

**Editor's Choice: Best New Hiking Gear for 2015**

# Washington **TRAILS**

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

# 2015 **Eruption Anniversary**

**Hiking with Wildlife**

**May+Jun 2015**



**Traverse the Southern Olympics  
Hiking Weekend in the Tri-Cities**



14



20



26



50

**May+Jun 2015**

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**COVER:** The unforgettable image of Mount St. Helens' eruption on May 18, 1980. Photo by Austin Post, USGS

# 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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## Spring in Central WA

Spring, before temperatures rise and bugs do their thing, is the ideal time to explore Washington's heartland. Rugged coulees, deep canyons, desert wildflowers, ancient lakes and shallow potholes—the stunning scenery brings me back again and again. I am reminded of my favorite family vacation, car camping on the banks of the Columbia River above Grand Coulee Dam. The days were hot, the river cold and the adventures nonstop.

Today, a journey to Central Washington brings back those same feelings of wonder as I follow the mighty river and its tributaries, searching for those experiences that you simply can't find anywhere else in the world.

So taken have I been by this area that I have visited three times this year alone. I started at the magnificent Ancient Lakes and was so entranced that I returned three weeks later with a friend who, like me, had never visited this series of lakes in the middle of the sagelands. And what about the nearby Wild Horses Monument? Where else do you hike to 15 life-size horses (called Grandfather Cuts Loose the Ponies) that stand proudly on a ridgeline? How about the coulee named Frenchman, where climbers flock in the dead of winter due to its sunny slopes and hikers explore as the flowers bloom? And then there's mineral-filled Soap Lake with its healthy salt waters, Coulee City and its historic trail, Gas and Grab pastries and friendly folk. And maybe my favorite of them all—Steamboat Rock—which juts straight out of the river like a gigantic boat, and where I once interrupted a herd of elk as I walked its perimeter, gazing in awe at the constantly changing view.

There is so much to discover—and protect—in Washington. At WTA, we take our commitment to preserve, promote and protect trails throughout the state very seriously. Two years ago, we opened an office in the Southwest and hired staff in the Northwest, and last year we hired our first staff member in Spokane. This year, I am pleased to announce that we will continue our expansion with more regional trip reporters, a greater focus on regional advocacy and more volunteer work in the center of our state.

Whether you experience Central Washington as a trail maintenance volunteer, trip reporter or hiker, we encourage you to take advantage of spring by visiting the heart of Washington in its prime. For inspiration, check out this issue's Northwest Weekend in the Tri-Cities (page 26), then flip on over to the feature highlighting the explosive anniversary of Mount St. Helens (page 14). Even more ideas for exploring Central Washington can be found online through our Hiking Guide and Trip Reports at wta.org.

Happy hiking,

*Karen Daubert*



**TOP:** WTA presented the keynote address at Back Country Horsemen of Washington's annual meeting. In attendance were Trygve Culp, BCHW President (left), and WTA staff and representatives Jeff Chapman, Tim Van Beek, Karen Daubert, Becky Miller and Gary Zink, along with Tom Mix, BCHW-WTA liaison.

**MIDDLE:** WTA volunteers, including students from Western Washington University, have been hard at work improving conditions on popular trails in Bellingham's Sehome Hill Arboretum. This spring they put the finishing touches on a critical trail reroute through challenging terrain.

**BOTTOM:** WTA's advocacy director, Andrea Imler, joined Rep. Reichert and fellow conservation and recreation groups to celebrate the 22,000-acre addition to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, which passed Congress in December 2014.

# EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Backcountry

As hikers, we all live near, and hike in, bear country. Recently, a little independent film made the rounds in art house theaters and became available on streaming services: **Backcountry**. It is a survival-horror tale of a young couple who venture into the wilderness of Ontario, Canada, for a romantic weekend but find themselves the victims of a horrific nightmare: a bear attack.

The story is based on an actual incident, and was carefully crafted to illustrate exactly what a bear attack would be like, in all its visceral horror. I am not a fan of horror, or gratuitous gore—and this is not that kind of film—but as an avid hiker, I was compelled to check it out. The very well-acted story is a character study of survival in the extreme, in the places so many of us like to play.

A bit shaken after watching the movie, I wanted to know more about bear attacks. In actuality, black bear attacks are exceptionally rare, with **only 61 known fatal attacks recorded in North America in the last 100+ years**. That's an average of 1 every 2 years. In many of these fatalities, there were often contributing factors, including sick or starving bears, or attempts at feeding bears. In contrast, an average of 74 people are killed by lightning, and more than 30,000 killed by auto accidents annually in North America. So you are safer hiking with bears than you are driving your car.

For more information on hiking with bears, visit [bear.org](http://bear.org) and [bearsmart.com](http://bearsmart.com). And if you're in the mood for a outdoor thriller, check out **Backcountry**. Just do yourself a favor—don't watch it the night before a hiking trip!



# SIGNPOST

Eli Boschetto

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## 2015 Gear Guide

In this issue of *Washington Trails*, you'll find our 2015 hiking gear guide—just in time to help you spend that REI dividend burning a hole in your pocket. This year's guide features an assortment of backpacking gear essentials—tents, packs, bags, boots, etc.—hand-picked and trail-tested by myself (and a few others). While this is one of the perks of being the editor of a hiking magazine, rest assured it is not all fun and games. Not every piece of gear out there is a winner.

The thing you can trust about the gear reviews in *WT* from myself and others is that—as a nonprofit publication—we are not obligated to promote gear based on advertising placements. This allows us to produce candid, unbiased reviews of the gear we like. If a piece of gear performs well and we like it, we'll promote it; if a piece of gear underperforms, we won't promote it because we have no obligation to do so. In this way, you can be assured that you are getting 100% genuine and honest recommendations for only the good stuff.

With that in mind, I've selected some really great gear options in this year's guide that you just might want to consider adding to your own gear closet. Among those are an incredibly comfortable sleeping bag that is ideal for those who like to have a little room to move around, a trekking pack that is an organizer's dream, and one of the lightest, most breathable pairs of hiking boots I've ever worn.

So if you're in the market for a new tent, backpacking stove or sleeping pad, check out the Editor's Choice Gear Guide on page 30. Then, go online and do your shopping through [wta.org/gearguide](http://wta.org/gearguide), where every purchase you make gives back to WTA up to 7% of your purchase price to help support our trail maintenance crews, youth programs and the best hiking magazine (this one!) coming to your mailbox.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Eli Boschetto, the author of the article.

## WTA STAFF PICKS: Where to See Wildlife



Washington's mountains are full of wild critters. Some are easy to see, such as deer and marmots, and others are more elusive, like bears and martens. The key to observing wildlife is hiking where they live and when they're active. For more info on hiking with wildlife, check out the feature on page 20.

LEFT: The BearVault BV500 food storage canister is approved by Olympic, North Cascades and Yosemite National Parks. (Not available in rainbow design.)

Catching a wild animal in its native habitat, demonstrating natural behaviors, is a hallmark of great wildlife photography. Check out some amazing examples from the photographers who participated in our Northwest Exposure Photo Contest last year at [wta.org/gallery](http://wta.org/gallery).



Editor's Choice photo "Pika Peek-a-boo" by Jacqueline Kajdzik

## What's Your Spirit Animal?

WTA's newest staffers reveal their Northwest wildlife counterparts and tips for seeing these animals on trail. Learn more about WTA staff at [wta.org/staff](http://wta.org/staff).



**Kayla Bordelon** (membership): *Salmon, because it adapts to changing environments, thrives during long journeys to far-off places and has a strong sense of home in the Pacific Northwest.*

- Head out to the Elwha in the fall to cheer on the Chinook as more and more salmon return to this now free-flowing river.



