

50 Years of Supporting Washington's Trails

Washington TRAILS

A Publication of Washington Trails Association | wta.org

NORTHWEST EXPOSURE!



Jan+Feb 2016



Giving a Voice to Trails

**Winter Weekend Getaways
Best New Rain Gear**



SUMMER BEGINS
» FEBRUARY 20TH

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**REGISTER STARTING
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**SIGN UP AT
wta.org/volunteer**

Photo courtesy of REI



In 2016 *WTA is celebrating 50 years of protecting trails. From our humble beginnings as a little newsletter to our current role as a leading voice for trails, our goal to empower hikers continues to drive our work of protecting and promoting trails in Washington state. This year, as we acknowledge the founders, members and volunteers who inspired and led us to this point, we will turn our sights to the future of trails.*

As the state's leading hiking resource and the nation's largest volunteer trail maintenance community, WTA serves more than 4 million hikers each year through our bimonthly magazine, online resources, social communities and collaborative partnerships. Through our grassroots advocacy, WTA focuses on trail issues including funding, access and wilderness protection, while our innovative youth and families programs educate and empower families, teachers and youth groups to discover the outdoors.

In a time when more people are looking to get outside, WTA will continue to find new and innovative ways to encourage safe and sustainable hiking and trail systems, while working to improve access to hiking opportunities for all Washingtonians. We invite you to continue this journey with us, as we continue to explore new ways to empower, inspire and engage the hikers of today and tomorrow.

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.

CONNECT WITH WTA:

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Here's to Turning 50!

You know that feeling of excitement that follows weeks of preparation: your trip is planned, your pack is full, your teammates are ready and your adventure finally begins!

This is how we feel at Washington Trails Association today as we set out together—with you—into a new year that carries a bit more meaning than most. In 2016 we celebrate our 50th anniversary and launch an ambitious five-year strategic plan that lays the groundwork for WTA's next 50 years!

At every turning point in our history—from our humble beginnings as a home-published newsletter to our grassroots advocacy for wilderness and threatened landscapes to our creation of a statewide volunteer trail maintenance community—WTA has stepped up to address the needs of hikers. As a result, our network of members, volunteers and partners is stronger than ever.

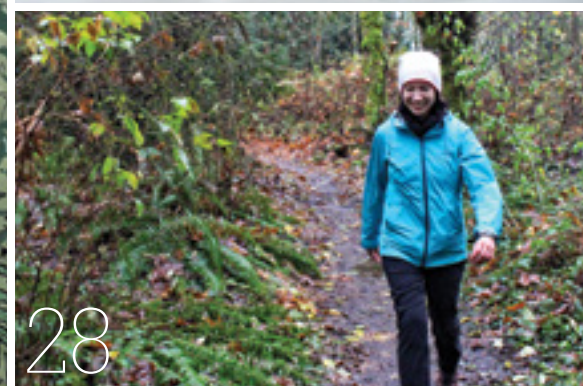
The vision that drives us is a powerful one: a Washington where the joy and satisfaction of hiking and its power to revitalize, improve and even transform lives is widely recognized; where people are effective stewards of, and passionate advocates for, natural landscapes and wild places; and where trails are connectors in the broadest sense of the word, linking not just points on a map but also friends, families, communities and cultures.

To make this vision a reality we have set three bold goals for our organization. Within five years, we will increase the number of quality trails in Washington. We will drive greater investment in our public lands. We will build and lead a broad coalition dedicated to protecting Washington's wild places. You can read about the details of WTA's new strategic plan in this issue on page 6. We welcome your comments about our plan and look forward to reporting on our progress each year.

As we enter this season of celebration and reflect on our first half-century of service, we are especially aware that we owe our success to you—our members, supporters and volunteers. Thank you!

Karen Daubert, Executive Director

Stephen Tan, Board President



Features

Northwest Exposure

WTA presents the winners of the Northwest Exposure Photo Contest in your new 2016 calendar. » **Center**

Giving a Voice to Trails

As WTA begins celebrating its 50th anniversary, we look at how it all began, and the need for hikers to speak up for trails. » **p.14**

This Land Is Your Land

This year, the National Park Service turns 100. With an eye to the future, they're looking at new ways to get people outdoors. » **p.20**

COVER: Last summer's wildfires produced colorful sunsets in Washington, as captured by Andrew Bertino from Sahale Arm in the North Cascades. See this image, and all the Northwest Exposure winners in this issue's 2016 calendar insert.

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WTA at Work

State honors WTA for trail work » p.10

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Finding Your Voice

In much the same way as Washington's legendary Harvey Manning (see pg. 15), I can distinctly remember when I turned from an everyday hiker into an advocate for parks and trails. It was following a visit to one of my favorite national parks. During that visit, my wife and I took an interpretive hike with one of the park's rangers. We had an amazing hike where we learned about the park's geology and other natural features. At the conclusion of the hike, we thanked the ranger and told him that we would be back the following year for another hike. To our dismay, the ranger informed us that the interpretive program was being discontinued for lack of funding.

Well, this was just unacceptable. These were our national parks—our national treasures. They were as much a place for hiking and camping as they were for discovering the fascinating things that make up our natural world and preserve our country's heritage. And the interpretive rangers were a big part of the experience. There had to be something we could do.

There was, the ranger told us. We could write a letter to the park superintendant and call our members of Congress, letting them know how much we value the park's interpretive rangers and the need to continue funding them. When we got home, that's exactly what we did. And apparently many others did as well. When we visited the same park again the following summer, the interpretive rangers were back, and we went on another hike. All the while, we felt proud that our efforts, no matter how small, helped save ranger jobs as well as an invaluable park program.

The same can be said of Washington's trails. If you value the trails you hike, you need to speak up for them. You need to find your voice and make it known that our trails are a treasure that need to be protected, funded and cared for. And by coming together with others, we can send a clear message to ensure that our trails will continue to be here for us, and for future generations.



A New Face for 50!

Put on your party hat! January 2016 kicks off WTA's 50th anniversary. To celebrate, we're unveiling our new logo. It's a visual representation of where we've come from and some inspiration for all we hope to achieve in the next 50 years.

You can show your WTA pride and sport the new logo yourself. Just renew your membership at the \$50 level and we'll send you a new WTA logo patch for your pack or jacket. We can't wait to celebrate our anniversary with you!



HIKING STEWARDSHIP COMMUNITY



Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020



A New Plan for WTA's Future

As WTA celebrates its golden anniversary, we are looking to the future of recreation. We have developed an ambitious strategic plan focused on inspiring a movement of hikers empowered to protect Washington's trails. There are three bold goals for this strategy: **1)** Everyone in Washington will have access to local trails; **2)** New generations will connect with, explore and conserve the outdoors; and **3)** Washington state will become the nation's strongest voice for hikers and trails.

At its core, WTA's new plan is about growing a community of hikers. It is people who are going to change the future of recreation. With our population growing we must ensure that the opportunity to explore the outdoors is equally accessible to everyone. We know that being in nature can have a powerful impact on people's lives, and this experience can turn a hiker into a steward. As more people are getting out, WTA will also redouble its efforts to promote both the value of hiking and the responsibilities of trail users. We strive to inspire and to empower a broad coalition dedicated to protecting trails and the places they take us.

We believe that if outdoor recreation becomes widely recognized as vital to our state's economy and quality of life, then good hiking practices and protecting trails can become social norms. This change in perspective would help Washington become a national leader in the recreation movement.

WTA is committed to building the capacity and raising the resources to meet our goals. But we need your help. Read WTA's full strategic plan and find out how to get involved at wta.org/strategicplan.

ACCESS:

Protect Washington's most heavily used and iconic trails.

Enhance Washington's hiking experiences.

Create more urban hiking opportunities.

Improve access to trails and wild places.

CONNECT:

Empower new generations of responsible trail users.

Invest in diversity and equitable access to trails.

Impact more youth statewide.

Leverage technology to make hiking information more accessible.

SUPPORT:

Change the conversation in the state to prioritize recreation and trails.

Elevate WTA as a model for protecting trails and empowering hikers.

Build a statewide community of advocates.

Foster a national network of trail stewards.



Cool Enough

Feeling Like You Belong in the Outdoors

You've probably had this moment, the one where you look around at the people who share the trail with you—anonymous hikers with bulging calf muscles or backpacking buddies who seem so, well, badass—and think, "I don't really belong here."

Don't worry. You're not alone.

We hear from lots of people who regularly use trails but don't feel like they can call themselves hikers. They have this idea that their time on trail doesn't count, that their experiences and accomplishments somehow don't stack up. It's called imposter syndrome (or the confidence gap). It may be felt more keenly by women striving to carve out their place in a once male-dominated sport, but when you begin asking around, it's clear the feeling is all-too-familiar among men too. Hikers of both genders with incredible trail resumes will tell you that they still get uncomfortable walking into some gear stores or outdoor events where the overall vibe is insider-only and "hardcore."

Sound familiar? Here are a few tips to help you flip those feelings.

Celebrate milestones along your outdoor journey.

Professional mountain guide Sheldon Kerr has written and talked about her own efforts to close the confidence gap. Kerr recommends believing in your skills and focusing on your own goals. **Give yourself credit** for your efforts, and don't let the achievements of others set your outdoor goals. (Read more at sheldonkerr.com.)

Give yourself—and each other—permission to be a hiker.

You don't have to thru-hike the PCT to call yourself a hiker. Taking a stroll on a local trail in a park can be a stellar hiking experience. When you encounter fledgling hikers facing some milestones you may have passed ages ago, try to **remember what it felt like** to be a beginner—and encourage them.

Call for more diverse types of hikers in outdoor media.

From the WTA website to retailer marketing to the magazines and blogs you read, ask to see hikers who look like you. Hiking happens all over the world, and people from every background enjoy being outside. Hikers and outdoor athletes come in **all shapes and sizes**, so there's no reason we shouldn't be portrayed that way.

Have a story of feeling like an imposter in the outdoors? Tell us about it or share your own tips at wta.org/coolenough.



Highs of Low Winter Trails

While winter may conjure up images of mountaintops blanketed in snow, there are also many lower trails transformed by the frost and quiet of winter. Here are a few of the delights to be found in winter trip reports from lower elevations.

