrew Pringle joined staff from nine other organizations at the inaugural National Summit of the Outdoors Empowered Network in Oakland, CA. WTA is a founding affiliate of the network, which works to seed and support programs getting youth outdoors through leadership training and gear libraries.



## BREAKING NEWS:

# Alpine Lakes Expansion Passes

The long wait is over! Just as this issue was wrapping up to go to press, the Senate passed the Alpine Lakes Wilderness and Pratt and Middle Fork Snoqualmie Rivers Protection Act (H.R. 361 / S. 112), marking the full passage of the bill by Congress.

Since 2007, WTA and hikers have supported the Alpine Lakes extension, designed to protect 22,000 acres adjacent to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. This effort was joined by many of our partners, including The Wilderness Society, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance and Middle Fork Coalition and Washington Wild.

The victory comes just at the end of the 50th anniversary year of the Wilderness Act. "For everyone in Washington state who cherishes our incredible wild spaces, this is a truly historic day," said Sen. Patty Murray.

"This isn't simply about protecting the natural treasures we love; it's about passing them along to our children, our grandchildren and generations of Washingtonians to come."

Sen. Murray worked tirelessly to get it over the finish

line in the Senate. The House had already voted and passed the bill, which was included in the National Defense Authorization Act along with other land protection measures from Washington, including the Illabot Creek Wild and Scenic River Act.

Passage of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness additions bipartisan bill comes seven years after its first

introduction by Sen. Patty Murray and Rep. Dave Reichert. Both have been stalwart champions for protecting the low- and mid-elevation forests of the Pratt and Middle Fork Snoqualmie river valleys for future generations to hike, camp and snowshoe along the valley floors. Sen. Maria Cantwell and Rep. Suzan DelBene have also been strong supporters and cosponsors of the bill.

The legislation expands the popular Alpine Lakes Wilderness and protects 10 miles of the Pratt River and 30 miles of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River.



■ Existing Wilderness Area    ■ Expanded Wilderness Area  
■ Mixed County, State and National Forest Lands

## We extend our thanks to WTA's Corporate Partners

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Hilleberg • Seven Hills Running Shop  
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To find out how your company can support WTA's work for trails, please call us at (206) 625-1367 or email [kate@wta.org](mailto:kate@wta.org).

# Revolutionize Your Life With an Outdoor Challenge

ONE INSPIRING WOMAN SHOWS YOU HOW | by cassandra overby



## Sport: Backpacking

Goal Date: Thanksgiving

- ☒ Find place to backpack
- ☐ Buy pass for trailhead
- ☐ Inventory boys' hiking backpacks
- ☐ Ask friends and family for backpacking gear
- ☐ Pick up food supplies

### NEED:

- ☒ First-aid kit
- Flashlights/Headlamps
- MAP!

- sea kayaking
- trailcross
- orienteering
- rafting
- ~~hiking~~?

- rope climbing
- mountaineering
- paragliding
- bicycle racing
- canoeing

- bouldering
- race walking
- backpacking
- ziplining
- rowing

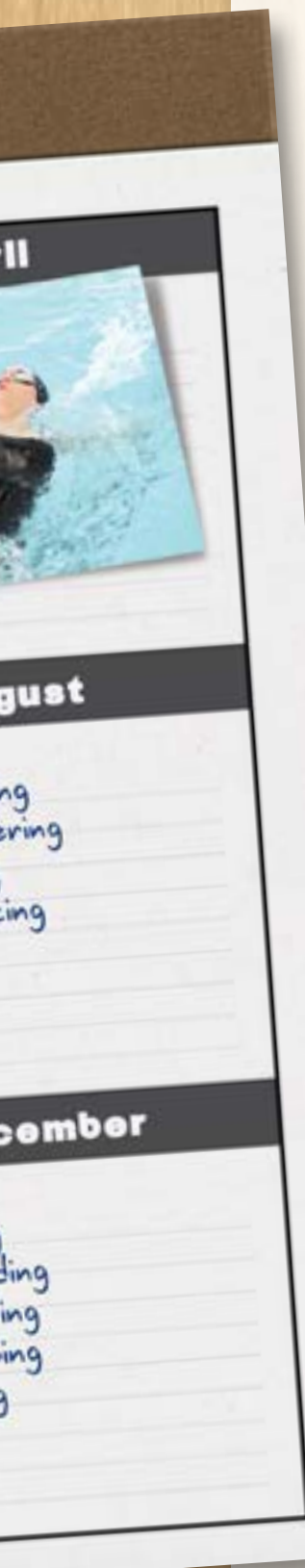
- ski biking
- dog sledging
- skiboarding
- ice climbing
- creek fishing



**D**o you have trouble keeping your New Year's resolutions? Maybe you're thinking too small.

Whether it's to get outside more, hike farther or discover new trails, there's a cure for the common New Year's resolution. It's a big, bold, audacious yearlong challenge.

Think it can't be done? *Meet Beautiful Existence.*



**W**e first learned of Beautiful Existence (yes, that's her legal name) and her signature yearlong challenges in early 2014, as she set out to spend the year trying every sport that REI offers gear for. In the process, she revolutionized her relationship with the outdoors, transformed her family dynamics for the better and spent an enviable number of days outside. And did we mention that she accomplished all of it as a full-time student, part-time employee and single mom to two active boys, ages 4 and 14?

"If I can be dedicated to the outdoors, anyone can do it," Existence says. Her journey shows you how.

### *Identify Your Passions*

For Existence, the first step toward her successful yearlong challenge happened long before 2014 ever began. It was the day, four and a half years ago, when she finally identified what she was passionate about—the day her youngest son was born. Existence had just brought a new life into the world and realized that she needed a new, more passionate life of her own to go with it. In the hospital bed, she started scribbling a list of things she had always wanted to do. Shortly thereafter, baby and preteen in tow, she started fearlessly checking things off.

"I didn't intentionally set out to give myself a bucket list to live every single year," she says with a laugh. "But that's what it has become. And I couldn't have designed it any better."

Between that day in 2009 when Existence first

realized what she was passionate about and the day she started the REI adventure, she got plenty of practice in setting—and achieving—big, bold goals. She spent 2011 buying everything (except for groceries) from Goodwill. In 2012, she lived all of the advice from *Parents* magazine. Along the way, she slowly gathered a following for her unique goals, but it wasn't until 2013—and her aim to eat and drink entirely from Starbucks for the year—that she became an international sensation, featured in *USA Today*, the *Huffington Post* and *Good Morning America*.

The media attention brought her more followers than ever before, but it also brought her criticism. Some people didn't understand her name. Others didn't understand her goals. She wasn't deterred. In fact, she was ready for her most involved challenge to date.

### *Eliminate Obstacles in Advance*

Even though Existence was mentally prepared for her outdoor year, she knew there were several big obstacles to successfully completing her goal.

To begin with, she had never spent much time in the outdoors. She'd never trained for a marathon or prepared for an afternoon of dogsledding. She could count the number of times she'd been camping on one hand. There were other obstacles as well. She

**"I was getting to experience something new, something I never would've known about ... sports that I don't think I would have ever tried."**

was on a limited income, had a packed schedule and wanted to include her sons in everything. So she dealt with those obstacles the best way she knew how: by meticulously planning everything.

That meant lots of research, months before even beginning her adventures. Existence immersed herself in the communities she wanted to be a part of, learning as much as possible about each of the sports she wanted to try. She sought out classes, looked for mentors and instructors, and tracked down used sporting equipment. She even wrote down all of the free state and national park days for 2014.

And then she did something she would come to rely on the whole year: she blocked off time for everything in her calendar. Activities were scheduled when they were seasonally appropriate and shorter adventures were planned for early mornings, school nights and weekends. Longer adventures were planned for school holidays; Thanksgiving became a backpacking trip. Existence even started working out with a trainer so she would be ready for a more active lifestyle.

## *Embrace the Change*

And then it was January. It didn't take long before all of the preparations started to pay off and Existence got to try everything she had spent months researching, from snowshoeing to parkour to geocaching.

"I was getting to experience something new, something I never would've otherwise known about," she says. "I got introduced to sports—and introduced my sons to sports—that I don't think I otherwise would have ever tried."

Existence's revelations went beyond the sports she was trying.

"I started connecting with nature and really realizing how much more beautiful our state is than I ever knew. It's easy to forget how beautiful this place is when you get busy and you're a mom. You're going to school and taking kids here and there and entertaining friends in the city and doing stuff. But then you go [outside] and you can hear the birds and smell the forest. It gives you a completely different perspective on the world."

As the months flew by and her time outside multiplied, it wasn't just Existence's perspective on the world that was changing. She also noticed a shift in her family.

**“When you commit to something ... you might be scared of it. You might be second-guessing yourself. But when you [do it] you're never going to regret it. You need to let yourself have those moments to look back on. There has to be a dedication and a determination to really make it happen.”**



"I took my boys with me all the time, everywhere," she says. "Hiking. Snowboarding. For almost everything I did and every sport I tried I had one or both of my boys along. It changed how we spent time together. Instead of staying inside, we'd head out for evenings in the park. We'd go longboarding or skateboarding together."

Existence saw the biggest change in her youngest son, four-year-old Epic, who fell in love with camping and spent five months of the year sleeping in a tent in their living room instead of sleeping in his bed.

"Over the year, I saw less hesitation from them about getting outside and more enthusiasm," she says. "If it's raining, they grab their raincoats now instead of complaining about not wanting to go outside."

One of the family's favorite shared activities is hiking. "Hiking with the boys has been amazing," says Existence. "They love it. And I love getting them out of the city and experiencing new things."