**Kristin Blankenheim** (development): *Marbled murrelet, because if I had a superpower, it would be to fly. Like the murrelet, you can find me in the woods, near the ocean or hanging out on the rocks. I have dual U.S.-Canadian citizenship, which the murrelet also shares.*

- Head into the heart of the Olympics for a chance to catch a marbled murrelet—or other elusive birds—in action.



**Jackie van Doorn** (development): *Otters, because I love playing with friends, swimming and checking out Washington's coast!*

- Clean water, plenty of sea-life snacks and shoreline vegetation make for prime habitat for sea otters. Try walking the shoreline along Leadbetter Point State Park.



**Frances Chiem** (advocacy/outreach): *Red foxes! There was a family of them that lived next to my parents' house.*

- Catch cunning foxes in action at Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge in the Selkirk Mountains. If the foxes elude you, you're still bound to see other wildlife!



**Jen Gradisher** (trail maintenance): *Coyotes, because they are playful, skillful and, due to their adaptive ability, can be found wandering in a multitude of environments, like me!*

- Look for coyotes at dawn and dusk in the open landscapes of Central and Eastern Washington. Listen for the distinctive yips of juveniles trying out their voices.



## Shared on Facebook:

I love the hiking community. Yesterday we hiked Denny Creek. The bridge is washed out so there's only half a big log left. My husband helped this group get their little tiny schnauzer across because the dog was standing on the rock crying before they came back for him. Then they helped get our lab Molly (not tiny, weighing in at almost 60 pounds) and me and my camera bag over. Meanwhile another group rescued my sunglasses after they fell in the river. Hikers create the best community and it always makes me so happy!

— Ashley Fontaine

## WTA TRIP REPORTS:

# Overlooked & Underfoot

*There needs to be a new choice on the Trip Report drop-down menu on bug status: maybe a “bugs were cool” option? The ladybugs are out, and they’re awesome. Stick to the trail so as not to trample them, but have a camera handy. The spring swarms are fantastic to watch.* — Holly Weiler, Liberty Lake Regional Park

Read more trail stories and conditions in Trip Reports, and help the hiking community by filing a report of your own, at [wta.org/tripreports](http://wta.org/tripreports).



## BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

A campsite is someone’s home when in the backcountry. Be respectful of your neighbors and do your part to keep camping an enjoyable experience for all.

- ◆ Set up your camp in designated areas, and follow Leave No Trace guidelines.
- ◆ Leave some personal space by not crowding your neighbors.
- ◆ Keep your campsite clean, and cook and wash 200 feet from camp and water.
- ◆ Be sure to store your food properly so as not to attract animals.
- ◆ Don’t take shortcuts through others’ campsites.
- ◆ Voices, radios and other noises carry; be respectful of quiet hours: 9pm to 8am.

## Tell Us What You Think

Washington Trails Association is conducting a survey and we would love to hear from you. As a member of WTA we value your feedback, so please weigh in on our work to protect and maintain hiking trails. As a thank you for participating, you will be entered to **win an Outdoor Research Elevator backpack**. The survey deadline is May 10.

Find the survey on our homepage, [wta.org](http://wta.org).



### Kudos for WTA members and volunteers:

*“Washington Trails Association (WTA) is coming out to help build two more miles of trail at Grand Ridge and, let’s be honest, this network of trails wouldn’t exist without their massive amounts of sweat equity. Seriously—if you see a WTA member, thank them for their support. Hugging them is just dangerous; they’re always carrying a Pulaski, 15 lbs of granola or wearing a hard hat with a name like ‘Maverick’ on it. To sign up, visit this link, and know you have our undying gratitude.”*

— King County Parks



Students (L-R) Pabla Ventura, Nicole Cashman, Mckenzie Meyer, Tessa Thom, Emma Loney, Devin Boyd, Aurora Smith and club advisor Jackie Woolman-Morgan meet with Rep. Dan Kristiansen in the House chambers.

## Future Voters, Avid Hikers Prove Advocacy Is for Everyone

OLYMPIA – The outdoors loom large for communities living in the shadow of Mount Pilchuck, but some worry those values will be lost on the next generation. A group of students in Granite Falls is working to change that.

It all started when the students noticed that, despite living so close to the North Cascades, many of their peers weren’t getting outside or weren’t thinking about what it takes to protect their natural heritage. But the students don’t blame this on apathy; they see it as more of an information gap.

“They don’t know what’s there to explore,” says sophomore Emma Loney.

To combat the problem, Loney and several friends formed a club, “Planet Granite.” Together, they pick up trash, go on hikes and watch documentaries to educate themselves on pressing issues. They also advocate for trails.

Despite busy school schedules, in February the students joined WTA in Olympia for Hiker Lobby Day. Many of them still have a few years before they are old enough to vote, but they know it is essential that they get involved in the legislative process.

After meeting with Sen. Kirk Pearson and Reps. Dan Kristiansen and Elizabeth Scott from the 39th District, the advocates said they learned how complex the legislative process can be but didn’t feel daunted.

“It’s encouraging to know your voice has an impact,” says junior Tessa Thom. “In a meeting [with elected officials], you can see a decision happen and you’re part of it.”

### Anyone Can Advocate for Trails

- Visit WTA’s Action Center at [wta.org/action](http://wta.org/action), where you can find out who your legislators are, view upcoming issues affecting trails, submit comments and sign petitions.
- Sign up for the Trail Action Network at [wta.org/action/action-network](http://wta.org/action/action-network) to get email alerts and updates on important issues.
- Submit a Trip Report to let us know about trails that need attention.

## REDISCOVER THE SUIATTLE:

# Boots on the Ground

DARRINGTON – Wearing brightly colored hard hats and big smiles, WTA volunteers are once again a presence on trails accessed by the Suiattle River Road, which reopened in October 2014 after 11 years of closures. WTA is working with the Darrington Ranger District and the Pacific Crest Trail Association to begin bringing these rough and rugged trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness back to their former glory.

In mid-April, WTA crew leaders hauled their crosscut saws up the Suiattle River Road to start clearing trails and brushing up on their log-out skills for the busy season ahead. By late April, WTA work parties were in full swing. Volunteers have been clearing downed logs, repairing damaged tread and cutting back brush to improve conditions on this beautiful river hike.

In the coming weeks, the Back Country Horsemen of Washington will generously help pack in tools and gear so that WTA volunteers can improve the entire length of the Suiattle River Trail and then work their way north along the Pacific Crest Trail. The nearby Downey Creek Trail, the southern terminus of the legendary Ptarmigan Traverse, will also be cleared in the next month thanks to two upcoming WTA Backcountry Response Teams.

Volunteers aren't the only ones on trail in the Suiattle. Adventurous hikers have already been filing Trip Reports from the area. If you go now, remember that downed trees, rough tread and brushy trails won't be the only challenges you'll find. Be prepared for early-season conditions, including fast-moving creeks and high-elevation snow.

*Plan your visit for May 30, and join WTA at the annual Darrington Day community celebration.*



# Thank you for being a member

## Is it time to renew your membership?

If you're a WTA member, you know how good it feels to support the trails you love. Membership with WTA connects you to the hiking community and empowers WTA to protect and preserve hiking trails across the state. And members receive great benefits, like *Washington Trails* magazine six times per year! We are so grateful for your support. Please take a moment to renew or join today.

Visit **wta.org**.



Trail crews are already working to clean up trails in the western Glacier Peak Wilderness for access to the Pacific Crest Trail and more. Photo by Erin Grindle.