ABOVE: Ancient and Dusty Lakes

A great choice for a winter hike ... the terrain is desert canyonlands with basalt columnar cliffs reminiscent of southern Utah without the red.

— Jeff Bottman

BELOW: Klickitat Rail Trail

Swale Canyon was eerily beautiful. Grab your hat and mittens and try the Swale Canyon winter experience.

— Patricia C; Photo by Lee Coulthard



WHEN DOES A WALK TURN INTO A HIKE?

Every year, we like to throw this question out to our community. Here are some of your responses:

When you get the hiking boots.

Wakako Tashiro

Even a long walk in an urban area could be considered a hike.

Michael Rourke

When you feel [a] connection to nature.

Eric Quinn

Walking is ... to get from point A to point B. Hiking is all about the experience.

Scott Wilson

When you're feeling adventurous.

Kelly Tuski



Your Footage Needed!

Have you taken some great video footage from Washington's trails? Share it with us!

Whether you're an aspiring filmmaker or a pro with an archive of b-roll from your outdoor adventures, we could use your help to bring the stories of Washington's trails to life in 2016. If you have something great stashed away that you're willing to share (with a credit, of course), let us know!

Learn more at wta.org/videovolunteer.

Fresh Faces at WTA

WTA is happy to welcome three new members to its board of directors. Thomas Goldstein (left) is a philanthropic and political strategist. A founder of Washington Bus and past board member of The Vera Project, he brings community-building expertise to the WTA board. Jennifer Faubion (center) started volunteering with WTA in her youth, helping the Back Country Horsemen of Washington support WTA's Volunteer Vacations. As a volunteer, hiker and horsewoman, Jennifer brings a well-rounded view of WTA's mission. Michael Dunning (right) is an environmental attorney and an avid hiker and skier. He is also on the board of One Less Mountain, which supports veterans.



Photo by Damien Murphy



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WTA Honored for Trail Work

Washington state agencies say “bravo” to volunteers



When Washington Trails Association volunteers gathered late last year to celebrate a record-breaking year of trail work, their commitment to trails garnered a “bravo” from the Washington State

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).

The Bravo Award recognizes the top projects funded by RCO’s grant programs, which include the Recreational Trails Program, the only federal grant program designed to maintain backcountry trails. WTA’s most recent grant applications for the Recreational Trails Program were ranked 1, 2 and 3 out of more than 60 worthy trail maintenance projects. Projects are rated by citizens and professionals on many factors such as need, quality of design and cost-effectiveness.

The grants awarded to WTA will provide \$382,000 over two years to help WTA engage thousands of volunteers and complete more than 100,000 hours of volunteer trail maintenance on hundreds of miles of trails across the state; a significant amount of this work will be accomplished by youth volunteers. Grant funding will leverage the additional public and private support, including WTA member donations, needed to complete the projects.

WTA volunteers also accepted an award from the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission for their efforts at Beacon Rock, Paradise Point and Battle Ground Lake State Parks. In 2015, WTA crews spent the equivalent of five weeks maintaining and improving trails in these beloved parks in southwest Washington. One key achievement was at Paradise Point State Park, where volunteers transformed a loop trail from a slick, muddy path that often disappeared under the rising East Fork Lewis River into a safer, more sustainable route. Thanks to better trail conditions, visitors of all ages can now focus their attention on the river views, wildlife and spring wildflowers that grace the park.

Beacon Rock State Park Manager Heath Yeats presents WTA staff and volunteers with an award recognizing their trail work at several southwest Washington state parks.



Youth volunteer Olivia Snyder shows off the hard hat she recently earned for completing five work parties with WTA. Olivia and her mom (and fellow WTA volunteer) Emily made cupcakes in celebration of the milestone.



Photos: Olivia Snyder by Jen Gradisher; Award presentation by Ryan Ojerio; Opposite: Youth ambassadors by Krista Dooley



Ambassadors Tackle Resumes, Leadership and Diversity at Annual Leadership Summit

WTA's fourth youth ambassador cohort met in November for its second annual leadership summit. At the event, 24 ambassadors attended workshops on topics including public speaking, leadership and outdoor careers. The summit was also the first time the ambassadors discussed cultural competency, diversity and barriers to outdoor recreation.

Talking about her daughter Reya's experience at the summit, Leska Fore says, "The weekend inspired her in a variety of directions. She wasn't expecting to learn so much or be challenged in such a multi-dimensional way."

Ambassadors were asked to reflect on how to make outdoor and hiking clubs as inclusive as possible. Among their ideas for increasing inclusion were reaching out to people outside their immediate friend groups and encouraging carpooling and the borrowing of gear.

The summit's workshops prepared participants to write an action plan for a project they will implement this school year. One ambassador, Stephanie, plans to write a children's book that incorporates themes of nature and the outdoors. She says, "Because we had that diversity talk, I started wondering how I could make it a more diverse story ... I don't want it to just be people like me."

The ambassador cohort also plans to organize three new high school hiking clubs and 12 one-day work parties this school year; several ambassadors are interested in trip reporting and assisting with hiking guide entries, and one ambassador plans to partner with a Yakima-area elementary school. We can't wait to see what else the ambassadors have planned.

Do you have a great idea for a youth ambassador project or have questions about the program? Email Andrea Martin at andrea@wta.org.



Highlights Around WTA

TOP: Work on Dirty Harry's Trail

WTA volunteers, in cooperation with Washington's DNR, move big rocks to lay the foundation for a new trail to Dirty Harry's Peak near North Bend. When completed, the new trail will provide a sustainable, enjoyable route to breathtaking views of the Snoqualmie Valley.

BOTTOM: You Are Our Trail Heroes!

WTA would like to thank all of its members, donors and volunteers for helping make 2015 such an amazing year for trails. You make our work possible. And as WTA kicks off its 50th anniversary year, we're looking forward to even bigger achievements for Washington's trails.



LOST: Have You Seen This Trail?

Learn about Washington's lost trails, share stories about your own favorite lost trails and help identify the trails in most need.

wta.org/losttrails

Make **Giving Back Together**
Your New Year's Resolution



2016

YOUTH & FAMILY WORK PARTIES

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

Winter/Spring Dates:

February 20: Cougar Mountain

March 19: Grand Ridge

April 16: coming soon

All events are from 9am to 2pm



Find locations
and sign up at

**wta.org/
volunteer**

New and Improved Way to Find Your Next Work Party

JOIN WORK PARTY

Volunteers asked and WTA listened!

New features are coming soon to the WTA website to make it easier than ever to give back to trails.

Soon you'll be able to search for trail work parties by date, region and more. Once you've joined a work party, you'll also be able to log in to manage your work parties, track your days on trail or make notes on trails you've saved to My Backpack. There are also new behind-the-scenes features to help WTA crew leaders and staff manage a growing number of work parties more efficiently.

Look for new features at **wta.org/volunteer** by February 1.

MTTA Tour de Huts



Saturday,
February 27, 2016
9 AM – 3 PM

Trek to High Hut,
Bruni's Snow Bowl Hut,
The Yurt
Visit one or all three

FREE!

Skis or Snowshoes Required

For more information visit:
www.skimtta.com
or email:
michael.j.wenger@gmail.com

TRIPS FOR TEENS

Join a team to hike, camp and fix up Washington's trails on a WTA youth vacation. Earn up to 40 service hours. No experience is necessary, and scholarships are available.

Trip registration opens on February 5. Submit applications by February 19 for priority placement. For information, schedules and applications, visit **wta.org/teens**.



CORRECTION: In the Nov+Dec 2015 issue of *Washington Trails*, a proofing oversight resulted in Charley Dickey's name being printed as Charles. Our apologies, Charley!

Victories for Trails in 2015!

2015 ended on a high note for hikers as two much-needed trail funding sources were approved by President Obama and Congress: the Recreation Trails Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Earlier in the year, the Recreation Trails Program (RTP) was threatened with elimination. However, Washington state's delegation in Washington, D.C., knowing how important the outdoors are for their constituents, stepped up.

Rep. Rick Larsen displayed extraordinary leadership in protecting RTP as part of the Transportation Alternatives Program by leading a letter from all U.S. House of Representatives Democrats on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee requesting funding to continue for the Transportation Alternatives Program. Larsen was also responsible for helping negotiate the final deal with the Senate.

President Obama signed the transportation bill—including RTP—into law, which will provide \$85 million for trails over the next five years. In addition to funding hiking and walking trails, it will help states provide safe routes to schools, critical bike infrastructure and more.

The second victory came with the renewal of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which had expired after 50 years of success at preserving America's great outdoors. The fund has been used to permanently protect land threatened with development by working with private landowners willing to sell their land to add to public lands and trails.

After months of hard work by hikers, conservationists and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts, Congress included the critical conservation program in the year-end omnibus budget, and reauthorized LWCF for three years and \$450 million in 2016. Advocates will continue to seek permanent authorization and full funding for the program. In Washington alone, this program has done everything from purchase land to reroute unsafe sections of the Pacific Crest Trail to fund urban parks.

These victories are welcome news to hikers who worked for their passage. WTA would like to thank everyone who spoke up for the importance of funding RTP and LWCF. WTA is also grateful for the bipartisan support from Washington's Senators and Representatives who made these victories possible.

With support from hikers and elected officials, we can ensure trails are well funded into the future.

LWCF has protected 100s of acres of land along the PCT, ensuring that views such as this—Mount Rainier, from between Crystal Mountain and Chinook Pass—can continue to be enjoyed.



Photo by J. Brink



Photos courtesy of Outdoors Empowered Network

WTA ATTENDS OEN NATIONAL SUMMIT

Shortly before 2015 drew to a close, WTA's Krista Dooley and Andrew Pringle spent a weekend camped out at the Presidio of San Francisco with peers from New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Oakland, Chicago, Detroit, Austin and Boise. They shared lessons from WTA's **Outdoor Leadership Training** program and learned from others working to reduce barriers to getting kids outside. In 2016, the **Outdoors Empowered Network** will work to get more gear for our lending libraries, combine our shared resources, study our collective impact and align our training and curriculum to empower communities of trip leaders across the country.

SIGN UP NOW FOR 2016 OLT WORKSHOPS

Do you work with youth? You can help connect kids, families and communities to nature by becoming an outdoor trip leader! WTA will lend you free gear and provide trip funding for your class or group. Get started by signing up for one of the 2016 Outdoor Leadership Training workshops.