In addition to sharing the yearlong REI challenge with her sons, Existence also used the opportunity to spend time with family and friends who were eager to participate—more so than with any other challenge she'd done. And there was an added benefit to sharing her adventures.

"If you have kids, friends and family that love you, if they see you doing something you're passionate about, it's going to light them up to do something they're passionate about too. It's super contagious to be living a life where you're doing something. It



June



July

- sea kayaking
- ~~trail~~
- orienteering
- rafting
- ~~rock~~ jumping?

August

- rope climbing
- ~~mountain~~
- ~~paragliding~~
- bicycle
- canoe



October



November

- bouldering
- race walking
- backpacking
- ziplining

December

- ski biking
- dog sledding
- skiboarding
- ice climbing

## Craft Your Own Yearlong Outdoor Challenge

- ☐ Set a yearly mileage goal
- ☐ Visit a new trail every week
- ☐ Walk across your city, county, state
- ☐ Spend 10% of your nights outside
- ☐ Set a days-on-trail goal
- ☐ Hike to work every day
- ☐ Backpack an epic trail
- ☐ Go on midweek adventures

Looking for inspiration from others who have set big outdoors goals? Check out [wta.org/gobig](http://wta.org/gobig).

really is. People can hear it, they can see it and they want to be a part of it. And they want to support you in it."

## Be Determined—and Flexible

Even with the support of friends and family, getting outside and trying all of the sports that REI offers gear for was not always easy. There were some days when schedules collided, the kids didn't want to do a certain activity or it poured. At the beginning of the year, Existence had been diagnosed with plantar fasciitis and bone spurs in both heels. Even when everything else was favorable, getting outside still meant moving through the constant, dull ache of being on injured feet. On tough days, it was only her steadfast commitment to her long-term goal—and the belief in what she was accomplishing for herself and her family—that kept her going.

"When you commit to something, it's there," she says. "You might be scared of it, like jumping off of a mountain. You might be second-guessing yourself. But I'm telling you, when you step off that mountain you're never going to regret it. You need to let yourself have those moments to look back on. There has to be a dedication and a determination there to really make it happen."

One of the things Existence learned by facing pain and adversity in her yearlong challenge was to be flexible. Sometimes that required a "no excuses" mentality, like when she was tempted

to call off an adventure because of rain and instead grabbed better rain gear. Sometimes it required having a backup plan, like when paragliding was rescheduled three times because of poor wind conditions. And sometimes it required making a hard—but smart—choice, like when the pain in her feet got so bad when she was attempting to summit Mount Adams that she had to stop hiking and leave that adventure on her bucket list.

Having to be flexible taught her that the aim for a yearlong challenge should never be perfection and that such a grand goal truly is a journey, not a destination.

## Relish Every Victory

Even when things were hard, there were breathtaking, awe-inspiring moments to lean on. Most of those moments were made even sweeter by the setbacks leading up to them, like the paragliding trip that was rescheduled over and over.

"I finally got to go paragliding at the end of August," Existence says. "Even that day, we were up on the mountain for 40 minutes waiting for the wind to turn. And there was a legitimate possibility while we were waiting that I wouldn't get to go yet again. I was

“I can see how people can get addicted to summiting. I didn’t get to achieve that goal—but I will. Every time I look at the snowy Olympics I think, I want to summit one of those mountains.”

starting to get really nervous. But all of that waiting, all of that dedication to rescheduling, was worth it when I jumped off that

mountain. I can’t even begin to tell you how happy I was. It was amazing. It felt like soaring, like being on the Titanic with your arms out in front of the boat.”

By living 2014 as a yearlong challenge, Existence made more heartwarming memories than some people make in a lifetime. All in all, she tried nearly 30 sports: backpacking, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly stroke, cross-country skiing, CrossFit, dog-sledding, freestyle swimming, Frisbee golf, geocaching, hiking, letterboxing, longboarding, mountaineering, mountain biking, parkour, paragliding, rock climbing, sea kayaking, skateboarding, ski biking, slacklining, snowboarding, snowshoeing, stand up paddleboarding, TrailCross, yoga and ziplining. And she honestly can’t pick a favorite.

Luckily, she doesn’t have to. Although this yearlong challenge is drawing to a close and she is on the brink of starting another (this one revolves around music and trying a different instrument every day for a year), many of the new hobbies she gained from her REI adventure—from hiking to mountaineering to yoga—will stay big parts of her life. So will spending time with her kids outdoors. In fact, they’ve already started planning their camping trips for 2015, including one at the popular music festival South by Southwest. Some adventures from this past year remain on Existence’s bucket list, including summiting a mountain.

“I can see how people can get addicted to summiting,” she says. “I didn’t get to achieve that goal—but I will. Every time I look at the snowy Olympics I think, I want to summit one of those mountains.”

Her wishes also go deeper; Existence wants other people to follow in her footsteps. She isn’t talking about living REI for a year like she did but rather getting creative and finding your own way to revolutionize your life.

“This is what I tell my boys,” she says. “You define what you want to do, every single year. If you don’t do it for a living or at school, do it after school, after your job. Just get into it. Is it art? Music? The outdoors? I’m serious. It’s all out there. And whatever excuse or inspiration you give it, whether you’re a blogger or you just like something, really allow yourself to do it. Because once you start doing it and you look back, you’re like holy moly! This is awesome! You owe it to yourself to do what makes you happy.”

If there’s one last piece of advice Existence likes to give people who are just starting a yearlong challenge of their own, it’s to not be ashamed of where you come from and where you start.

“Your 2-mile hike in the Issaquah Alps is just as noteworthy as a person’s in the French Alps,” she says. “It’s absolutely legitimate. It might just be your backyard. It might be the Issaquah Alps. There’s nothing wrong with that. Look at pictures; inspire yourself to one day try and really hike the Alps in Europe. But while you’re here, while you have the feasibility of going 5, 10, 20 minutes away, take what you have. Because it’s where everybody has to start. It’s where you get to start. And there’s beauty in that.”

Whatever you do, just get started and think big. Your existence will be a little more beautiful because of it. ♦





**Your voice really can make a difference for trails, so plan to join WTA at Hiker Lobby Day. No experience is necessary.**

- ◆ Learn how to lobby elected officials.
- ◆ Participate in meetings with representatives.
- ◆ Discuss issues facing public lands.
- ◆ Network with other hikers.

**SPEAK UP FOR TRAILS!**

# **Hiker Lobby Day 2015**

Washington Trails Association is the voice for hikers, but we can't do it without you. Join WTA and hikers from across the state at the eighth annual Hiker Lobby Day on February 24, 2015, in Olympia.

Our elected officials need to know that their constituents—YOU—care about preserving wildlands and protecting funding for public recreation lands. This is an opportunity to make your voice heard. It's also a chance to learn new skills to help you be an even better advocate for trails.

**Join WTA on February 24.**

**Visit [wta.org/hikerlobbyday](http://wta.org/hikerlobbyday)**



# Northwest Exposure

EDITOR'S CHOICE

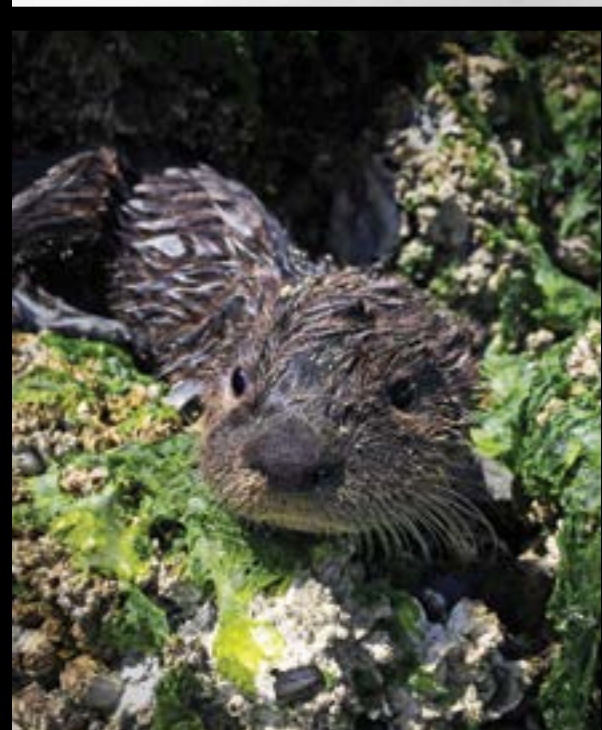
WTA's **2014 Northwest Exposure** photo contest drew in more than 2,000 entries—a record number for our 11th annual contest. The judging this time was especially challenging, as there were so many quality entries in the categories of Trailscapes, Hikers in Action, Flora and Fauna, Offbeat and, newly introduced, Camp Life. You can see the prize-winning photos in the **Northwest Exposure 2015 Calendar** inserted right into this issue.

In addition to the contest winners, we would also like to recognize ten more photos as our Editor's Picks (the 10th photo can be seen on page 5). You will see even more outstanding contest entries in the pages of **Washington Trails** and on **wta.org** throughout the year.