# Breaking New Trail at Paradise Point State Park

VANCOUVER – It used to be that sections of the 1-mile loop trail at Paradise Point State Park, just north of Vancouver, would disappear underwater as the tide and heavy rains raised the level of the East Fork Lewis River. But thanks to hardworking volunteers, the trail is now high and dry.

Last spring, WTA held its first event at Paradise Point. Since then, volunteers have taken a lead role in scouting, designing and coordinating work priorities with state park staff. This spring, WTA crews finished rebuilding a crib staircase that used to be a loose, rocky scramble. They also finished several reroutes that reduced the steep ups and downs along a key section of trail adjacent to the river.

With those trail improvements, it is now safer to turn your attention to views of the river, seek out birds and spring wildflowers or scan ahead on the trail for rough-skinned newts. Spring rains used to make for very slick walking, but the trail is now suitable for all ages. For more family-friendly fun, check out the park's disc golf course or launch a kayak from the picnic area.

Tom Griffith and Andrea Martin supervise the construction of a reroute that makes obsolete a dilapidated staircase that they concurrently deconstructed. Between the river and a cliff, this section of trail was rebentched and enhanced with a new rock retaining wall and crib staircase.



***“Even if you can’t make a large donation all at once, contributing a small amount consistently can really help.”***



WTA member and assistant crew leader Steve Smith was hooked on trail work from his first work party in 2012. Since then, he’s been a frequent volunteer, earning his orange hat and crosscut saw certification in 2014. The people he’s met through WTA are what keep him coming back. “WTA crew leaders make [trail work] very accessible, whatever your level, and the community is very welcoming,” says Steve. “I’ve never met a disagreeable person.”

Steve’s experience in the construction trade has come in handy on trail. And having run his own business, he knows firsthand how a consistent cash flow can contribute to the stability of any organization. This background, and his love for trails, inspired him to enroll in WTA’s monthly giving program.

**Thank you, Steve, for all you do to support WTA!**

Learn more about monthly giving at [wta.org/support](http://wta.org/support), or call Kate Neville at (206) 625-1367.

# Every Kid in a Park

Now more than ever, kids are spending less time outdoors. In February, President Obama launched a new program to help change that. The new Every Kid in a Park initiative offers resources and support from several federal agencies to get more kids outdoors—and exploring their public lands. Starting this fall, every fourth-grader in the nation will receive a pass that's good for free admission, for them and their families, to all of America's federal lands and waters. How the passes will be distributed will be announced closer to September.

Every Kid in a Park includes support for schools and families, including tools for trip planning, curriculum development and transportation needs. And the National Park Foundation and National Park Service have also committed to support the initiative through expanded transportation grants and youth education programs.

If you are a fourth grade teacher interested in taking students to visit public lands in Washington but don't know where to start, visit [wta.org/olt](http://wta.org/olt) for training opportunities and access to our free Gear Library. To learn more about this exciting new initiative and to sign up for updates on the program (including information on how passes will be distributed), visit [whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov).

## WTA's Gear Library Featured in *Sunset*

Each month, *Sunset* staffers track the top people, places, things and trends that make them happy to live in the West. In the April issue, WTA made the cut with a spotlight on our Gear Library, a unique lending program that provides teachers, youth workers and their groups with outdoor gear—for free.

We're happy that the photo by *Sunset* contributing photographer Jose Mandojana highlighted not only the gear but also a WTA-supported youth trip. The day of the photo shoot, teacher Tim Hall from Highline School District's Waskowitz Environmental Leadership School, and his high school students, were returning hiking gear from a recent trip. The smiles on the students' faces and the laughter in the library were sparked by the stories they recounted from their recent adventure with their classmates.

"Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to run meaningful trips with appropriate gear," says Hall. "Such strong experiences create a positive association with school that keeps our students engaged and ambitious. With increased standards and testing in schools, these trips are vital to the emotional health of our students and community. Without the WTA Gear Library, we would not have such happy students, who said it was their best trip of the year. One student shared, 'I liked the bond that I created with people I wasn't close to before.'"



### BEFORE AND AFTER:

## Blanchard Mountain



**LEFT:** Logs and debris had taken their toll on the Samish Bay Connector Trail on Blanchard Mountain, outside Bellingham.

**RIGHT:** Department of Natural Resources called in WTA volunteers to make repairs this winter. Their work resulted in a section of new, more sustainable tread on this popular hiking route to Oyster Dome. Photos by Arlen Bogaards.

### Teanaway Community Forest Plan Goes Public

YAKIMA – Hikers, trail runners and others recently had the opportunity to read and comment on the draft management plan for the Teanaway Community Forest. Maintaining and expanding recreational opportunities, including hiking trails and camping, is one of the goals of the community forest.

Designated as Washington state's first community forest, the 50,000-acre Teanaway Community Forest was purchased by the state from a private seller in October 2013 and is a cornerstone of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan. With the help of an advisory committee (WTA is a member), the departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) must develop a plan for managing the forest by June 30, 2015.

After months of working together, including 15 public committee meetings, three public open houses and field trips in the community forest, DNR and WDFW—with the recommendations of the advisory committee—have produced a draft management plan with five key goals.

1. To protect watershed health and water quality and quantity;
2. To maintain the land as a working forest, allowing for forestry and grazing while protecting the watershed and fish habitat;
3. To provide recreational opportunities, including hiking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, camping, birding and snowmobiling;
4. To conserve and restore wildlife and aquatic habitat; and
5. To support community partnerships.

While the community forest doesn't have an established trail system yet, many people have already discovered the potential it has for outdoor recreation—and the draft management plan reflects the need to provide great experiences to those who live, work and play there.

The advisory committee and state agencies agreed that a "sustainable network of safe, enjoyable recreational trails" should be developed for non-motorized trails that accommodate hikers, mountain bikers, horseback riders and others.

Moving forward, existing partnerships will continue and new collaborations will be established between public agencies, user groups and citizen volunteers. With the recognition that people love to and will want to continue having their adventures in the community forest, the advisory committee recommended that a separate planning process take place to shape how recreation will occur on the forest. A recreation planning committee will help to guide this effort.

## DNR Plans to Expand Recreation in the Snoqualmie Corridor

SEATTLE – Outdoor enthusiasts of all stripes will soon enjoy new access opportunities on 120 miles of hiking, mountain biking and equestrian trails in the Snoqualmie Corridor as part of a recently-released recreation plan.

Last month, the Washington Department of Natural Resources released the Snoqualmie Corridor Recreation Plan, which will help ensure outdoor enthusiasts can continue to enjoy this area for years to come. The corridor includes some of the most popular hiking trails around Puget Sound, including Tiger Mountain, Middle Fork Snoqualmie, Mount Si and Rattlesnake Mountain.

Hikers could benefit from some recommendations in the plan, including:

- ◆ Development of Exit 20, the main Tiger Mountain trailhead, as a gateway to the Snoqualmie Corridor. This is already a popular access point to Tiger 3 and Tradition Plateau.
- ◆ Expansion of the existing Tiger Summit Trailhead.
- ◆ Development of a new trailhead for mountain biking access in the north end of Raging River State Forest. Access will also be included for horseback riding and hiking.
- ◆ Construction of a new trailhead on the south side of the Mount Si NRCA for hiking access to trails around Mount Teneriffe.
- ◆ Creation of a new Granite Creek Trailhead for hiking access to the Granite Creek Trail.
- ◆ Development of a mountain biking and hiking trail connection from the community of Preston to the Tiger Mountain and Raging River State Forests.

"The Snoqualmie corridor is one of the most cherished landscapes in Washington state, and one we have worked with recreation and conservation groups to protect," Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark said in a news release. "This plan gives us a compass to guide how we manage this treasure."