Learn more at wta.org/olt.



“I can recall the precise point at which I stopped being a hiker and became a conservationist. It was on a heather slope high above White Rock Lake. There was beautiful wilderness all around me: lakes, forests, mountain ridges. Suddenly I saw this huge brown blight, an obvious clearcut, way down there by the Suiattle River. I thought, ‘My God ... They will take it all if someone doesn’t stop them.’” — Harvey Manning

GIVING A VOICE TO TRAILS

BY FRANCES CHIEM, ANDREA IMLER & CASSANDRA OVERBY

As Washington Trails Association turns 50 this year, we’re looking back and reflecting on how we’ve grown as an organization—and as hikers. We have a lot of achievements to be proud of. We’ve brought equity to trail funding provided by our state gas tax, protected trails and the lands that surround them, and developed a new way to engage people in trail and road issues. But perhaps our greatest achievement, one that we’re bone-deep proud of, is our role in helping to turn hikers like Manning—and you—into the stewards of our trails.

It’s the principle WTA was founded on, and it’s the very essence of why we continue to come to work—the joy of seeing Washington’s hiking community (you!) evolve from simply enjoying the outdoors to standing up for its support and protection. It’s the honor of showing you how you can make a difference for trails and the fulfillment of seeing your delight when we win together, whether that’s protecting the Pratt Lake Trail from logging or regaining access to spectacular places like Green Mountain and the Suiattle River Trail.

We’ve learned a lot along the way, from how to create champions for trails to how to work with other trail users to

maximize our impact. It’s been an amazing journey so far but there’s still more work—and more stewardship—to be done. We’re not intimidated. In fact, we’re committed to out-thinking, out-working and out-innovating everything that stands between us and a better future for trails. It’s become WTA’s calling card, and it’s the reason that our next 50 years are going to be even better than our first 50 years.

An Army for TRAILS

When outdoor organizations talk about the problems facing trails today, they give the impression that our favorite hiking thoroughfares were once perfectly provided for and that the issues we now face, from development to funding, are new. The reality is that trails and wild places have always been threatened and outdoors enthusiasts have always needed to demonstrate their care for these things—it’s the very reason Washington Trails Association was founded in 1966.

The 1960s were a critical time in Washington’s recreation history. Back then, hikers felt that impending threats—an increase in motorized recreation and commercial activities like logging and mining—were encroaching on their favorite trails and public lands. It could’ve been the beginning of the end. After all, there weren’t nearly enough hikers to stand up to the more powerful commercial interests. Instead, with a pioneering idea that was shared by three Washington hikers of the time, Ira Spring, Harvey Manning and Louise Marshall rallied a growing army of hikers that would come to stand

up for Washington's beloved trails. The product of that effort was an organization that would bring them together and show them how.

The idea was a simple one. Threatened areas could only be saved if they were more widely known, visited and treasured. This concept was coined by Spring as "green bonding," but in the beginning it was a grand experiment that drove Marshall to launch a hiker newsletter called *Signpost* (predecessor of *Washington Trails*) and publish a guidebook, *100 Hikes in Western Washington*. This was followed by Spring and Manning's *100 Hikes* collection. Everything they published had an important goal: to get people out on trails so they would fall in love with what they saw and then commit themselves to protecting those places.

"Is it too late for feet to save our heritage?" asked Ira Spring in his introduction to *100 Classic Hikes in Washington*. "No. Not if each of you takes up paper and pen and postage stamps and joins the letter-writing militia. Go walking. Fill your feet with the feel of the land. Then ... let your fingers do the walking on pages and mail them to your supervisors of national forests, Congresspersons and Senators, and newspaper editors. All these need to

know what your feet have learned. This wildland is your land, and it is your obligation to be its steward and its advocate."

It wasn't long before the young WTA, through the lens of *Signpost*, gave green bonding one of its first big tests. In the 1960s and 1970s, the pristine environment of the area now known as the Alpine Lakes Wilderness was threatened with encroaching development. At this point, hiking information was widely available and the legion of hikers on both sides of the Cascades had grown. But it remained to be seen: Would the new outdoors enthusiasts be compelled to speak up for protecting one of Washington's iconic areas?

There was only one way to find out. The call for help was sounded by the Alpine Lakes Protection Society (ALPS), Sierra Club and several other conservation organizations. In this pre-Internet era, it was accomplished through notices in *Signpost* and newspapers, as well as by word of mouth. People were asked to show up and testify at local hearings and write impassioned letters to members of Congress calling for a wild Alpine Lakes.

Don Parks, now a trustee with ALPS, had never advocated for the outdoors before he attended his first public meeting for the wilderness effort. "Every year we were losing miles of trails," says Parks. He understood that in order to keep those trails, he needed to take action. That first meeting was all it took—he was hooked. Parks saw that by showing up, he was able

to contribute towards making a difference.

Parks wasn't the only one to show up. Hundreds of other stewards, new and experienced, did as well. And they didn't just attend meetings locally. Some advocates like Parks also traveled to Washington, D.C., armed with photos of stunning blue waters among craggy peaks to meet with members of Congress and testify on behalf of the unparalleled landscape.

In 1976, after dozens of meetings, debates in Congress and phone calls to thought leaders, hikers achieved something great: the highest level of protection in our country—wilderness designation—for the Alpine Lakes. Within the triumphant victory of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness was another, no less important, win: green bonding was a proven success.

From One Voice to MANY

Green bonding was here to stay. It became a cornerstone principle of WTA, but especially the advocacy program, that anyone exposed to our outdoors can become a champion for trails—and not just hikers.

Over time, it became clear that the best way to advocate for our wild lands and trails was not only to advocate for our own interests but to join forces with other trail users—from trail runners to bird watchers to horseback riders to mountain bikers—who have fallen just as hard for the outdoors as we have. We're not just sharing a common

THE EVOLUTION OF AN ISSUE: INCLUDING HIKERS IN NOVA



IN THE LATE 1980s, WTA and its partners started working to revise NOVA (Non-Highway Off-Road Vehicle Activities program) to benefit all trail users. It was meant to fund outdoor recreation grants, but the grantees did not represent the diversity of Washington's trail users.

2002

A study finds that 80 percent of NOVA funds are generated by hikers, bikers, campers, equestrians, berry pickers and other nonmotorized trail users, but grants benefitting these users represent only 20 percent of the program.

2004

WTA works with mountain bikers and other recreation groups to reform NOVA for the benefit of all trail users. A successful reform raised original 20 percent for non-motorized projects to 80 percent!



interest in trails. We're building coalitions that take green bonding to a new level.

"The connections [built] between hikers and horsemen and mountain bikers have been really effective," says Gary Paull, wilderness and trails program coordinator for the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. "The more that groups have a consistent message that they can take to their elected officials, the stronger their voice is."

Interestingly enough, it was the Alpine Lakes Wilderness that provided the proving ground for another idea—this time collaboration. The wilderness itself had been protected since 1976, but since then, the valley directly below the Alpine Lakes, and the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River, had become a dumping ground for rusty cars and trash. In 2007, outdoor champions Rep. Dave Reichert and Sen. Patty Murray asked Congress to add the valley to the wilderness area to protect low- and mid-elevation forest and trails.

Congress didn't act immediately. Advocating for the addition to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness took years of collaboration between WTA and conservation groups like ALPS, Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, Washington Wild and others. It also brought together local community groups like the Middle Fork Outdoor Recreation Coalition, businesses, church leaders and elected

officials, in addition to recreation advocates like Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance.

In December 2014, collaboration was king. The expansion of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness was finally approved, giving 22,000 acres of much-loved land protected status. Without collaboration, the area likely would have been lost to development. Instead, this land remains in the public trust. Today, the Alpine Lakes Wilderness is one of the most visited wilderness areas in the country. But that's not the only thing we're proud of. The effort to protect it has become a model for how nonprofits, individuals and land managers can work together on behalf of Washington's natural treasures.

Collaboration proved to be such a success in 2014 that WTA joined 44 other groups, including The Mountaineers, REI, Washington Scuba Association, Ducks Unlimited and many other seemingly disparate groups, to form the Big Tent Outdoor Recreation Coalition, a nonprofit working to bring broader awareness of the importance of outdoor recreation to the state and establish outdoor recreation as an economic powerhouse. After all, the outdoors aren't just fun and games to Washingtonians; they're big business too. Outdoor recreation is responsible for \$21.6 billion of our state's economy and nearly 200,000 jobs each year.

Collaborations such as this are already paying off in dividends—and not just for the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. "We had such big gains in 2015, from the higher-than-anticipated level of state funding for trails and outdoor recreation to the creation

of an outdoor recreation advisor in the governor's office for the first time in our state's history," says Erin Dziedzic, WTA's strategic advisor in Olympia. "Now we have to ask ourselves: How do we carry that forward without losing ground?"

Innovating for the FUTURE

"There's been a lot of advocacy going on and that's probably kept us where we are. But it feels like it needs to go to another level," says Paull.

That's because there's still more to do. Washington is expanding. By 2040, the state will add 2 million more residents. More people means more boots on the ground and more hiking buddies, but it also means more pressure on the state's trail resources. There are other challenges as well. This summer, with its devastating wildfires, was a sad and powerful example of how difficult it is to guarantee that trails get even the meager funding due to them. Because federal spending for national forests and parks has taken a hit in recent years, land managers are raiding their own budgets—including money earmarked for trails—for operating and emergency costs.

With more people and fewer dollars, "business as usual" won't cut it. We must find innovative ways to build new trails, keep the ones we have accessible and make sure that people continue to have

2009

NOVA funds absorbed into State Parks budget during economic crises.



2010

Hikers join WTA staff in Olympia to lobby the Legislature to restore NOVA funds to their intended purpose: funding trail projects and essential recreation amenities.



2011

Funding restored to NOVA, benefitting 28 nonmotorized trail projects for the enjoyment of hikers, bikers and equestrians.

2015

To date, NOVA has funded 718 projects benefitting hikers because trail users have continued to advocate for high-quality outdoor experiences.