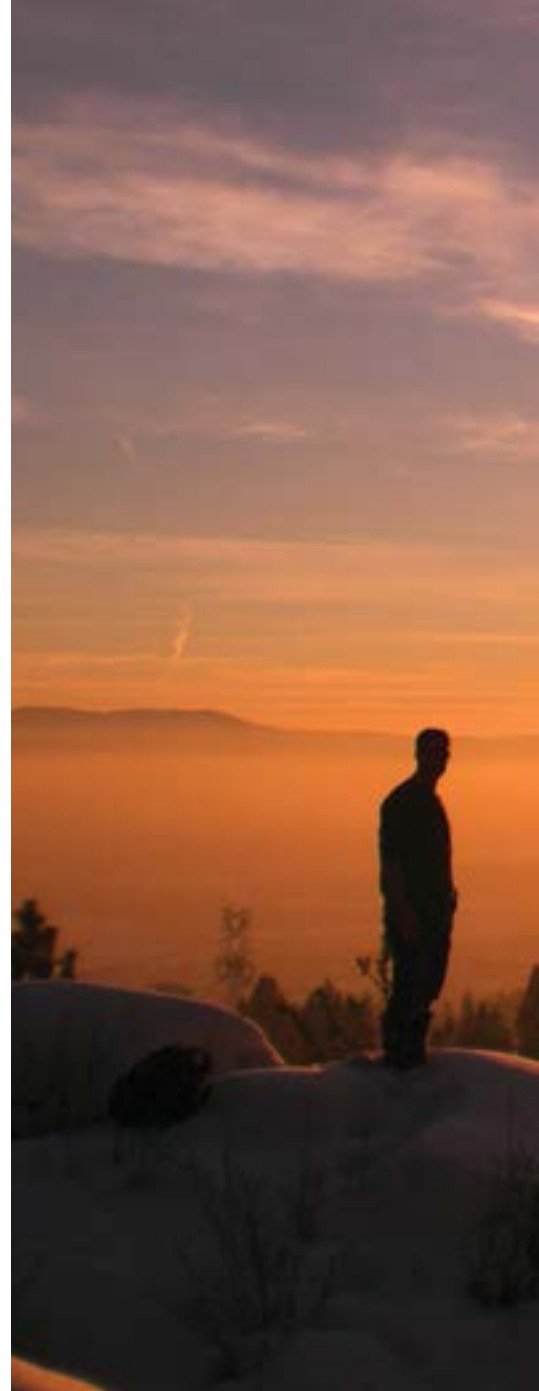
We would like to thank all who entered the 2014 Northwest Exposure contest. Your images help us promote the best that Washington hiking has to offer. We look forward to seeing more of your photos in Northwest Exposure 2015!

**TOP ROW:** Trail Treat, by Kayla Haas | Emmons Glacier Climb, Mount Rainier, by Arnab Banerjee | Frozen, Snake River, by Scott Fitzgerald.  
**MIDDLE ROW:** Starry Night, Mount Rainier, Jack Nichols | Winter Solitaire, Artist Point, by Joel DeWaard | Wonderland, Mount Rainier, by Brad Howard.  
**BOTTOM ROW:** Frozen Sunset, Mount Baker, by Arnab Banerjee | My Significant Otter, by Jason Steinberg | Image Lake, Glacier Peak, by Randall Hodges.





# Winter Trails & Ales



The second most populous city in Washington and the largest city between Seattle and Minneapolis, Spokane has managed to stay off the winter road-trip radar for the outdoors set. But in recent years, tourists have begun to figure out what the locals know: Spokane's tagline of "Near Nature, Near Perfect" is no mean boast. **BY AARON THEISEN**



**A**t the confluence of the arid Columbia Basin, the windswept wheat fields of the Palouse and the westernmost ramparts of the Rockies, Spokane offers world-class winter recreation—whatever your feelings are toward snow. Like it dry? The channeled scablands to the west might only receive a dusting of white stuff each winter. Prefer powder? Area ski resorts frequently rank near the top of North America’s snowpack—north Idaho’s Schweitzer Mountain Resort frequently sees well over 300 inches of snowfall each winter, and Lookout Pass tallies more than a dozen feet of snowpack.

Spokane receives about 4 feet of the white stuff each winter. Its dry climate belies the city’s history as a hub for winter innovators. The Riblet Tramway Company, once the world’s largest ski chairlift company, operated out of Spokane, and the city reared several renowned alpinists, including author John Roskelley. In the epicurean arena, Spokane’s food and brews have begun to receive recognition, too, with James Beard Award recipients opening new

restaurants in Spokane’s revitalized neighborhoods. So the secret’s out, but there’s still plenty of elbow room in the Inland Empire.

**FOODIE FYI:** Since 1990, the prestigious James Beard Awards have recognized culinary professionals for excellence and achievement in their fields to celebrate, preserve and nurture America’s culinary heritage and diversity.

If you’re traveling from any distance to Spokane, you’re probably ready to stretch your legs upon arrival. Begin your inland Northwest sojourn with a snow-free or snowshoe ramble through **Antoine Peak Conservation Area** (1). Purchased by Spokane County as part of its Conservation Futures program—an immensely popular and forward-thinking property tax levy that has preserved more than 7,000 acres of open space in Spokane County—Antoine Peak Conservation Area protects nearly 1,100 acres of rolling fields on the pine- and fir-forested flanks of 3,373-



For family-friendly winter activities, take a stroll along the Centennial Trail in Riverside State Park, or slide down the tubing hill at Mount Spokane Ski Area.

**PREVIOUS PAGE:** Enjoy a winter sunset from Antoine Peak, then warm up with local ales and hand-crafted food at Manito Taphouse.

**NEXT PAGE:** Spokane Falls is a centerpiece of the downtown area; Manito Taphouse prides itself on its use of locally-sourced ingredients; Hit the trails in Mount Spokane State Park.

Photos by Aaron Theisen and Holly Weiler

foot Antoine Peak. Mere minutes from the Spokane Valley Mall, the area provides critical winter habitat for a host of inland Northwest residents, including deer, moose, wild turkeys, turtles and black bears. From the limited-parking east trailhead on Lincoln Road, circumnavigate the peak with nearly 7 miles of mellow trekking. The highlight is a commanding valley vista from the summit—and a view of one of WTA's 2015 signature Eastern Washington projects: an expanded trail system and access from the west side of the conservation area.

Once you've stretched your trail legs, it's time to visit one of Spokane's most popular gastropubs: **Manito Tap House** ([manitotaphouse.com](http://manitotaphouse.com)). Located on Spokane's South Hill (2), Manito is bedecked with reclaimed barn wood on the walls and recycled-metal artwork, while its menus are committed to local flavor: each of the offerings on its pages-long list of 50 rotating taps details the distance the beer traveled from brewery to barstool, and the food menu highlights handcrafted food and plentiful gluten-free and vegan options. Try the carne adovada, braised pork-shoulder tacos garnished with pickled veggies, and order a plate of yam chips while poring over the extensive pours.

Once you've had your fill at the Tap House and are ready to turn down the sheets, head over to Spokane's **downtown district**. In recent years the city has begun to embrace its collection of turn-of-the-20th-century brick and masonry buildings. Once slated for demolition, the renovated **Davenport Hotel** ([davenporthotelcollection.com](http://davenporthotelcollection.com)) anchors Spokane's burgeoning downtown with its Gilded Age grandeur. Whether you retire to the famed pillow-top "Davenport Bed" or somewhere less opulent, the

hotel invites strolling through its history or sipping cocktails in the Peacock Room Lounge.

**HOTEL TIP:** For a budget room in the heart of the Davenport Arts District, check into the Montvale Hotel ([montvalespokanehotel.com](http://montvalespokanehotel.com)) with its funky blend of warm late-1800s wood and contemporary style.

The next morning, before heading to the trails and slopes, meander down Main Street for breakfast at **Santé Charcuterie** ([santespokane.com](http://santespokane.com)). Featuring local growers and tails-to-trotter pork, Santé adds farm-to-table cuisine to Spokane's breakfast scene. Or pick up groceries for the road at the **Main Market Co-Op** ([mainmarket.coop](http://mainmarket.coop)). This old tire-repair-shop-turned-grocer puts an emphasis on local and sustainable foods. For coffee, step next door to **Boots Bakery and Lounge** ([bootsbakery.com](http://bootsbakery.com)) for local brews and baked goods, including a nice selection of gluten-free and vegan treats.



Need gear before heading out? Drop into the downtown **REI** ([rei.com](http://rei.com)) or one of several local outfitters. Just north of downtown, **Mountain Gear** ([mountaingear.com](http://mountaingear.com)), one of the nation's largest mail-order gear retailers, also stocks a vast retail space; on the south end of downtown, tucked into a tiny brick storefront, **Mountain Goat Outfitters** caters, naturally, to the hardcore rock-and-ice climbing community, but has a good selection of hiking gear too.

Once you're fueled and geared up, strap on your snowshoes or Nordic skis at **Mount Spokane State Park** (3). The largest of Washington's state parks, Mount Spokane boasts more than 15 miles of groomed Nordic trails and a vast network of snowshoe trails within 45 minutes of downtown. The best introduction to the mountain is the **Burping Brook Basin** trail system, easily accessed off Mount Spokane Park Drive, less than 2 miles past the park entrance. Start at the **Lower Loop Road Snow-Park** and schuss up the Mount Kit Carson Loop Road 1.3 miles to Smith Gap and a picnic spot. From the Mount Kit Carson Loop Road, several singletrack snowshoe trails branch off into a thick forest of western red cedar and hemlock and allow for a variety of snowshoe loops.