The plan was developed with guidance from local recreation groups and will guide DNR activities in the region for the next 10 to 15 years. Currently, about 800,000 people recreate in the Snoqualmie corridor each year. As the plan is implemented, DNR will continue to consult with outdoor recreationists to ensure needs are met.

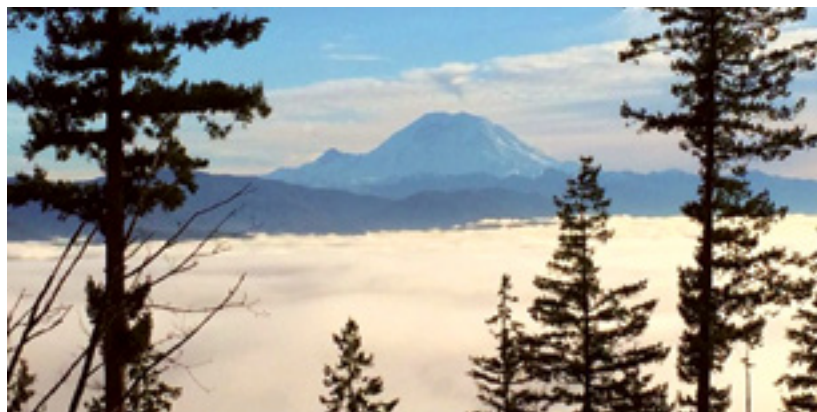


Photo by Trip Reporter Joy

On June 6, join with WTA in the nation's largest celebration of trails: National Trails Day. Work with other volunteers from across the state on one of WTA's special work parties to give back to the trails you love to hike.

- ◆ **Ridley Creek**  
Mount Baker
- ◆ **Dirty Harry's Creek**  
North Bend
- ◆ **Middle Fork**  
Families @ North Bend
- ◆ **Squak Mountain**  
King County Parks
- ◆ **Carbon River**  
Mount Rainier NP
- ◆ **Sams Walker**  
Columbia Gorge
- ◆ **S. Fork Skokomish**  
Hood Canal
- ◆ **Liberty Lake**  
Spokane



Show your support for trails and join WTA on June 6!  
**Sign up at [wta.org/volunteer](http://wta.org/volunteer)**

Photo by Paul Bestock

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

**Rainier - \$25,000+**

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

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



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

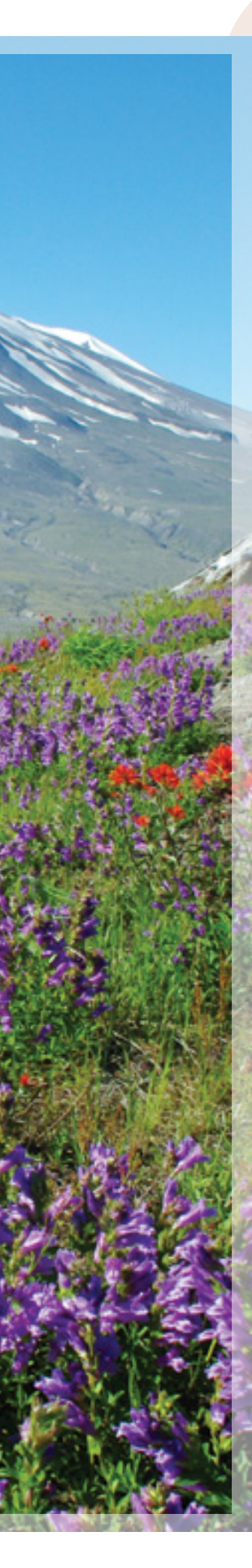
Hilleberg • Seven Hills Running Shop  
Cascade Crest 100-mile Endurance Run



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).

**Harry's Ridge:** Start at the Johnston Ridge Observatory and hike the Boundary Trail to the spur trail along Harry's Ridge. On the day of the eruption, hiking along Harry's Ridge would have been fatal, but today, visitors are rewarded with incredible views of Spirit Lake, Pumice Plain, the crater and two lava domes.





# AFTER THE ERUPTION

Living With the Legacy of Mount St. Helens | By Carolyn Driedger

*“It was the day that changed our lives.”*

Imagine sitting on a giant clock, knowing that the alarm is set and will go off soon—but not knowing exactly when. That describes the mindset of geologists 35 years ago as they observed Mount St. Helens’ reawakening. They made measurements and warned of more substantial eruptive activity. The clock continued to tick until the alarm rang at 8:32 a.m. on May 18, 1980.

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**3.20.1980:** After 123 years of slumber—and consequent indifference from Northwest residents for much of that time—Mount St. Helens reawakened. It began with a flurry of earthquakes, followed by a small eruption at the snow-covered summit that opened a 250-foot-wide crater. Within a week, the crater broadened to 1,300 feet and giant cracks splintered the summit. Throughout the remainder of March and much of April, minor eruptions rocked the peak hourly. All of that was worrisome, but the alarming thing was a growing bulge on the volcano’s north flank, which was expanding at a rate of 6.5 feet per day. Magma was rising into the volcano.

**5.17.1980:** The activity at Mount St. Helens attracted no shortage of scientific attention. My colleague Mindy Brugman and I visited the volcano to pursue her research on how an awakening volcano affects its glaciers. On May 17, the project took us to the Timberline parking lot beneath the expanding bulge. We then visited geologist David Johnston on the ridge directly north of the volcano. Our original intent had been to remain on the ridge overnight; the next morning we would take a helicopter trip to Shoestring Glacier. But Johnston’s cautions about potential bulge failure persuaded us to leave for the night. We headed south to Vancouver, with a new plan to approach Shoestring Glacier the next day by car. That change of plan saved our lives.

**5.18.1980:** The next morning, as Brugman and I drove north on I-5 from Vancouver, a mighty black cloud emerged from the north flank of Mount St. Helens. It billowed and flowed over high terrain to the north. This perplexed us, but within seconds, Brugman mouthed what each of us could barely comprehend—that Johnston’s apprehensions had come true: the north flank had failed. Mount St. Helens had erupted catastrophically.

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Photos: The massive collapse of the north flank of Mount St. Helens, followed by the lateral blast, buried streams, forests and valleys in rocky pyroclastic debris. Now, life returns as the mountain rebuilds itself. Photo by Ashley Gossens. Inset: The iconic profile of Mount St. Helens prior to its 1980 eruption. Photo by Harry Glicken, USGS.

By the evening of May 18, 1980, Mount St. Helens had the attention of the world. Reports circulated about one of the largest historical landslides on Earth and how it had swept away the volcano's northern flank. That massive debris avalanche unleashed a sideways blast that destroyed 230 square miles of timber. Billions of rock fragments shot skyward in a volcanic ash plume that reached a height of 80,000 feet in just 15 minutes. In towns across Central and Eastern Washington, Idaho and Montana, wind-blown ash filled the sky like a giant veil and turned daylight into darkness. Lahars (volcanic mudflows) swept down two branches of the Toutle River, Smith and Pine Creeks and Muddy River.

The eruption reshaped the volcano, creating the distinctive crater we recognize today, and transformed the surrounding landscape and ecology. Trails and familiar landscapes disappeared beneath the debris avalanche, which roared into Spirit Lake and raised its level by more than 200 feet. In a matter of minutes, the avalanche dammed tributary streams of the North Fork Toutle River, forming what we now know as Coldwater and Castle Lakes. The 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens resulted in the loss of 57 people, including Johnston, and was the most costly volcanic disaster (to the tune of \$1 billion in 1980 dollars) ever in the United States.