5 EASY STEPS TO BE A TRAIL STEWARD

- ✓ Learn about issues facing trails.
- ✓ Contact Congress about the importance of trail funding.
- ✓ Talk to hiking buddies about how they can protect trails.
- ✓ Volunteer time for trails to the best of your ability.
- ✓ Sign the pledge at wta.org/speakfortrails.

great, wild places to play in. That means new partnerships with local governments and odd bedfellows, reinforcing the economic and social values of trails and switching the mindset from “hiking as a hobby” to “hiking as a fundamental need for quality of life.”

One recent example of WTA’s work to shift this mindset is through our focus on the Teanaway Community Forest near Cle Elum, the first forest of its kind in the state. WTA has a seat on the forest’s advisory committee along with equestrians, farmers, mountain bikers and many others. Together we are walking the halls of the Capitol in Olympia to advocate for the funding to provide close-in recreation opportunities, create a new source of economy for local communities and protect the forest’s ecological values.

Only with these kinds of collaborations will we be successful, whether with securing funding for new trails or protecting more wilderness. Working together as one voice is much stronger than working alone.

Making YOU a Part of the TEAM

If there’s something we’ve learned from WTA’s 50 years of stewardship, it’s that great

need brings out the innovation and greatness in us all. Harvey Manning wasn’t a steward until he saw a clearcut in the middle of awe-inspiring wilderness; Don Parks wasn’t a steward until the Alpine Lakes were in danger of losing more trails. It’s clear that every time a need for trails and special places has come up in our hiking history, people have risen to the occasion—and we have too as an organization.

Heading into our 50th anniversary, we can’t wait to prove ourselves again. But we need your help. It’s easy to contribute. All you need are the boots on your feet to get out there and experience the wild places that make Washington so incredible. Then, in the spirit of Spring’s and Marshall’s work from half a century ago, add your voice to speak up for trails, and share your own stories about why they deserve protection.

“All it takes to be a champion for a place is to speak up and say you care about it,” says Andrea Imler, WTA’s advocacy director. “We need everyone to join us in ensuring future generations will continue to enjoy the trails we love today.”

Together, by using our boots and voices and working together, we can have an incredible impact on Washington’s trails in the next 50 years. As Margaret Mead was fond of saying, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”♦

Thank You to WTA’s Corporate Partners

Rainier - \$25,000+



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



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

THERMAREST



Alpine - \$1,000-\$2,499: Badger Mountain Challenge ♦ Cascade Crest 100-mile Endurance Run ♦ Klahhane Club
Leki USA ♦ Mountaineers Books ♦ Northside USA ♦ Perpetual Motion NW ♦ Seattle Sports Co.

WTA has several special 50th anniversary partnership opportunities for 2016. To find out how your company can support WTA’s work for trails, please call us at (206) 508-6849.

GET THE MOST OUT OF **My** BACKPACK

Using your ideas and feedback, we've added some brand new features to My Backpack, your base camp on wta.org. Here are some tips for setting up and getting the most of your account, all in service of making 2016 your best year on trail yet.

Organize, update, volunteer.



From your backpack, you'll be able to update your magazine mailing address and, as of Feb. 1, manage any trail work parties you've signed up for. For more info, see page 12.



Share, or not.

Toggle on the public view of your saved hikes list, to share the possibilities with hiking buddies. Rather keep your to-hike list private? No problem. You can do that, too.



Reward quality.

Recognize quality trip reports—and trip reporters—for sharing the details that help other hikers find their way.



Map your trips.

See where you've been, and picture the possibilities by seeing your trip reports and saved hikes on a map view.



Customize your saved hikes.

Search, sort and make notes on your list of saved hikes. See which trails you've hiked and what's still left to tackle.



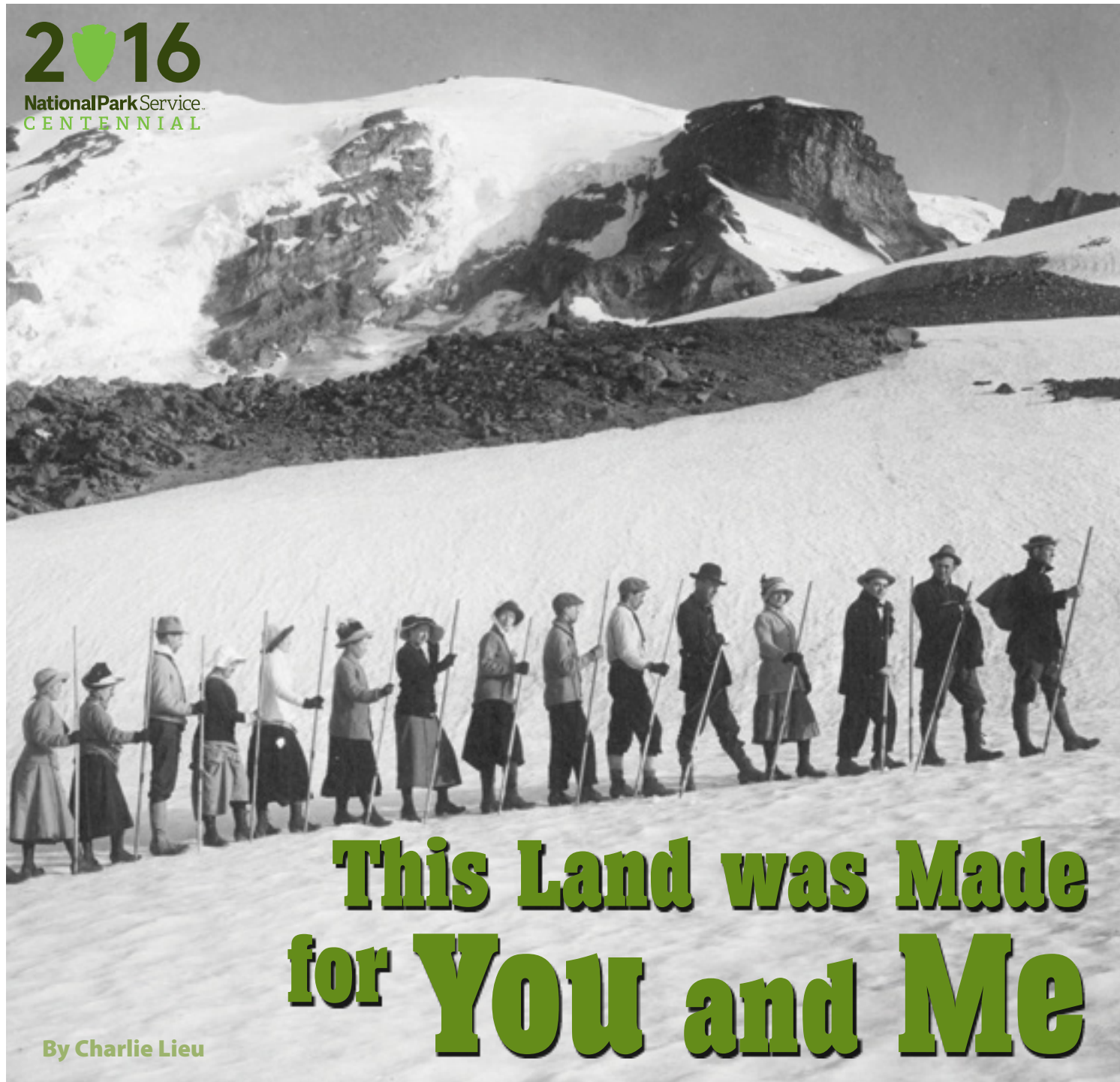
Earn a merit badge.

Earn merit badges for the number and quality of your trip reports, as well as for being a proud WTA member.



2016

National Park Service
CENTENNIAL



This Land was Made for You and Me

By Charlie Lieu

“I am extremely proud to be part of the national park system and excited to be part of it at this exciting time. The goal of the Centennial Celebration is not so much about looking to the past as positioning ourselves for the future. Our job for the next 100 years is to innovate so we can connect with new and diverse audiences in new and interesting ways.”

- Sarah Creachbaum, park superintendent, Olympic National Park

DID YOU KNOW:

- 🛡️ **The national park system** consists of more than 84 million acres located throughout all 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan and the Virgin Islands.
- 🛡️ **Delaware was the only state** without an official national park unit until March 2013, when President Obama designated the park now known as First State National Historical Park.
- 🛡️ **The Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park** is part of an international park, with units in Seattle, Alaska and British Columbia.
- 🛡️ **Lake Chelan National Recreation Area** is named for the Chelan tribe. Their pictographs can still be seen on the cliffs around the lake.
- 🛡️ **The Oregon National Historic Trail** spans seven states and more than 2,000 miles, from Missouri to Oregon and Washington.

Photos courtesy of the National Park Service

The service thus established ... is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

— The Organic Act, 1916

President Woodrow Wilson signed this act into law on August 25, 1916, and in doing so he forever changed the way Americans think about, interact with and manage our wild lands and cultural sites. The act established the National Park Service (NPS) within the existing Department of the Interior, which, until then, had managed the 35 existing national parks and monuments with the War Department and U.S. Forest Service. The new NPS was charged with managing and protecting the park system and would grow in the intervening century to 409 sites. It would become a symbol of our national pride, protected for the enjoyment of generations to come.

For the hundreds of millions of park visitors every year, a national park experience can be wide-ranging. While most of us think about wild places when we think of visiting a national park, an equally important component of the NPS is its network of cultural sites. For countless young people (and adults alike), the historic sites, parks, preserves and trails are places where our past lives on.

“For me, visiting these places was what made history come alive,” says Jimi Hightower, a centennial volunteer ambassador for the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in downtown Seattle. “I didn’t just read about the American Revolution or the westward migration, I got to see and touch these places that make up our cultural fabric.”

The NPS is using its Centennial Celebration as an opportunity to expand its outreach to the next generation of visitors, advocates and supporters (an increasingly diverse audience), while re-engaging those who already know and love the parks. “I was very fortunate to visit a lot of historical sites across the country,” recalls Hightower. “And those experiences were some of my fondest memories as a child. It’s what inspired me to do work that will pass on my passion to the next generation of wilderness and historical advocates.”