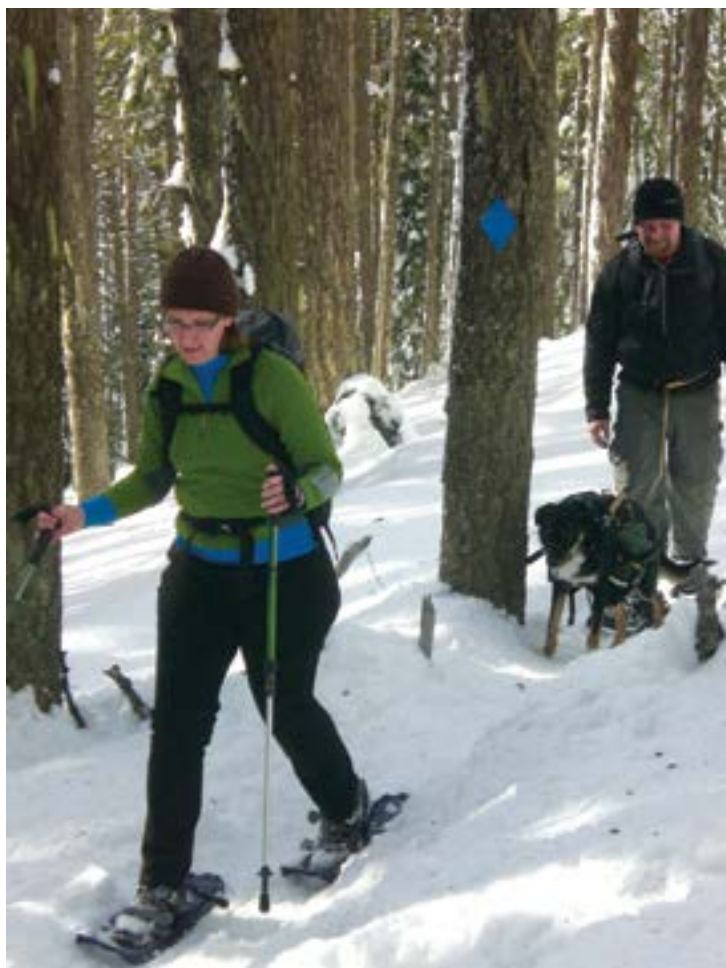
If faster is more your flavor, Mount Spokane is the closest of five ski resorts within 90 miles of Spokane, all with their own character and champions: **Silver Mountain Resort** (4; [silvermt.com](http://silvermt.com)), with deep Silver Valley powder at the end of a scenic 3-mile gondola ride; no-frills **Lookout Pass** (5; [skilookout.com](http://skilookout.com)) on the Idaho/Montana border, with its bountiful Bitterroots powder and backcountry access; the expansive gladed terrain of **49 Degrees North** (6; [ski49n.com](http://ski49n.com)) in northeast Washington; and **Schweitzer Mountain** (7; [schweitzer.com](http://schweitzer.com)) with its high snowpack and haute resort overlooking north Idaho's Lake Pend Oreille. Your best bet: Check the snow forecast and pursue the best powder.

**POWDER PLAY:** Can't decide where to hit the slopes? Check out the latest snow conditions at all of the area resorts at [onthesnow.com](http://onthesnow.com).

Snow stoke sated, return to Spokane for dinner and a beer. The twin brick smokestacks of **Steam Plant Brewing Company & Pub** ([steamplantspokane.com](http://steamplantspokane.com)) are a downtown icon—and so is the 15-year-old small-batch brewery. Poke around the historic boiler room and catwalks before sampling a Double Stack Stout or a seasonal selection. East of downtown, on the edge of the University District and the shore of the Spokane River, one of Spokane's oldest brewpubs, **No-Li Brewhouse** ([nolibrewhouse.com](http://nolibrewhouse.com)) predates the craft-beer craze. Formerly Northern Lights Brewing, a same-name conflict with an East Coast brewer necessitated a name change, but the beers and modern American menu have remained consistently excellent.

On your last day in Spokane, before settling behind the wheel for the drive home, head to **Riverside State Park** (8) for a final snow-free (or snow light) hike. Second in size among Washington's state parks only to its alpine sibling, Riverside features dozens of miles of forested low-elevation trails in a pristine setting just minutes from downtown. Start at the iconic basalt Bowl and Pitcher formation, cross the Spokane River on a sturdy bridge and follow well-worn paths through boulders and big ponderosa pines and Douglas fir. Nearly 60 miles of trail wind through Riverside, as does the 37-mile paved **Centennial Trail**; pick up a trail map and tailor a trip to your energy level.

Washington's second-largest state park, on the edge of Washington's second-largest city, with a riverfront recently ranked as the second best in the nation? Spokane has long played second fiddle to its west-side sibling, but it turns out number two is not a bad place to be. ♦



# Winter

*Just because the days are shorter and the temperature plummets doesn't mean you need to hole up and hibernate through winter. Just bundle up and get outside.*

*Some of the latest offerings in winter outerwear will keep you warm and cozy on your favorite snowy trails, from casual snowshoe strolls to more challenging winter hikes—and even zipping down the ski slopes.*

### **STAYING WARM ON THE TRAIL:**

**Bundle up**—but not too much. It's best to start hiking a little cold, as you'll warm up once you get moving.

**Wear a hat and gloves.** Your body heat escapes through your head, hands and feet. Cover up and keep that heat in.

**Choose synthetic,** sweat-wicking baselayers to stay dry underneath. Wet cotton doesn't dry in the cold.

**Pack a hot drink or soup** in an insulated bottle, and warm yourself up from the inside out when taking breaks.

### **SHOPPING FOR INSULATION WEAR:**

**Shop off-season.** Look for great winter wear deals in the spring or summer and be ready for next winter.

**Take advantage of outlets** and websites that often sell similar previous-season items with big discounts.

**Buy only what you need** for your activity. If you're going snowshoeing, you don't need a mountaineering parka.



Columbia's 890 TurboDown Jacket (left) and Sierra Designs' DriDown Hoody (right) employ hydrophobic down to resist harsh weather and temperatures.

## Down Power

*When it comes to winter warmth-to-weight ratio, nothing beats down. And with many items employing hydrophobic down, these can be effective winter warming layers here in the Northwest. Here are some of our favorites.*

### **RELIABLE:** Sierra Designs DriDown Hoody

This lightweight, no-frills down jacket became a quick favorite with our tester for its exceptional warmth and classic fit (good for layering up on extra-cold outings). A sweet feature is the innovative hood design, that turns into an insulating neck gaiter when the hood is not in use. Plus, the price point makes it an attractive selection for a hydrophobic down jacket. M/W \$199

### **VERSATILE:** Bergans Slingsbyind Jacket

Sleek, lightweight, windproof and water-repellent, the Slingsbyind (pronounced "sh-lings-beh-tinned") will keep you warm and toasty from the snowshoe trails to the upper slopes. When you heat up and need to stash it, it compresses nicely into an integrated stuff-sack pocket. Designed for high-exertion activities, the fit is trim, so size up if you wear extra layers. M/W \$250

### **FASHIONABLE:** Big Agnes Pyramid DownTek Jacket

For the ultimate in trail warmth, look no further than the women's Pyramid Jacket. (Sorry guys, this one is for the ladies.) Its ultra-warmth comes from 850-fill hydrophobic down under a wind- and water-resistant shell specially designed to keep insulation in place. Our tester especially liked the flattering trail-to-town style (though trim, so perhaps size up) and pretty color options. W \$400

# Warm Wear



Bergans Slingsbyind Jacket (left) and Big Agnes' Pyramid Jacket (center) offer athletic cuts for maximum winter performance and versatility.



The North Face's Plasma ThermoBall Jacket (right) insulates and keeps you dry on the trails and the slopes.

## Insulation Alternatives

For alternatives to down, there are numerous options that employ combinations of materials or synthetic fibers. For these, item weight goes up a little, but price usually comes down. Here are some top picks.

### **INNOVATIVE:** Columbia 890 TurboDown Jacket

For reliable warmth both dry and wet, this model outshined all the competition. This is thanks to its combination of Omni-Heat and hydrophobic down insulation, in addition to its heat-reflective inner liner. The TurboDown took top marks with our tester, including bonus points for its flattering fit (women's)—something not generally associated with puffy jackets. M/W \$325

### **CROSSOVER:** SmartWool PhD SmartLoft Hoody

Here's what you get when you cross a puffy jacket with activewear: an insulated shell for perfect temperature regulation during high-output activities. Under the wind- and water-repellent shell is a layer of wool insulation that keeps you warm and purring, even when wet. And the unique, form-fitting design puts more insulation where you need it most and less where you don't. W \$240

### **BOMBPROOF:** The North Face Plasma ThermoBall

A midweight winter coat, the Plasma ThermoBall will keep you just as warm on your favorite snowshoe routes as it will shredding fresh powder down the sickest steepes. The breathable, waterproof exterior stands up admirably to harsh elements—our tester even used it as a rain jacket around town—while the PrimaLoft insulation keeps you warm and dry. M/W \$280

## Choosing an Insulated Jacket

When selecting winter insulation wear, consider the following factors to help you determine what will be the best item for you.

- Type of activity: high-output vs. low-output
- Weather and temperature conditions, rain
- Item fit, ability to layer up/down if needed

Things to consider when shopping for insulating trail wear.

|                      | DOWN | HYDROPHOBIC DOWN | WOOL | SYNTHETIC |
|----------------------|------|------------------|------|-----------|
| Warmth               | ◆◆◆  | ◆◆◆              | ◆◆   | ◆◆        |
| Weight               | ◆◆◆  | ◆◆◆              | ◆◆   | ◆◆        |
| Compressibility      | ◆◆◆  | ◆◆◆              | ◆    | ◆◆        |
| Durability           | ◆◆   | ◆◆               | ◆◆◆  | ◆◆◆       |
| Performance When Wet | ◆    | ◆◆               | ◆◆◆  | ◆◆◆       |
| Drying Time          | ◆    | ◆◆               | ◆◆   | ◆◆◆       |
| Price                | ◆◆   | ◆                | ◆◆   | ◆◆◆       |

◆◆◆ = Best ◆◆ = Good ◆ = Poor

## Heat On Demand

If you're especially prone to being cold on winter trails, here are a few more items you might want to consider. They may seem a bit frivolous, but when it comes to staying warm and comfortable on winter trails, all's fair.