*When you hike on or near Mount St. Helens, keep in mind how temporary your surroundings might be. The landscape that you view today might be drastically different from the scene your grandparents knew and loved and the view that your children's children will see. Take pictures. Document your own unique moment in this dynamic geologic story.*



## AN EXPLOSION OF KNOWLEDGE

Overnight, Mount St. Helens morphed from being a symbol of the good life in the Pacific Northwest to a cataclysmic destroyer. But in the years since, it has also assumed the role of master teacher of everything from science to safety. More than destruction, this education is the true legacy of Mount St. Helens.

### Advancing Volcano Science

Since the eruption of Mount St. Helens, our understanding of how volcanoes work has grown by leaps and bounds. We now know that the lava-dome building eruptions of 2004 through 2008 were fed by magma left over from the 1980s eruptions. The massive debris avalanche at Mount St. Helens we now understand to be commonplace (on a geologic timescale) for volcanoes in the Cascades, on the ocean floor and on other planets. Earthquakes, ground deformation and gas measurements have taken on new meaning as scientists have learned that patterns of change can help

them make short-term eruption forecasts. In years since Mount St. Helens' 1980 eruption, volcano monitoring has evolved from the placement of a few scientific instruments on a volcano's flanks to a broad, integrated network of devices that can measure earthquakes, deformation and volcanic gases, as well as detect eruptions or volcano-related changes in the earth's surface from space.

Thanks to these better monitoring systems, geologists now know that Cascade volcanoes are inherently restless during non-eruptive times. Since 2004, seismographs have detected earthquake swarms at or near Mount Rainier, Mount St. Helens, Mount Hood, Three Sisters, Newberry Volcano and Lassen Peak. During the same time period, satellite and ground-based deformation monitors have identified surface uplift at the Three Sisters, subsidence at Medicine Lake Volcano and Lassen Peak, and both subsidence and uplift at Mount St. Helens. The earlier we see symptoms of impending volcanic activity, the more time we have to become prepared.

**Rim With A View:** If you are lucky enough to score a coveted Monitor Ridge climbing permit, and hearty enough to ascend more than 4,000 feet of rock and ash, the reward is a panorama like no other—including a peek into the steaming heart of a living mountain. Photo by Kathy Lashier.



Between 2004 and 2008, Mount St. Helens showed new signs of life. This minor eruption in March 2005 was associated with the lava dome growing in the volcano's crater. Photo by Matt Kennedy.

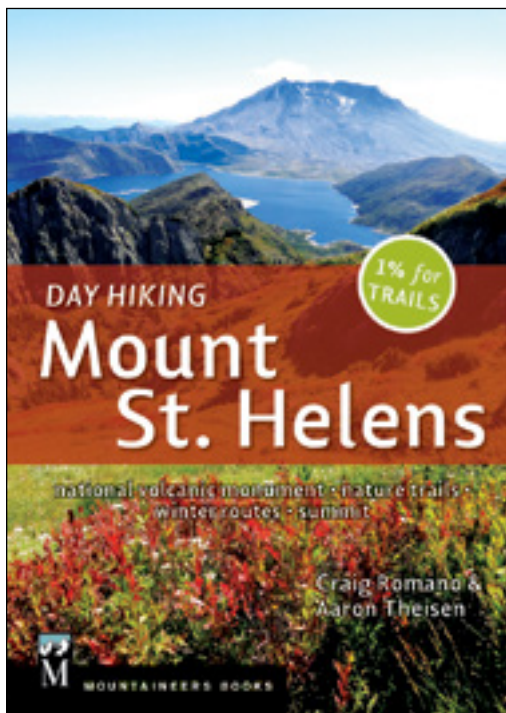
In addition to detecting more volcanic activity around the Cascade Range, advancements in volcano science have also given us more insight into Mount St. Helens. The dome-building eruptions of 1980 to 1986 and 2004 to 2008 illustrate that while not in eruption at this very moment, Mount St. Helens remains a fully functioning active volcano. Careful measurements of swelling reveal that magma continues to accumulate beneath Mount St. Helens, and current earthquake studies confirm this. This slow accumulation of magma could continue for centuries, or it could cause another eruption within our lifetimes. When the volcano becomes more restless, scientists will warn authorities and the public so that they can keep clear.

## Keeping More People Safe

In 1980, people across the state of Washington and into the Midwest experienced the effects of an eruption firsthand. Millions more watched it on television. Powerful images of previously unimaginable events heightened people's awareness about the problems caused by volcanoes and the need for community preparedness. With improved understanding of volcano behavior, and with new types of more sensitive monitoring instruments, scientists can provide better warning about the timing and style of an eruption.

*As you hike amid the volcanoes of the Cascade Range, consider how they are similar to and different from Mount St. Helens. Siblings in explosiveness, Glacier Peak, Mount Jefferson, and Mount Mazama (Crater Lake, OR) share a violent past. In contrast, Mounts Baker, Rainier, Adams and Hood much less so. Consider the lava dome within the Mount St. Helens crater and how it resembles Mount Hood's Crater Rock lava dome.*

*When you hike on and near Mount St. Helens, keep in mind how temporary your surroundings might be. The landscape that you view today might be drastically different from the scene your grandparents knew and loved, and the view that your children's children will see. Take pictures. Document your own unique moment in this dynamic geologic story.*



*Every trip I return to this fascinating landscape I am constantly blown away (yes, pun intended) by the volcano. I marvel at its destructive and healing forces all at once.*

— Craig Romano

Hot off the presses, the new **Day Hiking Mount St. Helens**, by Mountaineers Books, highlights 80 trails around the iconic volcano and surrounding areas. From easy nature and interpretive trails to isolated backcountry routes, there's something for everyone. This comprehensive guide will help you get out and discover this dynamic landscape on your own.



[mountaineersbooks.org](http://mountaineersbooks.org)

Concerns for citizen safety have prompted installation of additional monitoring sites, as well as contingency planning and communication among scientists, residents, emergency managers and the media. Officials and scientists have developed and periodically exercise emergency coordination plans, aid interpretive staffs, offer teacher workshops and courses for the public and each year commemorate May as Volcano Preparedness Month. Volcanoes can have short warning periods, but thanks to better monitoring technology, more advanced community planning and the memory of a society that has already witnessed an eruption, we're better prepared than ever for the next eruption.

## Hiking in Volcano Country

Recreating at Mount St. Helens (taking a hike, learning at the visitor's center, taking a field course), reading eyewitness accounts of the 1980 events, getting to know the other Cascade volcanoes and making sure that your community is prepared—these are some of the best ways to appreciate the legacy of Mount St. Helens. Visitors don't need to be worried about hiking on or around a volcano. They should be alert, as they would be along any trail, use common sense, obey closures and steer clear when advised of renewed volcanic unrest. Rising magma will provide scientists with some warning, commonly days or more in advance.