This is the vision that the NPS is hoping to impart on an increasingly dynamic and growing population: that everyone can—and should—enjoy and reflect on the vast network of public lands and protected places set aside for all Americans. While the 2016 centennial celebrates the rich history of the NPS with a host of events, it is also a turning point that will see the expansion of programs that we already know and love, such as Trails and Rails and the beloved Junior Rangers program.

In addition, new programs like Bark Rangers (think Junior Rangers for dogs), In My Backyard (where the park is brought to schoolchildren who would not otherwise be exposed to parks) and Park Prescriptions (in which your doctor prescribes hikes as part of a healthy lifestyle) will all be launching soon.

This is the year for everyone to rediscover our national parks—and not just the popular ones. There are 24 parks, sites and monuments located within the Northwest. Make a pledge this year to discover a few new ones.

To quote the singer-songwriter Woodrow “Woody” Guthrie, “This land was made for you and me.” So go outside and play. To find the latest information on centennial events and ongoing programs, visit FindYourPark.com. ♦



KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK is an international collaboration focused on preserving the story of the stampede to the Yukon gold fields. The Seattle unit showcases the city’s crucial role in this historical event that ignited dreams of easy riches in the minds of thousands as word spread of a rich gold strike in northwestern Canada.

INFO: nps.gov/klgo



LAKE CHELAN NATIONAL RECREATION AREA is an alpine paradise less than three hours from Seattle. Discover specially adapted flora and fauna surrounded by jagged peaks that are crowned by more than 300 glaciers. Here you can witness a landscape sensitive to the Earth’s changing climate and learn how to help steward the ecological heart of the North Cascades National Park Complex.

INFO: nationalparks.org/explore-parks/lake-chelan-national-recreation-area



THE OREGON NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL is a park dedicated to the sacrifices, struggles and triumphs of early American settlers. Trail ruts and traces of original settlements can still be seen along a historic trail that was once the primary “road” taken by families, enterprising business managers and fortune hunters who chose to make a new life in the northwest frontier.

INFO: nps.gov/oreg

NW WEEKEND: Winter Retreats

By Brandon Fralic & Rachel Wood

From the blustery Olympic Peninsula to snowy Eastern Washington, a stay at a cozy, rustic lodge is the perfect way to warm up and relax after spending a frosty day snowshoeing at Mount Rainier, skiing in the Methow Valley or beachcombing along the coast.



Stay & Play



Photo courtesy of Kalaloch Lodge

KALALOCH LODGE

On a scenic bluff overlooking the crashing surf of the Pacific Ocean, Kalaloch Lodge offers shelter from the Olympic Peninsula's 12 feet of annual precipitation. Mild coastal temperatures and the potential for storm-watching make this destination an ideal winter retreat.

Originally built in 1925 as Becker's Cabin Camp, Kalaloch Lodge was initially a collection of nine cabins until a 1931 expansion that followed the completion of Highway 101. Today, it welcomes travelers with 10 rooms in the main lodge and 44 cabins and 10 rooms in the Seacrest House. Many of the rooms offer ocean views and cabins are pet-friendly with full or partial kitchens. Rooms do not include Internet, televisions or phones. Take the time instead to walk along the beach, explore the Hoh rainforest or curl up by the fireplace in your cabin to read against the backdrop of ocean waves.

EAT HERE The Creekside Restaurant at the main lodge offers Pacific Northwest fare made with local and seasonal ingredients. For a hearty breakfast, try the smoked salmon hash; the Dungeness crab mac and cheese makes for an indulgent dinner.

HIKE HERE Kalaloch and the surrounding beaches are part of 65 miles of wild coastline in Olympic National Park. Visit **Beach 4** at low tide for the best tidepools, home to intertidal wildlife including sea stars, anemones and barnacles. North of Kalaloch, picturesque **Ruby Beach** offers views of rugged sea stacks. Visit the ranger station south of Kalaloch Lodge to learn more about the area's diverse ecosystem.

GET THERE Kalaloch Lodge is 91 miles from Port Angeles; drive west, then south, on US 101. From Olympia, the lodge is 117 miles; drive west on WA 8, continue west, then north, on US 101.

INFO thekalalochlodge.com



NATIONAL PARK INN LONGMIRE

As America's fifth national park, Mount Rainier is full of history—and it begins at Longmire. Set serenely within the Longmire National Historic Landmark District, the National Park Inn is over a century old. Those in search of a cozy retreat will find it here. Fine examples of the western national park rustic style, or “parkitecture,” surround the inn, including the 1916 museum building and 1930 administrative building.

The National Park Inn at Longmire is the only lodge and restaurant open year-round within the park. The inn offers 25 rooms, mountain views and a boardgame-stocked guest lounge—sans the modern-day distractions of phone, television and Internet. Order up one of their signature hot cocktails and warm up by the oversized stone fireplace—or bundle up to relax on the front porch while watching sunset alpenglow light up Mount Rainier.

GEAR UP The general store at the National Park Inn rents snowshoes and cross-country gear for adults and children.

HIKE HERE The 0.7-mile **Trail of the Shadows** loop presents a casual stroll among forested meadows. Points of interest include the mineral springs responsible for Longmire's settlement and a restored cabin originally built in 1888. For a challenging winter hike or snowshoe, head for **Rampart Ridge**. This 4.5-mile loop begins with a series of relatively steep switchbacks, gaining 1,200 feet to a pleasant stroll along the ridgetop and a viewpoint that offers a wide panorama of Mount Rainier.

GET THERE The National Park Inn at Longmire is 70 miles east of Olympia, 65 miles southeast of Tacoma and 96 miles south and east of Seattle. Drive to Elbe, then continue 20 miles east on WA 706. National park entry fee required.

INFO mtrainerguestservices.com



BEAR CREEK LODGE

Mount Spokane State Park receives an average of 300 inches of snow each winter that's perfect for downhill or cross-country skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing. Just outside the state park, Bear Creek Lodge is conveniently located for an easy winter getaway. Originally opened in 1952, the family owned and operated lodge offers 15 comfortable rooms. All rooms have a private bathroom; some even feature a spa tub. Designed in a rustic spirit, these no-frills rooms are without television, phone or cell service; Internet access is available. Two large fireplaces warm the lodge, and big-screen TVs are available for a movie night. When you're ready to play in the snow, be sure to ask about Bear Creek's nearly 800-foot-long snow tubing hill.

EAT HERE The restaurant and lounge serve up standard American fare, beer and wine. Try the country-style BBQ pork ribs special (Wed. only), or tackle the massive Bear Creek burger.

HIKE HERE For a moderately challenging snowshoe, trek to the **CCC Cabin** on Beauty Mountain. Enjoy views across Spokane Valley while you hike beneath old-growth trees and ascend to the old cabin where a wood stove awaits to warm you up.

GET THERE Bear Creek Lodge is 26 miles from Spokane; drive north on US 2, then northeast on WA 206.

INFO bearcreeklodge.com



METHOW RIVER LODGE

Just a 10-minute walk from the charming Old West-inspired town of Winthrop, Methow River Lodge welcomes travelers ready to explore the Methow Valley. This modern pinewood lodge has 26 rooms with patios overlooking the Methow River. The property also includes six cabins, each sleeping 4 to 6 comfortably, complete with fully stocked kitchens. All accommodations include Internet, satellite television and mini-fridge. The lodge is also right next door to the outdoor Winthrop Ice and Sports Rink. Try your luck on the ice, then head out to the Methow Community Trail to play in the snow.

EAT HERE Head into town for a pint and something to eat at one of the many restaurants within walking distance of Methow River Lodge.

HIKE HERE West of Winthrop, the **Big Valley Wildlife Area** is 1,164 acres of scenic forest. The 5-mile round-trip **Big Valley Loop Trail** is a flat, double-loop section of the Methow Community Trail. Perfect for snowshoeing or cross-country skiing, with plenty of opportunities to view the river and moments to catch the winter sun through the surrounding ponderosa pines.

GET THERE Methow River Lodge is 163 miles from Ellensburg; drive north on US 97 and continue on WA 20 to Winthrop. From Spokane, the lodge is 183 miles; drive west on US 2, then continue north on WA 17 and US 97 to WA 20.

INFO methowriverlodge.com

MOUNT RAINIER CHAIN REQUIREMENTS: All vehicles are required to carry tire chains when traveling in the park during the winter season (Nov. 1–May 1). This requirement applies to all vehicles (including four-wheel-drive), regardless of tire type or weather conditions.

MOUNT SPOKANE PERMIT REQUIREMENTS: As all of Mount Spokane State Park is considered a Sno-Park, both a Sno-Park permit and Discover Pass are required for all visitors during the winter season (Nov. 1–Apr. 30). To use the groomed trails, a groomed trails sticker is required in addition to the regular Sno-Park permit.



TEN ESSENTIALS:

RAIN GEAR

Stay dry. It's the number one rule of survival and the easiest way to prevent hypothermia during cold-weather hikes. When the temp dips, even a light sprinkle can suck heat from your body. So no matter which side of the state you're on, precip protection is one of the most important collections in your gear closet—year-round.

How to Choose Rain Gear

Rain gear for hikers should be dependable, packable and lightweight. Here are a few things to look for.

❑ **DRY AND BREATHABLE:** Keeping precipitation out is just half of the equation. When you're burning up with a sweat, it's equally important to let perspiration escape. The best rain gear for hikers uses technical fabrics that maintain breathability and keep you dry.

❑ **A GOOD HOOD:** Just like heads, there's no standard hood size. Some are oversized to accommodate helmets and ponytails, while others may barely cover your noggin. It's a good idea to try on coats with whatever headwear you plan on using while hiking.

❑ **PACKABLE:** Since you'll probably want to strip off your rain gear and stash it in your pack, pick gear that packs down nice and small. Thinner shells can also allow extra room for layering, giving you more temperature control depending on the weather.