### Heat for the Feet

**ThermaCELL Heated Insoles** are the only insoles on the market with removable, rechargeable batteries and remote control operation. The insoles have three temperature settings that are perfect for adding warmth when you need it: turn it up on the chairlift or eating lunch at the summit; turn it down when hiking, skiing or snowshoeing. It's as easy as pressing the button on the included fob. If chronically frozen feet keep you from enjoying the winter outdoors, this may be your solution. We gave them a try and they were awesome. \$130-\$180



### Keep the Wings Warm

Sometimes you want a little extra without needing to take along a lot of extra. **Pavepara Arm Warmers** are a lightweight addition to the winter wardrobe that you'll love: a no-pinch cuff that stays in place, thumbholes for warmth while wearing gloves and, of course, easy on and off. We especially liked the flexibility they offered during high-intensity activities that let us turn a short-sleeve shirt into a long-sleeve shirt—without having to carry an extra shirt. \$40



### Add Warmth to Your Bag

Want to try winter camping but don't have a winter sleeping bag? Don't buy a new bag, just add a thermal liner. **Sea to Summit's Thermolite Reactor Liners** add 15 to 25 degrees of warmth to your existing sleeping bag. The lightweight, specialized fabric breathes while it warms, ensuring that you stay nice and toasty without overheating. Available in regular, Plus and Extreme models. \$57-\$67



For winter outdoors, start with breathable baselayers from ColdPruf and Icebreaker. And make sure the extremities—head, hands and feet—are covered as well to keep you insulated from the elements.

## The Base-ics

*Keeping warm is not just about what you wear on the outside but also what you wear underneath. A good set of baselayers—top and bottom—will wick away sweat to help keep you warm. And don't forget your hat and gloves.*

### UPPER: ColdPruf Premium Performance Crew

Lightweight and comfortable, this poly-spandex baselayer was a top pick for keeping our tester dry during high-output activities. Flatlock seams ensure there's no rubbing under pack straps, and extra length keeps it tucked in. M/W \$26

### LOWER: Icebreaker Everyday Leggings

This affordable baselayer will keep your lower half warm and dry on any winter outing. Moisture wicking, odor-resistant merino wool ensures things stay comfy down there without overheating during intense activities. M/W \$60

### HEAD: Ibex Zepher Earflap Beanie

Soft and comfy, this merino wool beanie keeps the head—and ears—toasty warm without being overly bulky. And it's so compact and light (1.1 ounces!) you can easily stash it in a pocket when you, or the days, warm up. \$40

### HANDS: SmartWool NTS Mid 250 Gloves

The most useful gloves we tested, these were perfect for warmth on their own or when used as a liner under heavier winter gauntlets. Finger pads on the thumb and index finger let you use your touch-screen tech without taking them off. \$35

### FEET: Lorpen Midweight Hiker Socks

Just as good in winter as they are in summer, these full-cushion merino wool socks incorporate a mesh instep for added temperature control and breathability. Plus, the flat-knit toe seam eliminates rubbing and irritation when active. \$20

# Snow Treads

## TRAIL MIX

Gear Shop

*In the same way you want to bundle up with warm wear for those winter trails, you also want to equip yourself with a good traction device for your feet—because nothing will chill and frustrate you quicker than slipping on ice or snow and taking a face-first digger. There are plenty of choices available depending on the types of winter trails you plan on exploring. Small strap-on or step-in devices are great for packed snow trails; instep crampons and microspikes are ideal for icy surfaces; and snowshoes can take on a variety of surfaces, from deep snow to steep, icy grades.*

### SNOWSHOE TIPS:

- ▶ **Before buying:** Sample a variety of snowshoes to see which fit and perform best for your weight and gait. Most mountain shops rent snowshoes at affordable prices.
- ▶ **Choose your size:** Snowshoes are sized not only for height, but also for snow conditions: longer snowshoes are good for deeper snow and powder, shorter snowshoes are ideal for packed snow and moving quickly.
- ▶ **Wear your boots:** When trying on and sampling snowshoes, wear the boots you intend to wear with them on trail to ensure that you get a comfortable fit.

### ALL-PURPOSE MSR Revo

So you're thinking about tromping some winter trail. Whether you have your eye on a gentle walk along Hurricane Ridge or a big grinder up Monitor Ridge, the MSR Revo Snowshoes will tackle both of those—and everything in between. Sporting MSR's unique ExoTract deck with full-perimeter crampon contact they afford a wider grip on sloping surfaces, making traverses a breeze. The highlight of this model is the new HyperLink binding system (very similar to a snowboard binding) that makes it effortless for getting in and out—and perfect for accommodating smaller boots. When the grade picks up, flip up the heel Televator for increased traction and less fatigue. For extra-deep powder, you can even add tail extensions for added flotation. M/W \$200

**Bonus Points:** Easy, snowboard-style step-in binding.

### FOR THE GALS Atlas Elektra 1023

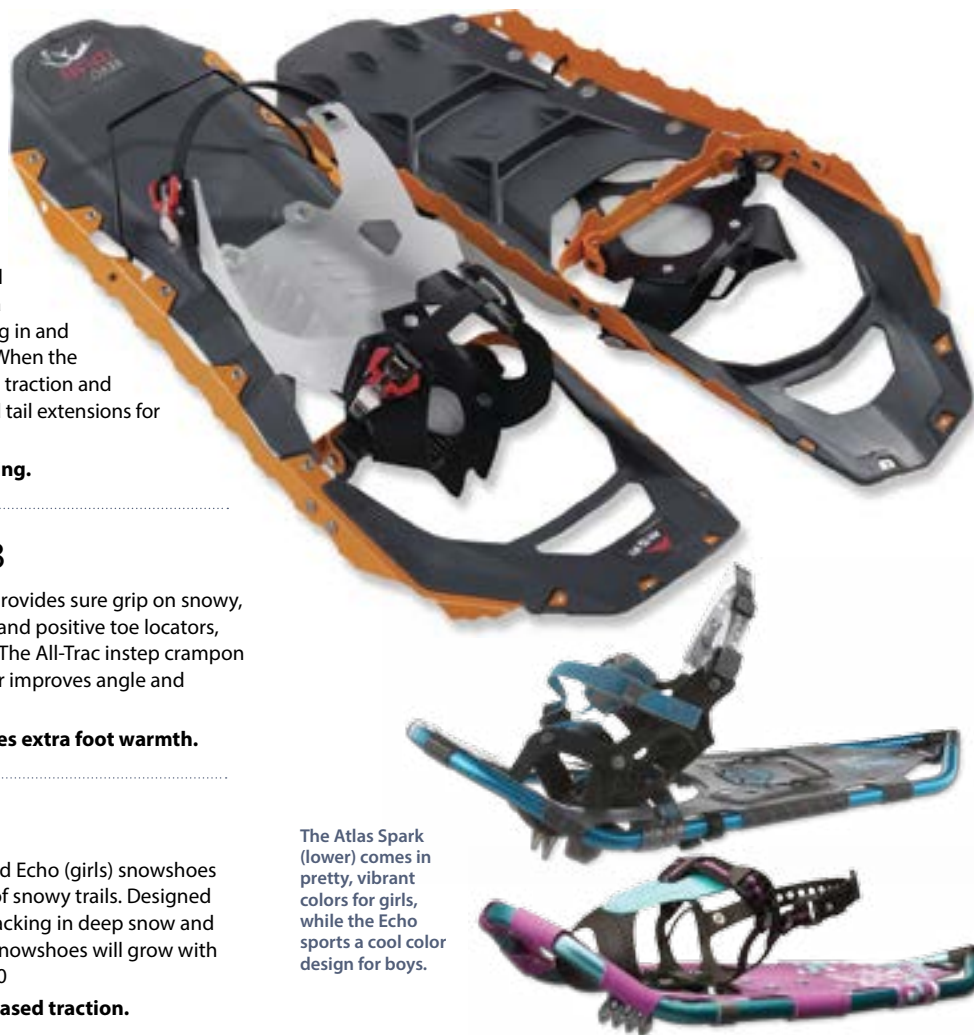
For a specialized women's snowshoe, the Elektra 10 provides sure grip on snowy, all-mountain trails. Employing Wrapp Swift bindings and positive toe locators, entry is as easy as stepping in and pulling the straps. The All-Trac instep crampon digs deep to grip icy slopes, while the flip-up heel bar improves angle and traction on the steep. W \$200

**Bonus Points:** Cushioned binding padding provides extra foot warmth.

### KIDS TOO! Atlas Spark & Echo

With a simplified binding system, the Spark (boys) and Echo (girls) snowshoes will let the Littles keep up with the Bigs on a variety of snowy trails. Designed for durability, the unique railing shape assists with tracking in deep snow and is tailored to a child's gait. For kids ages 8–12, these snowshoes will grow with them for use through several winter seasons. B/G \$80

**Bonus Points:** Additional heel cleat provides increased traction.



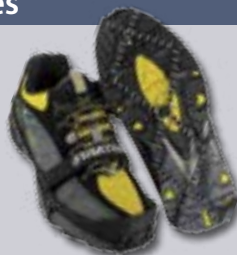
The Atlas Spark (lower) comes in pretty, vibrant colors for girls, while the Echo sports a cool color design for boys.