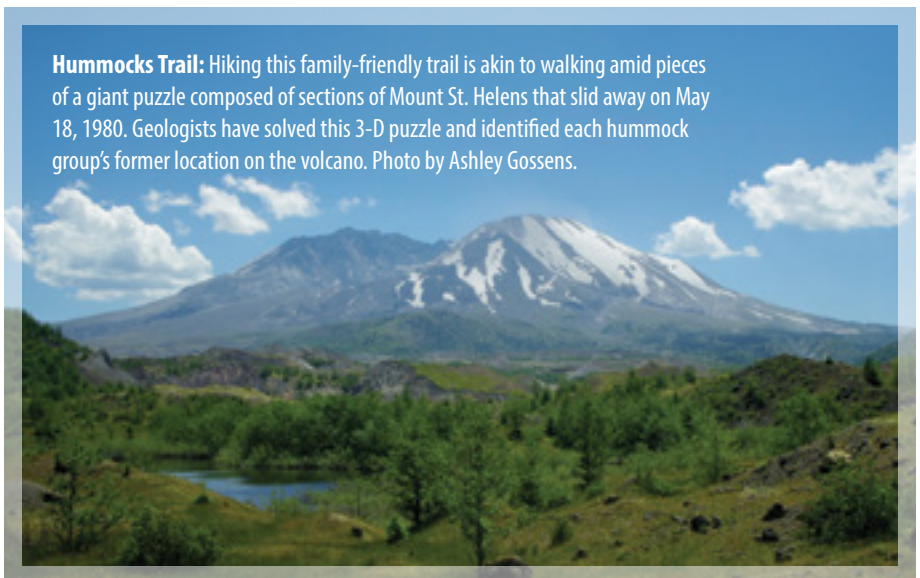
Hikes at Mount St. Helens are proof that dramatic geological processes create spectacular scenery. With much of the forest eliminated during the catastrophic eruption, most trails offer grand vistas of Mount St. Helens and other Cascade volcanoes. Nowhere else in the Cascades can hikers view such fresh volcanic landscapes and rapidly evolving ecosystems. There is a trail type for everyone, as well as ranger-led walks, classes and world-class interpretive facilities. A visit to the volcano might be the closest you will ever come to a historical event of epic proportions. Mount St. Helens has a dynamic past, and its future will be similar. Enjoy it in the interlude. ♦

*Carolyn Driedger is a hydrologist and the outreach coordinator at the USGS Cascades Volcano Observatory in Vancouver, Washington. She works in partnership with public officials, emergency managers, media, park interpreters and educators to advance the cause of volcano preparedness in the Cascade Range.*

*Join in commemorating the eruption anniversary with three days of events at the Johnston Ridge Observatory and Coldwater Science and Learning Center. For info, visit [mshinstitute.org](http://mshinstitute.org) and [mshslc.org](http://mshslc.org).*

- ♦ **May 16: It's a Blast Science Education Day**
- ♦ **May 17: Eruption Eyewitness Stories**
- ♦ **May 18: Eruption Commemoration & 35 Years of Science Discovery**

**Hummocks Trail:** Hiking this family-friendly trail is akin to walking amid pieces of a giant puzzle composed of sections of Mount St. Helens that slid away on May 18, 1980. Geologists have solved this 3-D puzzle and identified each hummock group's former location on the volcano. Photo by Ashley Gossens.



# H I K E •A• T H O N

Washington Trails Association's 12th Annual

## GET READY TO MAKE YOUR MILES COUNT!

AUGUST 2015



Registration opens July 1  
**[wta.org/hikeathon](http://wta.org/hikeathon)**

Poster art by Shane Boyd

# Walking with

## How to Be a Proper Guest in an Animal's Home

BY JENNIFER JARSTAD



**W**hile on a hike in the Cascades several years ago, I had the pleasure of crossing paths with a black bear. My hiking partner instantly saw the animal as a threat and proceeded to pick up a large piece of wood. Walking slowly toward the bear, he was poised to hurl the wood in the direction of the bear in an attempt to scare it off. The endeavor was not necessary; the bear had no interest in us and quickly ran off. I found the encounter exhilarating. It was the closest I had ever come to a bear in the wild, and with no bear cubs in sight, it never appeared to me that the bear would be a threat. However, I realized that not everyone perceives wildlife in the same light. While some are intrigued, others are fearful. Nevertheless, being knowledgeable about wilderness protocol and showing respect for wildlife will result in a much safer and more pleasurable experience for both outdoor recreationists and wild inhabitants alike.

Many of us who live in the Pacific Northwest are known for our love of the outdoors. Surrounded by lakes, rivers, forests, mountains and oceans, our growing population and expansive development increase the likelihood that we will cross paths with a wild animal during our outdoor activities. Moreover, with additional hikers taking to the trails, our impact on wildlife becomes even more profound as we venture into their habitat—and they into ours. In order to ensure our region retains a healthy and balanced ecosystem for wild creatures, we must learn how to share the land and live harmoniously with wildlife.

### You Are the Visitor

Regardless of how tempting it may be to sidle up to a cute mountain goat or moose calf and snap a photo (or worse yet, try to take a selfie with a wild animal), close contact with wild animals is actually dangerous for both you and the animal. Nearly all wild creatures prefer to maintain a distance from humans. Unless ill or threatened, they are far less interested in making you their dinner than they are in finding refuge from humans. It is important that we respect their space in their habitat.

Humans entering a wild habitat can alter an animal's behavior. Leaving food behind or attempting to attract an animal with food offerings conditions wildlife to the presence of humans.

# Wildlife

**UNGULATES** are hooved animals that are mostly herbivorous. However, just because they may not be interested in eating hikers doesn't mean you shouldn't keep a respectful distance from them in the wild. While typically timid around people, ungulates will vocalize and even charge if threatened. Staying a good distance away is always the best protocol in their presence.

**OMNIVORES** are animals that eat both plants and animals. Some of these animals (such as bears) possess some of the physical characteristics of carnivores (e.g. canine teeth) but also have omnivorous attributes (e.g. prehensile lips for eating berries and claws for climbing trees). Keeping a safe distance is always the best protocol when in the presence of omnivores.

**CARNIVORES** are meat eaters and are classified as highly intelligent mammals. Many carnivores will delineate territorial boundaries. Respecting these animals will ultimately benefit both humans and wildlife. This requires giving them adequate space when visiting their terrain and making yourself seem as large—and unworthy of target—as possible.

**SNAKES** are often perceived as threatening, and yet they play an important role in maintaining backwoods ecosystems. As predators of several pest animals, there are only about a dozen snakes that can be found in Washington. Only one is considered potentially dangerous to humans. It can be avoided provided people are vigilant when hiking in their territory.

**RODENTS** you encounter while hiking and camping may not act so wild, yet encouraging contact with these critters contributes to the creation of nuisance species and the threat of disease. Therefore, interaction with these animals is not encouraged—despite how cute they may be.



Fox pup, pika and black bear; photos by Doug Diekema

Close contact intensifies the risk of those animals responding aggressively toward humans in some situations and also increases danger to the animal as a result of reported conflicts.

## Meeting Animals on Trail

Responding appropriately to wildlife encounters requires understanding and respecting basic outdoor etiquette. In most cases, wildlife will attempt to avoid any contact with humans.

In order to maintain a healthy and compatible relationship with wildlife, it is important to allow untamed critters adequate space and avoid provocation. Doing so will minimize adverse responses from those that live in the wild.

- ◆ Keep your eyes and ears open to your surroundings.
- ◆ If you see a wild animal, remain calm and keep your distance (at least 100 yards).
- ◆ If you are closer than 100 yards before you notice the animal, slowly back away to gain distance.
- ◆ Stay on designated trails to prevent additional infringement upon wildlife territory.
- ◆ Keep pets on leash to avoid conflict between wild and domesticated animals.

- ◆ Avoid getting in between adult fauna and their offspring.
- ◆ Stay away from animal carcasses that may be a draw for carnivorous scavengers.
- ◆ Properly store all food and scented items in front- and backcountry camps.
- ◆ Conduct all cooking and cleaning away from your tent, and never store food in your tent.
- ◆ Some animals are drawn to the scent of urine or feces. Try to use established areas for eliminating human waste or designate an area at least 50 yards from your campsite.