1 Arc'teryx Zeta LT

When the words “atmospheric river” appear in the weather forecast, this is the jacket you want in your pack. The Zeta LT provides superior rain protection, even during drenching downpours, with its well-designed hood and over-the-hip length. Unlike many hardcore rain jackets, the Zeta LT doesn't feel bulky or stiff, and it's comfortable fit and breathability readily accommodate most active outdoor pursuits. Plus, it weighs less than 12 oz. and compresses nicely for easy stashing when the weather clears. M/W \$375

4 Patagonia Torrentshell

The Torrentshell is a form-fitting jacket that provides good rain and wind protection, while remaining nicely breathable. Under prolonged exposure to heavy rain, it did not perform as well as some of the heavier jackets, but it provided good protection during typical showers and became a favorite for wearing around town on wet days. Plus, the light weight (just 12 oz.) and compressibility make it ideal for throwing in a daypack. New for 2016, the Torrentshell is constructed of all-recycled materials. M/W \$129

2 Black Diamond Liquid Point

Relative newcomer to outdoor apparel, Black Diamond does not disappoint with this sleek, practically-bombproof rain shell. The combination of the seam-sealed GoreTex shell and the adjustable, helmet-compatible hood keep the wind and rain at bay, while the multi-directional pit zips help regulate your temperature when your activity output heats you up. No matter whether you're out for a hike, snowshoe or alpine ascent, this jacket has you covered. The fit is trim, so size up if you want to add an insulation layer. M \$249

5 REI Shuksan

This breathable, eVent shell has all the bells and whistles you could ask for—including being waterproof enough to outlast even the toughest downpours. When the weather really starts howling, its chin guard and full-length storm guard keep the elements on the outside. The cut is impressive, built long and lean for athletic builds, with an adjustable hood with plenty of room, and pockets in all the right places. With enough layers underneath, you could even use it as a ski coat. REI really nailed it with the Shuksan! M/W \$249

3 Outdoor Research Helium II

The Helium II may just be the perfect jacket for emergency rain protection. At 6 oz., it is so light and compressible that there is no reason to leave it behind. Waterproof and breathable, it's a great choice for a run in the rain or hikes through wet foliage. The durable fabric and trim fit make this an ideal jacket for hiking, backpacking, climbing, running, cycling or walking around the city. While it may not withstand torrential downpours, or multiple days of heavy rain, it's a great addition to your Ten Essentials. M/W \$159

6 OR VersaLiner / Hanz Gloves

With detachable waterproof shells for extra protection, OR's sleek VersaLiner gloves (6) will be your new favorites. Stash the liners in the zippered pockets or, if it's extra-chilly, put hand-warmer packets in there instead—the pockets are the perfect size. Hanz waterproof gloves (7) are perfect for photographers or anyone who's had to set up a tent in the rain. Grippy and flexible, their three-layer construction keeps your hands dry while giving you the dexterity you need when the weather goes south. \$52 /\$35

Toasty Treads

A good pair of winter hiking boots can mean the difference between a great day on the trail and a death march that leaves you with sore, wet feet, blisters, banged toes and even frostbite. And unless you're content to hang up the boots for seven months of the year, hiking in the Northwest requires footwear that will keep your feet dry and comfortable in muddy, wet and snow-covered terrain. That means good traction on snow and insulation and water protection above and beyond that found in a typical summer hiking boot.

Oboz Bridger BDry The level of comfort, support and protection these boots provided was very impressive. Out of the box, they were more comfortable than our tester's favorite pair of hiking boots and required almost no break-in period. After 8 miles on the rugged Blanca Lake Trail, his feet felt great—no banged toes and no hotspots. They provided solid support and excellent traction over steep, muddy trail with lots of slick roots and rocks and kept our tester's feet warm and dry after a full day of hiking. Sturdy enough for backpacking, yet light enough for day hiking. M/W \$165



Arc'teryx Bora2 GTX The creative design of these boots allows you to match the amount of insulation with the day's trail conditions. An interchangeable GoreTex liner fits into the weather-resistant outer shell and is adequate for most hiking conditions. An optional, more insulated liner can be purchased separately. The liners conform comfortably to the feet and feature an elastic cuff for keeping dirt and snow out. On first use, we found the stiff outer shells putting pressure on the top and sides of the feet, but that was resolved after some break-in time. M/W \$320



Columbia Bugaboot Plus III These comfortable boots are a great choice for keeping your feet cozy on cold winter hikes. The waterproof shell, insulation and reflective inner lining keep your feet warm while walking or playing in the snow and dry when slogging through slush and shallow creeks. The lugged sole provides good traction on the snow, and unlike many heavy winter boots, at about 3 lbs per pair, the Bugaboos are remarkably light. We would not wear these as year-round trail boots, but they function quite well for hiking in snow and snowshoeing. M/W \$170



Ahnu Northridge Perfect for snow play or going for apres after a day on the slopes or trails, these plush, insulated boots are as stylish as they are rugged and comfortable. Our tester especially liked the combination of the lace-up front and side zips, which allowed for a custom fit with a variety of winter pants and socks. The beefy tread provided good traction on a variety of wet and uneven surfaces, while the waterproof upper kept her feet warm, dry and comfortable. The standard footbed is a little thin, so consider replacing it with a good-quality option (e.g., Sole or Superfeet). W \$185



Tips for Choosing Winter Boots

Think carefully as you shop about how you intend to use a boot. No single boot is perfect for all conditions, so you may need to decide which features are most essential. Here are a few things to look for.

❑ **FIT & COMFORT:** A good fit and comfort are essential. Make sure to spend some time walking around in a boot before buying it.

❑ **TRACTION:** Staying safe on wintery terrain requires good traction. Make sure the boot soles are lugged and provide good grip.

❑ **WATERPROOF:** Winter trails are wet trails. At a minimum, winter boots should be water resistant, but in the winter you may regret anything short of fully waterproof.

❑ **INSULATION:** A key component that sets a winter boot apart from a summer boot is adequate insulation to protect against cold feet and even frostbite.



Winter Elixirs

Nothing cools you to the bone quicker than a fierce winter wind. Since you don't have control over Mother Nature, warm yourself from the inside out with one of these hot beverages. Each drink is easy to prepare while hiking and is sure to take the sting out of cold weather.

NATURE'S COFFEE KETTLE We sure love our coffee here in the Northwest. Backcountry options are usually limited to instant packets or methods that require extra equipment, but here's an alternative. Without messing with coffee grounds, just pour water into the foil pouch, seal closed, let sit for 3-4 minutes and serve! The kettle packs flat and lightweight and makes four 8-ounce cups. You can also purchase refill packets and use the kettle up to five times. **Available at naturescoffeekettle.com. \$6**

COCOA SANTE INSTANT HOT COCOA MIX Hot chocolate is an instant pick-me-up on the trail. For a sophisticated update on a childhood favorite, bring a packet of Cocoa Sante on your next adventure. The Parisian blend evokes French "chocolat chaud" with decadent dark chocolate flakes and a hint of vanilla. Just mix one packet with 8 ounces of hot water, stir and enjoy. Chocolatey, creamy and easy! For a truly unique cup of cocoa, try the exotic Kashmir Spice flavor, which blends cinnamon, cardamom and ginger. **Available at REI. \$2**

PACKIT GOURMET JAMAICAN PEANUT PORRIDGE For an easy and utensil-free lunch on your winter hike, try filling your thermos with a sippable soup. Anything brothy will do, but try Packit Gourmet's Jamaican Peanut Porridge, with a robust blend of oats, coconut, ground peanuts and spices. Just add 10 ounces of hot water and let it rehydrate for 10 minutes. So easy to prepare, you can do it on the trail or at home ahead of time. Both warm and hearty, it's the perfect multitasker on cold days. **Available at packitgourmet.com. \$4**

D.I.Y. HOT TODDY Did you know there's a National Hot Toddy Day?! Celebrate on January 11 with this recipe, modified from the original for easy brewing in the backcountry:

- ◆ 1/2 cup boiling water
- ◆ 1 honey stick
- ◆ 1 cinnamon stick (optional)
- ◆ 1 herbal tea bag
- ◆ 1.5 ounces brandy, whiskey or rum

Grab your camp mug and prepare the tea, steeping according to instructions. Snip the end of the honey stick, pour the contents into the tea and stir. Add the brandy, whiskey or rum and garnish with a cinnamon stick for authenticity. Sip slowly and enjoy.

Piping Hot

What's the point in packing a warm drink if it's just going to get cold before you drink it? Here are a few insulated bottle selections that conserve heat so your drinks stay toasty-warm—an essential for cold weather hiking!

KLEAN KANTEEN 12 OZ.

Ideal for a short stroll on a local trail, this 12-ounce insulated bottle will keep your favorite hot beverage steamy for up to six hours. Add the cafe cap (pictured, in combo set) for sipping on the go. \$29



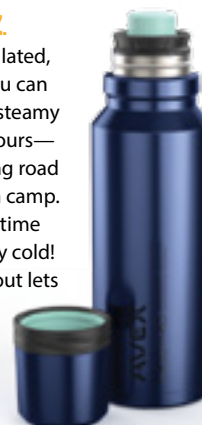
HYDRO FLASK 20 OZ.

If you're packing lots o' latte on your hike, pack along this 20-ounce powerhouse. This durable insulated bottle keeps your drink piping hot for 12 hours. It also has swappable lids and keeps cold things cold for 24 hours, making it a great all-season selection. \$28



AVEX 3SIXTY 40 OZ.

With this super-insulated, 40-ounce tanker, you can enjoy your favorite steamy drink for up to 24 hours—that's good for a long road trip or a weekend in camp. And it doubles that time at keeping drinks icy cold! Plus, the unique spout lets you pour from any angle, spill-free, into its handy, insulated cup. \$37



WINTER WALKABOUTS

“Big Finn Hill Park doesn’t just offer beautifully forested trails but also several athletic fields to play different sports.”

— KRISTEN SAPOWICZ



Big Finn Hill Park / KIRKLAND

Big Finn Hill Park is the lesser-known cousin to the adjoining Saint Edwards State Park in Kirkland. Its expansive 220 acres are worth exploring and getting to know for their miles of meandering trails fit for mountain biking and casual strolling. Chock-full of tall Douglas-firs, ferns and bright green mosses, it offers possibilities to spot eagles, deer and owls.

Start by carefully crossing Juanita Dr. and heading west. When you see the sign for the park entrance on 72nd Ave NE, go south and wander the many winding trails through the forest first. Along the way, you'll see numbered wooden markers at the trail junctions. They don't follow any particular path—and the map doesn't show every trail—so pay attention to your progress to help find your way back. If you get turned around and lose your whereabouts, just head for the sound of the road.