## More Winter Trail Traction Devices



### Katoolah MICROspikes

The closest thing to a full-blown crampon, these heavy-duty full-cleat attachments, will take on just about any winter trail surface for walking, hiking and running. \$65



### YakTrax PRO

Like tire chains for your boots, these lightweight straps attach to any boot or shoe for extra traction on snowy surfaces. And they're easy-on, easy-off for when trail conditions change. \$30



### STABILicers

These durable traction devices combine stainless steel studs with a rugged outsole for maximum grip on icy surfaces. A simple binding system attaches to any hiking shoe or boot. \$50

# TRAIL MIX

## Nature Nook

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: Osprey

The 12<sup>th</sup> man might be excited to learn that the osprey is also known, among other nicknames, as a sea hawk. While he might not be very good at throwing footballs, he certainly shines at intercepting fish from lakes and rivers. The osprey's vision is extremely keen at detecting underwater objects. When hunting, he will hover over a fish for a moment, then free fall from the air and plunge into the water. Barblike pads on his talons help him keep hold of his wiggling meal. Like many raptors, ospreys mate for life. The male generally determines the nesting site; the female arranges the nest. The eggs do not all hatch at the same time; the first hatchling may arrive up to five days before the others. To see ospreys, grab your binoculars and head to your local lake, river or pond.



### BEAST: River Otter

Playful and humorous to watch, river otters are just as comfortable on land as they are in water. They are frequently spotted frolicking on muddy lakeshores and playfully sliding down snowy hills. Their elongated bodies, powerful tails and webbed feet allow them to run on land almost as effectively as they can swim in water, where they can stay submerged for up to eight minutes in depths up to 60 feet. River otters live in areas with good water and an abundant food supply of fish, crustaceans, frogs, rodents, insects, small birds and mollusks. In the spring, females give birth to two to four pups; at eight to ten weeks of age, her litter learns to swim and feed. Most active at night, river otters can be tricky to spot. Look for them in healthy ecosystems near confluences of creeks and streams.



### BLOOM: Salal

If you've hiked on the western side of the Cascade Crest, you've hiked near this plant. Salal is one of the most prominent ground covers in the Northwest and prefers the acidic soils of the coniferous forest understory. In early spring, pink to white flowers appear in elongated clusters, turning into edible dark blue berries in summer and fall. Salal berries were a significant food source for Native Americans who ate them both fresh off the vine and dried for baking. Today, they are mostly used in jams, jellies, pies and preserves and have a sweet, mild flavor. The floral industry also covets salal for uses in flower arrangements worldwide. To find salal, lace up your boots and head to any thick Northwest evergreen forest.



Photos by Tami Asars



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## Hiking

**WTA TRAILBLAZER** Explore 1,000s of Washington's trails and the latest Trip Reports without being tethered to your computer. Bonus points: This app can read your GPS location and suggest trails near you.

**Best for:** iPhone, Android, Windows; Free

## First Aid & Survival



**RED CROSS FIRST AID** Access basic first aid for common emergencies, as well as instructional videos, interactive quizzes and step-by-step advice. Once downloaded, can be used without cell service.

**Best for:** iPhone, Android; Free



**SAS SURVIVAL GUIDE** Learn survival skills through the full text of the best-selling book, instructional videos and interactive quizzes. Bonus points: This app offers extensive photo galleries of animal tracks, medicinal and poisonous plants and more.

**Best for:** iPhone, Android; \$5.99

## Field Guides



**SKYVIEW** Point your smartphone at the sky to identify stars, constellations and satellites. Once downloaded, can be used without cell service.

**Best for:** iPhone, iPad; Free. *Have an Android? Try SkyMap instead; Free*



**AUDUBON BIRDS PRO** See high-quality pictures, read in-depth descriptions, listen to calls and log sightings for more than 820 unique species of birds. Bonus points: This app is as thorough as a traditional field guide.

**Best for:** iPhone, iPad, Android; \$3.99–\$4.99



**WA WILDFLOWERS** Browse plants or search by characteristics for more than 870 common shrubs, wildflowers and vines found in Washington. Once downloaded, can be used without cell service.

**Best for:** iPhone, Android, Kindle Fire; \$7.99

## Navigation



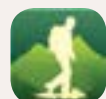
**MOTIONX GPS** Download custom road and topo maps before your next hike—then see your progress on the map and track elapsed time, distance, average speed and more while you adventure. Once downloaded (with maps), it can be used without cell service.\*

**Best for:** iPhone, iPad; \$0.99. *Have an Android? Try BackCountry Navigator TOPO GPS instead; \$11.99*



**PEAKFINDER** Point your smartphone at a mountain landscape and instantly find out the names of the peaks you're looking at. Once downloaded, can be used without cell service. Select from Western U.S., Eastern U.S. and Canada.

**Best for:** iPhone, Android; \$3.99



### HALFMILE'S PCT

Mileage counter and GPS locator for PCT hikers.

iPhone, Android



### POCKET RANGER

Maps and guides to all of Washington's state parks.

iPhone, Android



### CHIMANI NAT'L PARKS

Guide to 401 U.S. national parks, sites and monuments.

iPhone, Android



### GEOCACHING

Searchable database of geocaches around the world.

iPhone, Android

\*Even with a mobile device map, WTA strongly encourages hikers to carry a traditional paper map and compass on all hikes.



# Snow D

**Need to know where to go tromp some trail this winter?**

Here are ten winter routes to get you outdoors. We've even included a few snow-free options for those interested in staying on dry ground. You can find more info on these trails and many more—including the latest trip reports—at **[wta.org](http://wta.org)**.

**Photo by Steve Van Etten**



**1 JUNE LAKE** lies in the shadow of Mount St. Helens and is a pleasant snowshoe from the Marble Mountain Sno-Park. With almost 50 miles of trails, this popular trail system offers plenty of winter recreation for snowshoers, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers. Starting at the Sno-Park parking area, follow the often-groomed Pine Marten Trail east (look for blue diamond snow route markers), which parallels the road through the forest. Cross Lake Creek on the road, then walk up the short road spur to the June Lake trailhead. Continue north up the June Lake Trail with plenty of views of snowy St. Helens; you may even spot people climbing up Monitor Ridge to the rim summit. Cross over the small creek bridge to scenic and silent June Lake. Return by the same route, or make it a loop by crossing the Worm Flows and descending on the Swift Trail.

**CLIMBING TIP:** Permits are required above 4,800 feet on Mount St. Helens. They are available at the Marble Mountain climbing register.

|                                                                                                                         |                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>DISTANCE:</b> 4.8 miles, RT                                                                                          | <b>PERMIT:</b> Sno-Park |
| <b>ELEVATION GAIN:</b> 500 ft                                                                                           | <b>DOGS:</b> Leashed    |
| <b>ELEVATION PEAK:</b> 3,140 ft                                                                                         | <b>MAP:</b> GT: 364S    |
| <b>INFO:</b> <a href="http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/june-lake-snowshoe">wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/june-lake-snowshoe</a> |                         |

*Hike by Brittany Manwill*

**2 McCLELLAN MEADOWS** is the winter gateway into the Indian Heaven Wilderness and offers a challenging snowshoe to Indian Racetrack. From the Sno-Park, hike on the FR 3053 (partially groomed) toward the McClellan Meadows Trail. At the trail, continue southeast. After 3 miles, intersect FR-65 and head south to Falls Creek Horse Camp, then east on Race Track Trail into the heart of the wilderness. With Falls Creek Horse Camp behind you, enter Indian Heaven Wilderness. The trail begins to undulate as it climbs up through silver fir, western white pine, and Engelmann spruce. The trail continues to rise for 2.1 miles until you finally drop down into a large open meadow. Pause here and reflect upon the echoes of history. Once known as "Sahalee Tyee," the area is culturally important to many Native American tribes who used to gather here for berry picking, hunting and fishing. Return by the same route.

**TRAIL TIP:** This route is for experienced winter hikers. Winter trail markers (blue diamonds) are few and far between, if at all. Carry your map and compass.

|                                                                                                             |                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>DISTANCE:</b> 15 miles, RT                                                                               | <b>PERMIT:</b> Sno-Park      |
| <b>ELEVATION GAIN:</b> 1,250 ft                                                                             | <b>DOGS:</b> Not recom'd     |
| <b>ELEVATION PEAK:</b> 4,350 ft                                                                             | <b>MAP:</b> Green Trails 397 |
| <b>INFO:</b> <a href="http://fs.usda.gov/main/giffordpinchot/home">fs.usda.gov/main/giffordpinchot/home</a> |                              |

*Hike by Ryan Schreiner*

**WINTER SAFETY:** Always check weather ([noaa.gov](http://noaa.gov)) and snow conditions ([nwac.us](http://nwac.us)) before heading out.

**3** **AMABILIS MOUNTAIN** offers both spectacular views and a bit of solitude at the summit. The route is accessed via the Cabin Creek Sno-Park and is one of the more popular cross-country skiing destinations in the Snoqualmie Pass area. Begin by navigating the maze of ski loops to get on the path to the summit; keep right, following the signed Berg route for 0.25 mile until you encounter signs pointing uphill to Amabilis. The route follows FR 4822 as it slowly switchbacks up the mountain. The higher you climb, the more the view opens up, including excellent westward panoramas of Kachess Lake a little before you reach the top. From the top, enjoy views of Kachess Ridge to the north, rising above Kachess Lake. To the south, a sea of ridges and mountains spreads out toward Mount Rainier. To the northwest, the jagged peaks of the Three Queens and Chikamin Ridge stand out against the skyline.

**TRAIL TIP:** You don't need to stick to the road—and can cut some mileage—if you blaze up the open hillsides cross-country. Just be sure to carry your map.