Hiking and camping in the Pacific Northwest need not be a dangerous or frightening venture as long as you are prepared and wise in your decisions. Attacks on humans by wild animals are very rare in our area; however, your behavior while in their territory will determine each animal's response to human intrusion. The more we understand about wild animals, the better prepared we will be if and when we do encounter wildlife. ♦

*Jennifer Jarstad is an avid hiker and former mountain guide. She has been a member of WTA for almost 25 years. Jennifer is currently working on her master's degree in biology and zoology through Miami University's Advanced Inquiry Program in association with the Woodland Park Zoo.*

**DEER:** There are two primary species of deer in Washington: mule deer and white-tailed deer. Mule deer prefer open forests and sagebrush meadows, while white-tailed deer frequent lower-elevation riparian and field habitats.

**Encounter:** If alarmed, most deer will flee. However, they can respond aggressively if threatened or provoked. Keep a safe distance from them.

**ELK:** There are two types of elk in Washington: Roosevelt and Rocky Mountain elk. Roosevelt elk are most prevalent in the Olympic Mountains, while Rocky Mountain elk are more apt to roam the eastern side of the Cascades.

**Encounter:** Much like deer, elk will flee from humans; however, males can be dangerous during the fall rut. Maintain a respectful distance.

## MOUNTAIN GOAT:

Often found on high elevation cliffs and rocky terrain, they will drop to lower elevations for food, and for protection from extreme weather. They occupy suitable habitats between Canada and Oregon.

**Encounter:** Recent incidents indicate that mountain goats may be getting too accustomed to humans. Maintaining a detached relationship is essential for the health and well-being of both mountain goats and humans.

Be prepared  
to meet  
animals on  
trail, and  
know how  
to respond.



## BIGHORN SHEEP:

Known for their skill of climbing high rocky terrain (including steep slopes, talus and cliffs), bighorn sheep mostly reside in Central and Eastern Washington and are a common sight in the Yakima River Valley.

**Encounter:** Bighorn sheep will often vacate an area once people are present; but, some human behavior (e.g. hiking off trail) can elicit aggressive responses.

**MOOSE:** There are only an estimated 1,000 moose in Washington. They traditionally favor forested areas near lakes and wetlands. However, they now seem to be adapting to more wooded habitats. Moose are mostly found in the northeastern area of the state.

**Encounter:** Moose can be aggressive when hungry, with their young, threatened (even due to a barking dog) or during mating season. Always maintain a safe distance.

## BLACK BEAR:

Nearly all of the bears in Washington are black bears. Their habitat varies throughout the state, from mountainous timberland to rain forests. Contact with black bears is becoming more frequent as human development into their habitat increases.

**Encounter:** Making noise will help steer bears away. If you spot one, give it a wide berth to avoid a confrontation. Do not run!

## GRIZZLY BEAR:

There are approximately only 30 grizzly bears residing in Washington, most of which are located in the far northeastern corner of the state. Grizzlies are distinguishable from smaller black bears by their shoulder hump and rounded faces.

**Encounter:** In grizzly country, make noise and announce your presence at all times. If you encounter a grizzly, speak softly, back away slowly and evacuate the area. Never run!

**COUGAR:** Present across Washington, cougars are most attracted to steep rocky canyons and densely vegetated forest. Due to their nocturnal inclination and their preference for solidarity, they are rarely observed in the wild.

**Encounter:** In the event that you encounter a cougar in the wild, make noise, stand tall while waving your arms; pick up small children and pets. Do not run!

**BOBCAT:** These small felines live in a variety of habitats, including rocky cliffs, wooded territories, open meadows and farmland. They are found all over Washington, although they tend to avoid areas with deep snow.

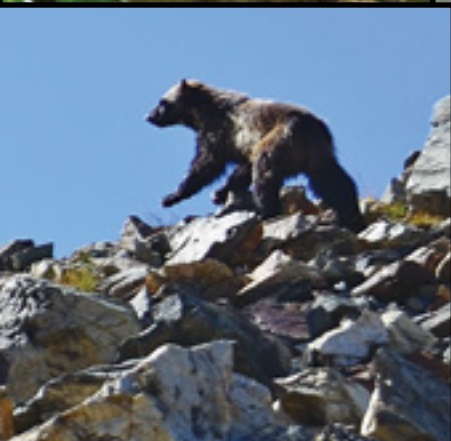
**Encounter:** Bobcats are extremely guarded around humans and are not often seen. By not leaving food out, you will help discourage social dependency on humans.

**WOLF:** Washington is home to the gray wolf. There are currently approximately 68 wolves divided into 16 packs throughout the state, but mostly in the central and eastern areas. Wolves require large forested and mountainous habitat.

**Encounter:** Avoid wolves by maintaining a healthy distance from them and staying away from carrion. Keep dogs on leash to prevent conflicts.

**COYOTE:** Small and bushy tailed, coyotes can be found in mountainous and densely forested areas, open range country and even urban waterfront areas. They are skillful scavengers and hunters that will feast upon fruit and grass in addition to small animals.

**Encounter:** Making noise and appearing large around coyotes will discourage them from approaching.



**WOLVERINE:** Currently making a comeback in the Cascade Range, wolverines prefer rugged, snowy topography. They can be found from Mount Baker to Mount Adams and may travel as much as 15 miles a day in search of carrion and a variety of smaller mammals to feed on.

**Encounter:** Like most wild carnivores, wolverines are wary of humans. If you spy a wolverine, give it space and savor the experience.

**WESTERN RATTLESNAKE:** Typically located east of the Cascades, rattlesnakes live on rocks in open, sun-exposed areas. They possess a triangular-shaped head and diamond-shaped pattern on their back that may be gray or greenish-brown.

**Encounter:** Most often, rattlesnakes will warn of their presence by rattling their tail. Stop immediately and slowly retreat from the area.

**MARMOT:** Living above timberline, hoary and Olympic marmots prefer meadows and talus slopes in the Cascade and Olympic Mountains, respectively. Yellow-bellied marmots are found at lower elevations in Eastern Washington.

**Encounter:** Wary of humans, it is unlikely that a marmot will approach; however, maintaining this mistrust will help protect both marmots and humans.

**CHIPMUNK:** Chipmunks can be seen almost everywhere in Washington. yellow-pine chipmunks reside in alpine and subalpine terrain; red-tailed chipmunks are found in higher conifer forests; Townsend's chipmunks occupy lower forests; and least chipmunks inhabit sagebrush.

**Encounter:** Skittish yet curious, they may approach in search of food. Do not feed them and always manage your food properly.

# WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU MEET ANIMALS ON TRAIL



# CLEAN TRAILS START WITH YOU

WTA and Klean Kanteen are teaming up to help keep our trails clean. When you hit the trail, remember to bring your own water bottle to help reduce waste and minimize litter.

**TAKE THE PLEDGE** to Leave No Trace, and help keep your favorite trails clean. You can even win a new Klean Kanteen!

**[wta.org/keeptrails-clean](http://wta.org/keeptrails-clean)**

**#bringyourown**



Jagged basalt cliffs, dusty brown tumbleweeds, isolated shrub-steppe—Central Washington is known for its barren beauty. But in late spring, the no-nonsense terrain births something that most visitors don't expect: a softness that transforms everything it touches. From the dusty ground, hundreds of species of wildflowers, from balsamroot to wild onion, suddenly reach for the cerulean blue sky. Serious-looking horned larks hop around the green stalks, while the whistling songs of meadowlarks fill the warm air. To experience Central Washington at its best, there's no better time or place than May in the Tri-Cities.

BY CASSANDRA OVERBY



# Hiking the Heartland



**I**f it's blooms and birds you want to see, there's no shortage of ways to get outside and explore the best the region has to offer. Thanks to its relatively flat landscape and the mighty Columbia River, the Tri-Cities is a mecca for outdoor recreation, from hiking to biking to kayaking. But that's not all that makes the area worth visiting. It also boasts one very well-known national historic landmark (Hanford) and three towns (Richland, Kennewick and Pasco) with very distinct personalities. The perfect Tri-Cities weekend blends all of these elements together for the best in recreation, history and local flavor.