In addition to being a great location for dog walkers and families with kiddos, the park has some moderate elevation in a few spots that makes it attractive to mountain bikers. Be alert for bikers along the trail and move to the side to let them pass.

DISTANCE: 9.5 miles // **MAP:** Big Finn Hill Park
ELEVATION GAIN: 100 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 450 ft.
PERMIT: None // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: kingcounty.gov/services/parks-recreation

TRAILHEAD: Park entrances are located at NE 138th St from both Juanita Dr NE and 84th Ave NE. Two parking lots are available in the park area east of Juanita Dr NE.

HIKE & PHOTO: Kristen Sapowicz



Licorice Fern Trail / ISSAQUAH ALPS

Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park is the largest "urban wild land" in the United States, with more than 3,000 acres of forest riddled with 38 miles of hiking trails. The Licorice Fern Trail is a great choice for Cougar Mountain veterans looking for a fresh approach to Far Country Falls.

The trail begins directly from 169th Ave SE; look for a small hiker sign indicating the trailhead. Head into the trees on the wide gravel path, where the trail angles uphill, winding beneath mossy alders and through a thick understory of vine maple and fern. After 1 mile of hiking, the trail crosses SE Licorice Way before continuing to climb another 0.3 mile to the junction with the Indian Trail.

Head left at the junction for 0.5 mile to the Far Country Trail, then continue straight ahead to reach the Far Country Falls overlook. The small, multitiered cascade drops through a field of moss-covered boulders. You can add some mileage by hiking another 0.3 mile up the Far Country Trail, to the Far Country Lookout, for a peekaboo view of the surrounding suburban landscape.

DISTANCE: 3.8 miles // **MAP:** Cougar Mtn Park
ELEVATION GAIN: 200 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 700 ft.
PERMIT: None // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/licorice-fern

TRAILHEAD: From I-405, exit onto Coal Creek Pkwy. Head south to May Valley Rd. Turn left and continue 2.3 miles, merge onto SE 112th St, then turn left onto 169th Ave SE.

HIKE & PHOTO: Nate & Jer Barnes

The **Licorice Fern Trail** is a great alternative to the more popular Cougar Mountain trails, and offers the same outdoor experience with less foot traffic.

RAINY DAY GETAWAY

Easy and approachable for any hiker, the **Licorice Fern Trail** is a good option on a rainy day, as **Far Country Falls** is fueled entirely by rain and snowmelt.



HIKE IT: Urban Trails



Little Mountain Park's trail network has grown considerably in recent years. Since 2009, the **Mount Vernon Trail Builders** have logged over 12,000 volunteer hours here, building shared-use trails for hikers, runners and mountain bikers. This is the place to go if you're looking to discover new trails in the Mount Vernon area.



Little Mountain Park / MOUNT VERNON

Aptly named Little Mountain is easily accessible year-round. This 522-acre forested park—just a few miles from Mount Vernon's downtown area—feels much farther from the city. A narrow road leads to the sub-1,000-foot summit, where Skagit Valley views await. While driving to the top is pleasant, it is far more rewarding to hike.

For a short loop hike, park at the pullout signed "To trails." Head up the shared Bonnie and Clyde Trail, which begins with a moderate climb before easing to contour around the mountainside. Along the way you'll encounter an abandoned car—surely inspiration for this trail's name. Reach a junction at approximately 0.9 mile. To the left, the Sidewinder Trail switchbacks gently up the mountain and is popular with mountain bikers. Instead, turn right for the short, steep, hiker-only Ginny's Trail. At the road, stay right to reach the summit overlook.

From the top of Little Mountain, gaze over fertile fields and the Skagit River toward Fidalgo and Whidbey Islands. To complete the loop, head southeast and follow the signed Ridge Trail down.

DISTANCE: 1.5 miles // **MAP:** Mt. Vernon Trail Builders
ELEVATION GAIN: 300 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 934 ft.
PERMIT: None // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: mountvernontrailbuilders.com

TRAILHEAD: From I-5, take exit 225 onto Anderson Rd east for 1 mile. Turn right on E. Blackburn Rd, then right again on Little Mountain Rd to the park entrance.

HIKE: Rachel Wood // **PHOTO:** Brandon Fralic

WINTER WARMUP

Cozy up near the fireplace at **Trumpeter Public House** in downtown Mount Vernon. With family-friendly dining, gluten-free options and a wide selection of beer, wine and spirits, it has something for everyone.



Interurban Trail / BELLINGHAM

This trail can be short or long, depending on how much you want to hike and which trailhead you start from. Along the way, you will pass several quaint waterfalls and some spectacular views of the San Juan Islands and Chuckanut Bay.

For a longer option, hike from the north end of Fairhaven Park south to Arroyo Park. At about 1 mile, a 0.6-mile side loop breaks off eastward and crosses 24th St to Hoag's Pond. This little forested pond has a wooden bench to sit and makes a nice spot for relaxing. Continuing south, the Interurban Trail enters Arroyo Park, where there are several unmarked, unmapped side trails. Stay on the main trail through the forest for 0.75 mile to a set of switchbacks that climb steeply uphill for a short distance before easing to exit the park. The trail then continues another 4 miles through the forested Chuckanut Mountains to Larrabee State Park.

Along the trail are several blacktop roads leading to private homes. The trail itself, in certain sections, is actually part of private gravel roads but residents have authorized access to hike on the main trail.

DISTANCE: Up to 11.8 miles // **MAP:** Chuckanut Rec Area
ELEVATION GAIN: 300 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 350 ft.
PERMIT: Discovery Pass // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/interurban-trail

TRAILHEAD: From Bellingham, drive south on Chuckanut Dr. There are trailheads at Arroyo Park, Fairhaven Park and Larrabee State Park.

HIKE & PHOTO: Mike Morrison



CARRY YOUR ESSENTIALS

Even on short, local trails, you should still be prepared for sudden turns in the weather. Pack along your Ten Essentials, including rain gear.

Skagit-Sauk Reach Trail / ROCKPORT

Extending from the family-friendly Wetland Wildlife Interpretive Trail at Howard Miller Steelhead Park, the Skagit-Sauk Reach Trail stretches toward the confluence of the Skagit and Sauk Rivers before looping back toward the camping area at the park. The gentle terrain of this trail offers access to the banks of the Wild and Scenic Skagit River, mountain views and prime bird-watching opportunities.

Begin by exploring the short interpretive loop, where informational signs highlight the area's wildlife and plant life and the important relationship between the two. From the loop's far end, continue west through the grassy, wooded landscape, where spur trails lead to the banks of the river. From the shoreline, cast your gaze upward, toward the trees; you'll likely spot bald eagles perched above the river.

The path leads north, then east, as the loop makes its way back to its starting point, skirting the boundary between an open, grassy meadow and a stand of deciduous trees. Keep your eyes peeled for deer grazing in the grass and for birds, such as hawks and ravens, soaring overhead.

DISTANCE: 8 miles // **MAP:** Green Trails 45
ELEVATION GAIN: Minimal // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 300 ft.
PERMIT: None // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/skagit-sauk-reach-trail

TRAILHEAD: From I-5, drive east on SR 20 to Rockport. Turn right on SR 530 to Rockport Park Rd. Turn right again to the park entrance.

HIKE: Lindsay Leffelman // **PHOTO:** Craig Romano



Take time to check out the **Skagit River Bald Eagle Interpretive Center** at the park. During the winter season, the center is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays

Theler Wetlands / BREMERTON

Located at the head of Hood Canal, Theler Wetlands consists of more than 3 miles of accessible walking trails within 139 acres of protected salt marsh and estuary wetlands. If they're open, discover the displays and hands-on exhibits that teach more about the wetlands ecosystem.

From the visitor center, walk along the River Estuary Trail, which follows an old dike for about 0.5 mile. At the first junction, go right to explore the recently restored saltwater estuary. Watch for red-winged blackbirds, kingfishers, herons, Canada geese and other waterfowl. The trail continues for about 0.5 mile, passing the Pacific Northwest Salmon Center before rejoining the River Estuary Trail. Turn right, passing the picnic area and restroom, to a series of boardwalks that lead to a junction at 1.25 miles, where a viewing platform overlooks the Union River.

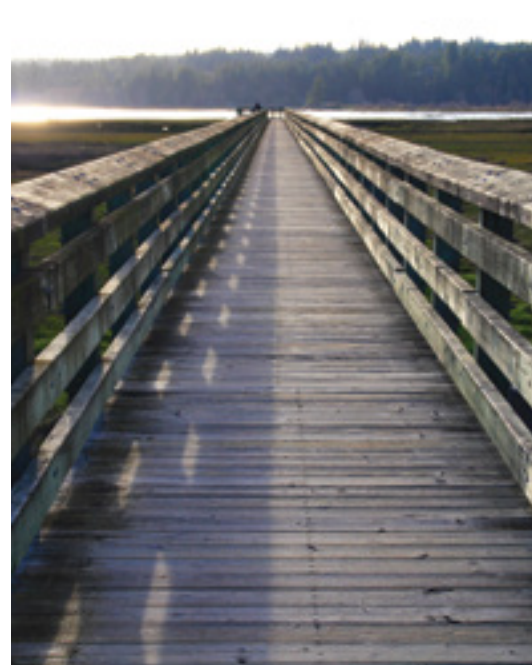
Before returning to the parking lot, take the 0.25-mile South Tidal Marsh Trail for views of Hood Canal and the Olympic Mountains. Also consider exploring the Sweetwater Creek and Alder Creek Trails, both of which make nice 0.25-mile loops.

DISTANCE: 3.5 miles // **MAP:** USGS Belfair
ELEVATION GAIN: 50 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 50 ft.
PERMIT: None // **DOGS:** Not permitted

INFO: wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/mary-e-theler-wetlands-nature-preserve

TRAILHEAD: From Bremerton, drive west on SR 3 to Belfair. Continue 1 mile to the Mary E. Theler Community Center.

HIKE & PHOTO: Kelsie Donleycott





Sacajawea Heritage Trail / TRI-CITIES

Hike, run or bike a few, or all 23, miles of this paved trail that links parks and riverside greenbelts in all three of the Tri-Cities. It's named for the young Lemhi Shoshone woman who accompanied Lewis and Clark as a scout and interpreter and visited the area in October 1805 on the expedition's way to the Pacific. They made camp at the confluence of the Snake and Columbia Rivers, at what is now Sacajawea State Park.