*Hike and photo by Nate & Jer Barnes*

**4** **CHEHALIS RIVER** is a snow-free stroll along the river between working farmland and recently restored riparian habitat hosting a bevy of birds, from barn swallows to bald eagles. From the parking area, walk the road past an old barn to a T-junction at 0.3 mile. Pick up an interpretive guidebook and follow the signposts, first right, then back. Trees and shrubs along the river bank were planted to protect fish habitat. As they grow, cottonwood, red-osier dogwood and willow will restore eroded river banks and create spawning grounds for threatened char; the mature black cottonwoods across the river are the largest such grove remaining along the Chehalis. At 1.2 miles, reach the end of the north branch of the route. Follow the path back past the T-junction to the south branch at 2 miles; continue to its terminus at 2.6 miles at a grove of Douglas fir and western redcedar. Return the way you came.

**POST HIKE:** The Olympic Club Pub has catered to tourists and timbermen since 1908.

|                                                                                 |                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>DISTANCE:</b> 3.6 miles, RT                                                  | <b>PERMIT:</b> N/A          |
| <b>ELEVATION GAIN:</b> 210 ft                                                   | <b>DOGS:</b> Leashed        |
| <b>ELEVATION PEAK:</b> 265 ft                                                   | <b>MAP:</b> USGS: Rochester |
| <b>INFO:</b> <a href="http://lewiscountrytrails.org">lewiscountrytrails.org</a> |                             |

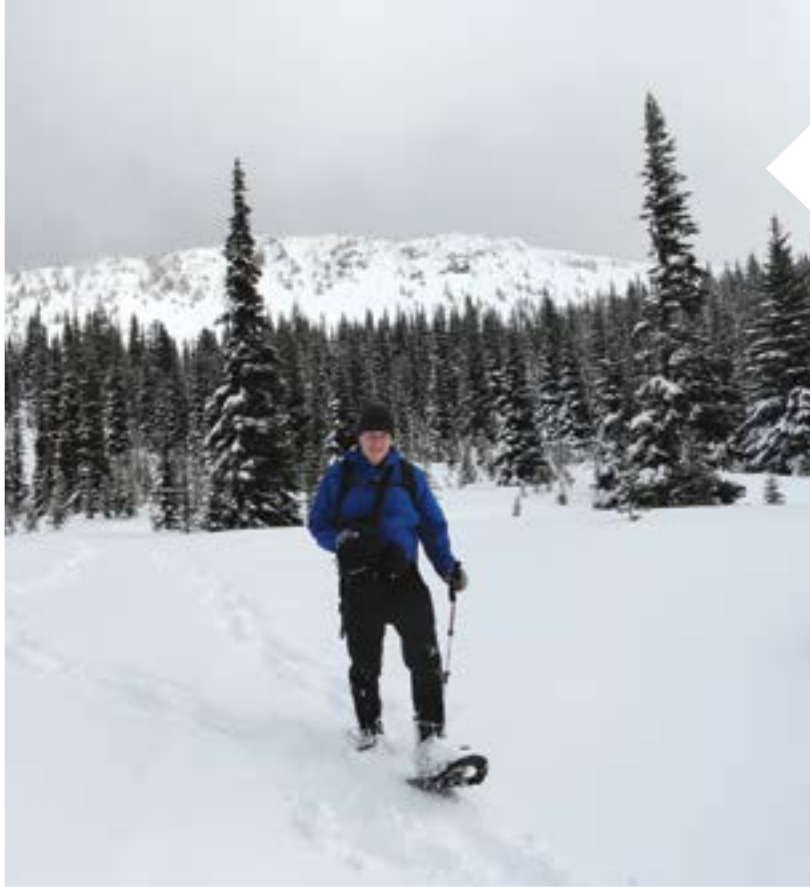
*Hike by Aaron Theisen*



### HIKE IT: Amabilis Mountain

|                                                                                                           |                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>DISTANCE:</b> 9.5 miles, RT                                                                            | <b>PERMIT:</b> Sno-Park      |
| <b>ELEVATION GAIN:</b> 2,100 ft                                                                           | <b>DOGS:</b> Not recom'd     |
| <b>ELEVATION PEAK:</b> 4,570 ft                                                                           | <b>MAP:</b> Green Trails 207 |
| <b>INFO:</b> <a href="http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/amabilis-mt">wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/amabilis-mt</a> |                              |

Looking for winter hikes in the Spokane area? Check out the Northwest Weekend feature in this issue for trails at Antoine Peak and Mount Spokane State Park.



**5 CORRAL PASS** is a challenging snowshoe set in subalpine meadows that pays off with glimpses of Mount Rainier and a panoramic view of the Norse Peak Wilderness high country. From the trailhead on FR 7174, follow the frozen roadway past a gate and start winding up the steep, forested ridge. Elk are prolific here and throughout the White River Valley so keep your eyes peeled. At 4 miles, round a ridge providing unobstructed views of the Deep Creek Valley, Mutton Mountain and Dalles Ridge. From here, the grade eases and approaches a high basin tucked beneath Castle Mountain. Beyond, the route climbs over a small ridge and reaches 5,700-foot Corral Pass at 5.6 miles. Try to locate the Noble Knob Trail signpost sticking out of the snow. The Corral Pass campground makes an excellent place for winter backcountry camping. Enjoy views east down into the Greenwater River Valley and south to Castle Mountain and Fifes Peaks.

**POST HIKE:** The Black Diamond Bakery will satisfy any after-hike appetite. This historic establishment has been serving hungry souls since 1902.

**DISTANCE:** 11.5 miles, RT  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 2,800 ft  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 5,700 ft  
**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/corral-pass-snowshoe](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/corral-pass-snowshoe)

**PERMIT:** N/A  
**DOGS:** Not permitted  
**MAP:** Green Trails 269

*Hike and photo by Craig Romano*



**6 WONDERLAND TRAIL** between Longmire and Cougar Rock Campground, alongside the Nisqually River, is a great snowshoe for beginners and kids thanks to its minimal elevation gain and relatively short distance. Plus, the drive to the trailhead is much easier than to some of the higher, more remote winter destinations. Begin your snowy Wonderland stroll near the Wilderness Information Center, where you will get the majority of the climb out of the way in the first 0.25 mile. Then you are rewarded with a gently rolling, forested trail that remains between the road and the river. The trail will start to skirt the riverbank; at times you are near the level of the water, but at others, you can hover—carefully!—over the bank's edge and peer into the water up to 100 feet below. When you reach the campground, turn around and return the same way. Then go and get warmed up with a hot drink in the historic National Park Inn.

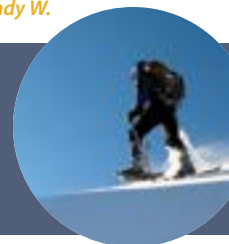
**TRAIL TIP:** Beware of cornices. Sometimes the actual edge of a cliff can be hidden under the snow.

**DISTANCE:** 4 miles, RT  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 400 ft  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 3,180 ft  
**INFO:** [nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit](http://nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit)

**PERMIT:** Nat'l Park fee  
**DOGS:** Not permitted  
**MAP:** Green Trails 269

*Hike by Kristen Sapowicz; photo by Wendy W.*

**TRAIL COURTESY:** When snowshoeing on groomed cross-country trails, be courteous of other users and stay to the right side, and don't stomp through ski tracks.



**7 COAL PASS** climbs a series of winding, snow-covered forest roads to culminate in sweeping views of Mount Baker's glaciated northwest flank. Start by following FR 39 along Lookout Creek as it ascends the heavily forested valley. After crossing the creek, the road traverses above Glacier Creek Gorge. At 2 miles, reach a junction and veer sharply to the right to follow FR 36 for just over 2 miles through second-growth and clearcut areas; the forest begins to open up to more mountainous views the higher you go. After crossing the creek again, veer right at the next junction to travel upward through a series of switchbacks on FR 3610. The road levels out for the final 0.5 mile to the pass. From the top, take in expansive views of Mount Baker's glaciers, Coleman and Roosevelt, and ridges, Chowder, Bastille and Heliotrope.

**TRAIL TIP:** Glacier Creek Road is also frequented by snowmobilers and skiers; exercise proper trail etiquette by staying to the right when snowshoeing.

**DISTANCE:** 10 miles, RT  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 2,400 ft  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 4,500 ft  
**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/coal-pass](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/coal-pass)

**PERMIT:** N/A  
**DOGS:** Leashed  
**MAP:** Green Trails 13

*Hike by Lindsay Leffelman*

**8 ROCK TRAIL** in Larrabee State Park—recently completed by WTA volunteers—passes sandstone cliffs and mossy erratic boulders to connect Chuckanut Ridge and the South Lost Lake Trail. Before you begin hiking, take in sweeping views of Chuckanut Bay and the San Juan Islands from Cyrus Gates Overlook. A short walk through evergreens leads to the first set of zigzagging staircases. Challenge younger hikers to count all those stairs! Once you have dropped 700 feet, peek inside the carved-out cubbyholes and small caves. Some are larger inside than their openings suggest. Then look up for a dizzying view of evergreen treetops and dripping ferns clinging to the sheer sandstone. Cross the creek on Bogaard's Bridge, then walk between two imposing mossy erratics as you descend three more sets of stairs and a few switchbacks. The trail levels out before connecting to the South Lost Lake Trail. The Rock Trail ends here, but your hike doesn't have to. Head north, then turn right at the next junction to reach Lost Lake's shore in approximately half a mile.

**DISTANCE:** 2.4 miles, RT  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,200 ft  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 1,300 ft  
**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/rock-trail](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/rock-trail)

**PERMIT:** Discover Pass  
**DOGS:** Leashed  
**MAP:** Chuckanut Rec

*Hike by Rachel Wood; photo by Brandon Fralic*



**BUNDLE UP:** For winter hiking, dress in layers, and start just a little cold; you'll heat up as you go. Don't forget to bundle up your pup, too. See this issue's Gear Closet for info on winter warm wear.



Ashley Jones



## HIKE IT: Oak Creek Road

**DISTANCE:** 4–6.5 miles, RT     **PERMIT:** Discover Pass  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 800 ft     **DOGS:** Leashed  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 2,500 ft     **MAP:** Green Trails 305  
**INFO:** [wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/oak\\_creek](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/oak_creek)

**9 OAK CREEK ROAD** is a scenic, easy to moderate hike or snowshoe up a broad canyon just west of Yakima—with a good chance of spotting bands of elk. From the gate at US 12, the road climbs gently along the right (north) side of Oak Creek through open shrub-steppe beneath nice basalt cliffs and outcrops. Through here is where you're most likely to see the elk. At 1.7 miles, NPK Canyon comes in from the right and the road curves above a large field with good views back down the canyon; 0.25 mile farther along is Clint Canyon, where the road enters a forest of Garry oaks, aspens and cottonwoods. At 2.5 miles is a clearing at the mouth of Pine Tree Canyon, and at 3.25 miles is the broad mouth of Hoover Canyon. The road then continues another 1.5 miles to the mouth of Indian Creek, where it begins climbing out of the canyon. Any of these locations are good turnaround points depending on how far you want to go. The side canyons are mostly brushy, with steep game trails; the better route out is to retrace your steps along the road.

**POST-HIKE:** For good Mexican food, try El Porton in Yakima; for local beer, hit up the Yakima Craft Brewing Company's Tap Room.

*Hike and photo by David Hagen*



**10 GUILLEMOT COVE** invites you to explore a series of trails amid the historic 184-acre nature reserve.

Begin by hiking downhill on the Main Access Trail, located opposite the parking lot, to meet up with the Sawmill Trail. Continue right, descending under a canopy of cedar, hemlock and fir, on a route eventually becoming the Margaret Trail. At the bottom of the hill, turn left to pass the Nest House and emerge at a trail kiosk. After periods of heavy rain, the meadow can flood, making access to the beach difficult. There are plans to build a boardwalk through this wet area, but until then, if conditions—or waterproof boots—allow, cross the bridge over Boyce Creek and follow the rerouted Beach House Trail to the saltwater cove. Watch for seabirds, including the black-and-white pigeon guillemot for which the cove was named. If a soggy meadow stops progress toward the beach, try hiking the Stump House Trail to its namesake: a large, hollowed-out cedar stump house with roof. Another option is the Maple Tree Trail, beginning just past the fallen-down remains of an old barn. This level trail connects with the River Trail Loop and meanders beneath giant, moss-covered bigleaf maples.

**DISTANCE:** Up to 2.5 miles     **PERMIT:** N/A  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 360 ft     **DOGS:** Not permitted  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 360 ft     **MAP:** USGS: Holly  
**INFO:** [kitsapgov.com/parks](http://kitsapgov.com/parks)

*Hike and photo by Kelsie Donleycott*

**SNO-PARKS:** Special winter permits are required for day use. Visit [parks.wa.gov](http://parks.wa.gov) for trail maps and area info.

**BE PREPARED:** Always pack your Ten Essentials, especially your map and compass. Even familiar trails can look totally different with a blanket of snow.



# Columbia Plateau

**T**he Spokane, Portland and Seattle rail line represented the last major triumph of railroad magnate James J. Hill, the “Empire Builder.” Today, recreationists can survey the Inland Empire’s wetlands, working farms and Western-movie vistas on this 130-mile rail-trail through Eastern Washington’s channeled scablands, now maintained as Columbia Plateau Trail State Park.

Hikers won’t find snowcapped spires or gemlike lakes, but they will find a sprawling expanse of sagebrush, soybean and wheat pitted with pothole ponds, all tucked away into Washington’s breadbasket. Even better, this arid landscape—straight out of a John Ford Western—can be accessed virtually year-round, making it a worthwhile destination for winter-weary hikers.

Through much of its length, the Columbia Plateau Trail (CPT) passes through the channeled scablands, the canyon-carved remains of cataclysmic ice-age floods some 15,000 to 30,000 years ago. Around the maze of basalt buttes and broad mesas, windblown loess (a rich but fragile topsoil produced by the erosion of lava flows) has, over the millennia, settled in drifts up to 10,000 feet thick. The result is some of the world’s best agricultural soil punctuated by arid, hardscrabble rock. And all around is the surprising hum of life: raptors perch on pioneer fenceposts searching for meals of voles and mice, coyotes and foxes saunter here and there in their own search for sustenance, and rodents—and rattlesnakes—move stealthily underfoot. Porcupines, beavers, turtles and turkeys find refuge here as well.

Spring is the ideal—some might say *only*—time to hike the CPT. Best is early March, when the February doldrums have burned off and tick season has yet to peak. The shallow rocky soils showcase some of springtime’s earliest blooms, including sagebrush buttercup and desert-parsley. Later in the spring, bright pink bitterroots daub the otherwise drab ground. In colder winter months, the low-angled winter sun casts grasses and rimrock in stark relief.

Paralleled by private lands and, at times, working rail lines, the route can be accessed from several trailheads along its length; currently, 23 miles between Lincoln County and Cheney and another 15 miles near Tri-Cities between Ice Harbor Dam and Snake River Junction are developed for public use. The remaining 96 miles between Martin Road southwest of Cheney and the Snake River near the Tri-Cities offer no services and are difficult to negotiate, particularly because two gated trestles require detours. It’s possible, with advance planning for off-route camps, to make a multiday traverse of the trail, but the railroad ballast—fist-sized crushed rock that composes the railbed—on much of the trail’s length is more friendly to a fat bike than hiking boots. Most hikers will stick to day trips, watching the antique mile markers tick by as they traverse the plateau.

**Hike & photos  
by Aaron Theisen**

## STAY HYDRATED:

Although an oasis for wildlife, the Columbia Plateau Trail accesses little in the way of amenities for two-legged travelers along most of the route. Bring plenty of water. The trail, shade-free for much of its length, can be mercilessly hot in the summer, and there is no water along the route.

# BITS & PIECES

While you can't hike the Columbia Plateau Trail (easily) from end-to-end, there are several options for exploring the northern and southern reaches of this historic thoroughfare.



## TREK: SNAKE RIVER

**DISTANCE:** 6 miles **ELEVATION GAIN:** 150 ft.

The southern terminus of the Columbia Plateau surveys the stark, scalloped Snake River country of southeast Washington. Pioneer John Mullan scratched out a wagon road here in the middle of the 19th century; the rail line sometimes runs on top of the old wagon road, sometimes paralleling it, offering an added bit of history. For a pleasant stroll for all ages, follow the east shore of the Snake River and admire anglers—both avian and human—at work in the shadeless landscape. Most foot travelers turn around at Burr Canyon Road; beyond here, the railroad ballast begins to bear down on hikers' boots.



## HIKE: FISH LAKE

**DISTANCE:** 7.5 miles **ELEVATION GAIN:** Minimal

The only stretch of the CPT improved with smooth blacktop, the 3.75-mile stretch from Fish Lake Regional Park to the Cheney trailhead makes a fine introduction to the trail for hikers, bikers and, in the winter, snowshoers and Nordic skiers. Beginning at Fish Lake Regional Park, the rail-trail skirts the southeast side of the lake before chugging slowly but steadily uphill amidst ponderosa pines and basalt columns, past several large tracts of agricultural land. On either side, shallow "pothole" wetlands, scoured into the basalt bedrock by ancient floodwaters, provide oases for migratory birds and belie Eastern Washington's dry reputation.



## HIKE: AMBER LAKE

**DISTANCE:** 15 miles **ELEVATION GAIN:** Minimal

South of Cheney, the CPT passes through a section of the 18,000-acre Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge that is otherwise inaccessible to the public. For a longer dayhike, start at the popular angling waters of Amber Lake, amble north through aspens and plateau shrubs—dogwood, sumac and currant. In contrast to much of the rest of its length, the CPT here passes through the ponderosa pine belt of Eastern Washington; these spicy-scented evergreens provide cover for mule deer and a large population of elk. Moose frequent the shallow marshes of the refuge's interior, as do a variety of waterfowl. Return by the same route.



## CPT Stats

**DISTANCE:** 134 miles (38 miles for day use)

**HIGHEST POINT:** Turnbull Refuge at 2,280 ft.

**LOWEST POINT:** Snake River at 600 ft.

**TRIP TIME:** day use only

**BEST SEASON:** October – May

**MAPS:** WA State Parks Columbia Plateau

**PERMITS:** Discover Pass

**INFORMATION:** [parks.wa.gov](http://parks.wa.gov)

**CLIMATE:** The driest part of the state, the Columbia Plateau sees a scant 7 inches of rain annually in some places. Summers can be mercilessly hot in the largely shade-free environs, while winters often see only a dusting of wind-blown snow.

**WILDLIFE:** Watch for mule deer, moose, elk, coyote, fox, beaver, badger, Hungarian partridge, chukar, quail and wild turkey.

**GUIDEBOOK:** *Day Hike Eastern Washington*, by Craig Romano, highlights several more hikes in the Columbia Plateau and Channeled Scablands areas.

**Summer begins  
February 7.**

**Don't miss out!**

Washington's backcountry trails need your help more than ever. That's why WTA is putting together ready-made summer vacations to accomplish much-needed trail work in beautiful locations across the state. Join us for a rewarding, challenging and fun **Volunteer Vacation** or **Backcountry Response Team (BCRT)** in 2015.

**Preview upcoming  
trips on January 30.**

**Registration opens  
Feb. 7 at 10:00am.**



**DREAMING OF  
SUMMER  
VACATION?**

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Photo by Paul Bestock