The heritage trail begins at the state park and travels north along the Columbia through Pasco before crossing the river. Here you can veer north along the Columbia on the Richland Riverfront Trail. The Sacajawea Heritage Trail continues south through nature preserves on the Yakima River Delta and then on through Kennewick's sprawling Columbia Park before crossing the Columbia and returning to Pasco. There are lots of wonderful interpretive sites, displays and sculptures along the way.

At Sacajawea State Park you can visit the interpretive center as well as see the displays that make up the Confluence Project, which was commissioned for the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

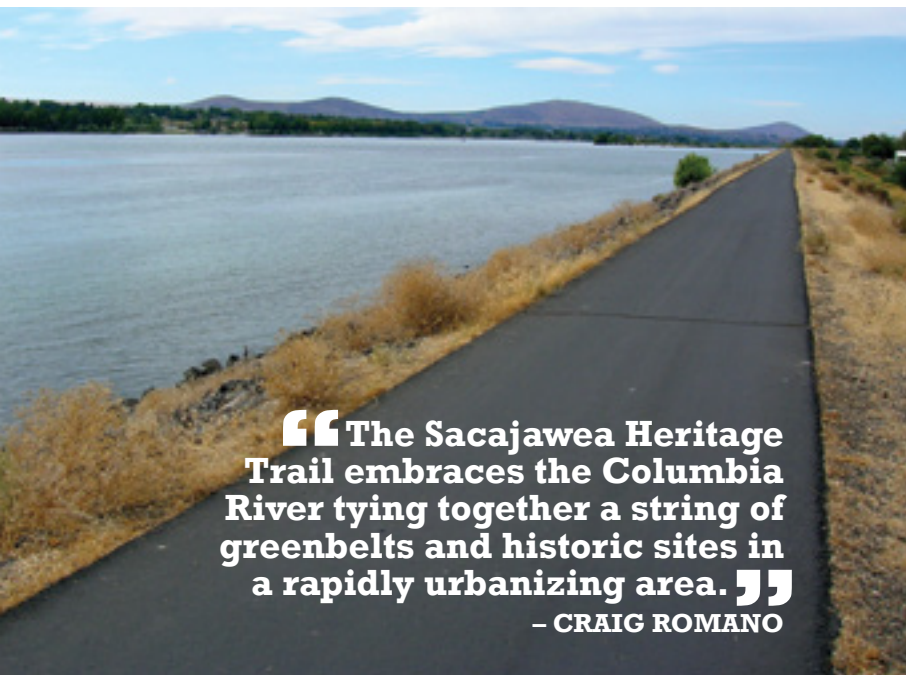
DISTANCE: Up to 23 miles // **MAP:** Sacajawea Heritage
ELEVATION GAIN: Minimal // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 400 ft.
PERMIT: None // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: visittri-cities.com/what-to-see-and-do

TRAILHEAD: The trail can be accessed from many locations within the Tri-Cities, including Columbia Park and Sacajawea State Park (Discover Pass required).

HIKE & PHOTO: Craig Romano

Rattlesnake Mountain Brewery, right on the Sacajawea Heritage Trail in Richland, is a favorite watering hole for local runners, hikers and cyclists.



“The Sacajawea Heritage Trail embraces the Columbia River tying together a string of greenbelts and historic sites in a rapidly urbanizing area.”
— CRAIG ROMANO

Frenchman's Bar Trail / VANCOUVER

Just a few miles from the heart of downtown Vancouver is a quaint rural getaway, where the Frenchman's Bar Trail connects Vancouver Lake Park to Frenchman's Bar Regional Park. The wide, paved path provides the perfect urban getaway for hikers and dog walkers alike—it's also a favorite among birders. On clear days, you'll be treated to views of Mount Hood, Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens.

As the trail proceeds past Vancouver Lake to Frenchman's Bar Regional Park, it traverses the shore of the Columbia River, with views across the way to Sauvie Island and the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, just north of Kelly Point Park. With unhindered views of the Columbia River, open sandy beaches and mountain vistas, there's plenty of room to stretch out in this southwest Washington backyard.

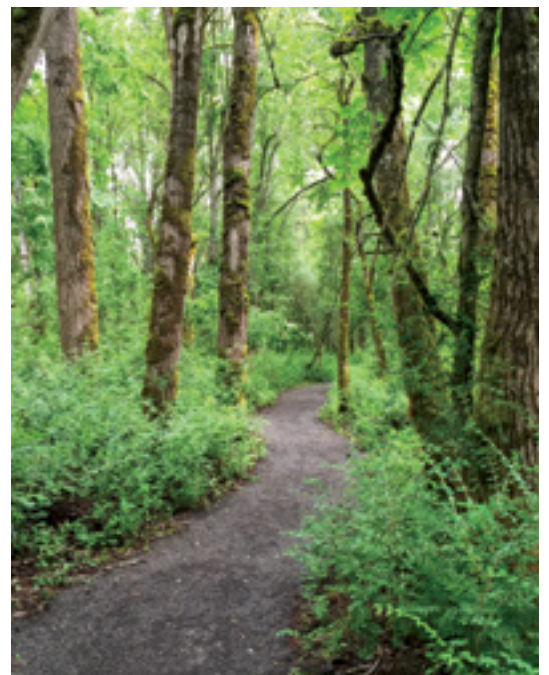
While dogs are permitted on the trail year-round, they are not permitted on the beach or surrounding turf area of Vancouver Lake Regional Park between April 1 and Oct. 31.

DISTANCE: 2.5 miles // **MAP:** Vancouver Lake Park
ELEVATION GAIN: None // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 210 ft.
PERMIT: None // **DOGS:** Not permitted

INFO: clark.wa.gov/publicworks/parks/vancouverlake.html

TRAILHEAD: From I-5 in Vancouver, take exit 1D onto 4th Plain Blvd. Head west 1.5 miles, then merge right to stay on 4th Plain. Continue 3 miles to the main park entrance.

HIKE: Ryan Schreiner // **PHOTO:** Ryan Ojerio





Yakima Greenway / YAKIMA

The Yakima Greenway is a 10-mile paved trail along the Yakima and Naches Rivers with a mix of developed parks, fishing lakes, picnic areas, playgrounds and nature trails—perfect for anything from a short walk or a picnic with the kids to a run or an all-day hike.

The center of the greenway is Sarg Hubbard Park, with a playground and a lakeside amphitheater; a little more than 1 mile south is Sherman Park, with a picnic area and an off-leash dog park; 2 miles north, the Rotary Lake area provides access to the YWCA Human Spirit Nature Trail. At the south end of the greenway is the Poppoff Nature Trail, with interpretive brochures and wildlife viewing platforms.

Away from the parks, cottonwoods tower over the trail above a thick understory of wild rose, red-osier dogwood and willows, where gray squirrels dart here and there. With the rivers seldom out of sight, you're likely to see a variety of songbirds and waterfowl, including geese, ducks, kingfishers, great blue herons and, in winter, bald eagles.

DISTANCE: Up to 10 miles // **MAP:** Yakima Greenway
ELEVATION GAIN: 100 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 1,130 ft.
PERMIT: None // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: yakimagreenway.org

TRAILHEAD: Access the greenway at Myron Lake, Harlan Landing, the Rotary Lake parking area, Sarg Hubbard Park, Sherman Park and from Spring Creek and Valley Mall Blvd.

HIKE & PHOTO: David Hagen

When visiting the **Dishman Hills Natural Area**, take a little extra time to explore the **native plant garden** near the parking lot. It is maintained by the University High School girls cross-country team.



Dishman Hills Trail / SPOKANE

A hike through the Dishman Hills Natural Area allows visitors to step back in time and wander through the region's geology and intact ecosystem, all just minutes from downtown Spokane. With the consolidation of the trail system into several conjoined loops, hikers can choose trails of varied lengths.

Start by heading east out of Camp Caro to the Deep Ravine Trail. This WTA-improved trail climbs a short distance before dropping into—you guessed it—a very deep ravine. This route detours to Goldback Spring, then returns to the main trail. Or bypass the Deep Ravine and climb through the rocky outcroppings of Enchanted Ravine. Here, you can loop back to your starting point or continue uphill to the next junction and more loop options.

For the longest option, turn left and contour around Eagle Peak (with an optional spur to the summit) before coming to the Lost Ponds intersection, a good place to catch a frog chorus in the evening. Enjoy the view, then return on the Pond Loop Trail. Don't miss the native plant garden near the parking area.

DISTANCE: Up to 7 miles // **MAP:** Dishman Hills Area
ELEVATION GAIN: 400 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 2,425 ft.
PERMIT: None // **DOGS:** Leashed

INFO: <http://dishmanhills.org>

TRAILHEAD: From I-90, take the Argonne exit and turn south. Turn west on Sprague, then take the second left onto Sargent Rd. Continue to the parking area on the right.

HIKE & PHOTO: Holly Weiler

YAKIMA ARBORETUM

Accessible from the greenway at Sherman Park, the arboretum features an **orienteeing course**, a small **Japanese garden**, a **self-guided tour** and an **interpretive center/gift shop**. Open 9 to 4 in winter.



Northwest Exposure

EDITOR'S CHOICE

WTA's **2015 Northwest Exposure** photo contest drew in more than 1,800 entries in the categories of Trailscapes, Hikers in Action, Flora and Fauna, Camp Life and, newly introduced, Fun on Trail. You can see the prize-winning photos in the **Northwest Exposure 2016 Calendar**. In addition to the contest winners, we would also like to recognize ten honorable mentions as our **Editor's Picks**. WTA would like to thank all of the contest participants, and looks forward to seeing more of your photos in 2016.

• **TOP ROW:** Sahale Arm, by Andrew Bertino // Porcupine, by Mary Campbell // Olympic Coast, by Xiao Wang.
• **MIDDLE ROW:** Mountain goats, by Delton Young // Coleman Glacier, by Charles Martin // Gray jay, by Gabe Purpur. **BOTTOM ROW:** Palouse Falls, by Craig Goodwin
• // Camp nap, by Jeff Mallahan // Panorama Point, by Stuart Doty // Table Mountain aurora, by Jack Nichols.





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