### **DAY ONE: Get Your Bearings**

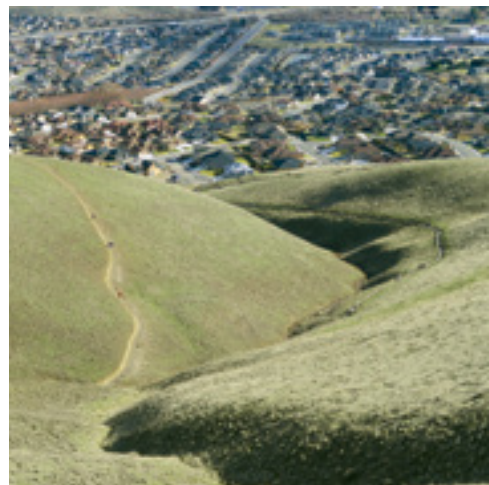
*On your first day in the Tri-Cities, you'll get your bearings by learning local history at Hanford, tasting local produce in Pasco and enjoying a sunset hike with incredible views of Richland.*

The best way to start any morning—let alone one in the Tri-Cities—is with a donut. So before you launch into your day with a tour of Hanford, make a breakfast stop at the **Spudnut Shop** (Richland; thespudnutshop.com). This locally owned favorite has been featured on the Food Network and the Travel Channel for its namesake, a donut made from potato flour.

Donut and coffee in hand, make your way to the **Hanford B Reactor Tour Headquarters** (1; Richland; manhattanproject breactor.hanford.gov). The 4.5-hour tours are free and run April through September (reservations required). You'll visit the world's first large-scale nuclear reactor and learn how the unique qualities of the Tri-Cities area, from its abundance of land and water to its low population, made it the ideal location for a top-secret project that changed the course of world events—and now make it an ideal place to recreate.

Once you've taken in the serious side of local history, explore the fun side at **Atomic Ale Brewpub and Eatery** (Richland; atomic alebrewpub.com). Enjoy wood-fired pizza and house brews in the shadow of neon lights and atomic drawings. Don't miss the atomic giant soft pretzel—as spicy as it is tasty—and the beer sampler.

After lunch, it's time to gather supplies for your upcoming sunset hike. Head to family-owned and -operated **Country Mercantile** (Pasco; countrymercantile.com). It's the perfect place to gather picnic supplies, including seasonal fruits and vegetables and homemade chocolate and fudge. There's even a deli with premade sandwiches and wraps. If you're feeling ambitious, pick up enough supplies for tomorrow's lunch as well.



Stretch your legs on a trail to a viewpoint overlooking the Columbia River at White Bluffs; Take a tour of America's first top-secret nuclear reactor at Hanford B; Get above the city for big views and colorful sunsets at Badger Mountain.

Photos by David Hagen, Cassandra Overby, and courtesy of TRIDEC.

Your picnic will come in handy as you explore **Badger Mountain** (2; Richland; wta.org). The 648-acre, 4-trail preserve teeters on the edge of South Richland's housing sprawl and offers excellent urban hiking and expansive views of the local community. The best place to access Badger Mountain is Trailhead Park, which has a parking lot and ample street parking.

Start your hike on the Canyon Trail, which works its way steeply uphill from the trailhead. After 0.1 mile, the trail forks. You'll head left on the Sagebrush Trail and continue on for 0.6 mile of easy switchbacks that wind around protected shrub-steppe. When the trail forks again, head right on the Skyline Trail for 0.9 mile and then right again on the Canyon Trail. In 0.1 mile (at the top of the hill, just past the buildings) and after enjoying the great view of the Tri-Cities skyline, turn to the southwest and find a place to eat dinner and watch the sunset. Keep your camera ready to capture the warm glow of pink and orange on the surrounding vineyards and bluffs.

**NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY:** Badger Mountain is highly recommended for night photography because there is so little light pollution in the area. Pack your tripod to capture a star trail or two.

Once you've eaten dinner and the sun has put itself to bed, turn on your headlamp and hike back down the mountain (approx. 1 mile on the Canyon

Trail) to Trailhead Park. On solstices and full-moon nights, expect some company. Because of the great views and easy-to-navigate trails, this is a popular spot for night hiking.

## DAY TWO: Hit Your Stride

*On your second day in the Tri-Cities, you'll hit your stride with a long hike at White Bluffs – South Slope, followed by a charming Italian dinner in Kennewick.*

If you're in the mood for coffee, drop by **Roasters Coffee** (roasterscoffee.net) on the way to White Bluffs. There are several locations around the Tri-Cities, two in each town, that offer coffee made from beans locally roasted in small batches.

Fueled by caffeine and the promise of adventure, head to **White Bluffs–South Slope** (3; wta.org; Discover Pass required). The hike is in the Hanford Reach National Monument, 45 minutes from the Tri-Cities, but worth the drive.

From the trailhead you'll have an excellent view of Mount Adams and Mount Rainier, but there's more to see at White Bluffs than just the two volcanoes. On your walk you'll explore the Hanford Reach (the last free-flowing section of the Columbia), as well as spectacular sandstone cliffs, rolling prairie and deep ravines. Pack your camera. In late spring, you can expect to see a carpet of wildflowers and an abundance of cliff swallows, raptors and geese.

And in the golden hour, there's no better place to be than White Bluffs, where the sandstone picks up every nuance of the setting sun.

The route can be customized according to your preferences. If done in its entirety, the hike is 10 miles long with little to no elevation gain. From the trailhead, walk south along an old paved road. Continue on for 1 mile, until you cross paths with an unsigned trail on your left. Head up this trail, meandering through rolling hills and skirting the base of patterned bluffs. Once the trail climbs steeply to a high point with nice valley views, stop for a picnic lunch. Then either go back the way you came or, for a longer hike, follow the trail south along the ridge for about a mile. Take one of the many game trails down to the riverside road. Continue south on the road to keep exploring or head north on the road to get back to your car.

After you're done stretching your legs at White Bluffs, make your way to **Carmine's Italian Restaurant** (Kennewick; carmineskennewick.com). This is one of the most popular restaurants in the Tri-Cities, so make reservations in advance. Prepare for an evening-long affair; dinner at Carmine's is slow (in a good way). There are typically two meal choices each evening and everything is served home-style. Keep your eyes out for Carmine, the proprietor, who might just seat you or serve your meal. He's even known to sit down with guests from time to time for an old-fashioned visit. When it comes to comfort food and genuine hospitality—all for less than you'd pay in a chain restaurant—there's no better place than Carmine's.

**NIGHT LIFE:** Walk a few blocks from Carmine's to the **Branding Iron** (Kennewick; brandingironnightclub.com) for the area's best live music and country dancing.

## DAY THREE: Choose Your Own Adventure

*On your third day in the Tri-Cities, explore even more of the region by paddling, pedaling or hiking.*

You have another big day ahead of you—and the promise of more good coffee to help you enjoy it. This morning, grab a cup at **Frost Me Sweet Bistro and Bakery** (Richland; frostmesweet.com). Then it's time to choose your adventure for the day.



Cool off with an after-hike brew at the Atomic Ale Brewpub and Eatery in Richland. While you're there, make a dinner reservation at Carmine's Italian Restaurant in Kennewick. Perhaps you'll meet the man himself. Photos by Cassandra Overby.

## Where to Stay

**HOTEL:** Hampton Inn, Richland (hamptoninn.com)  
Nice rooms with private patios that overlook the Columbia River. Don't miss the hotel's surprisingly good continental breakfast.

**B&B:** Cherry Chalet, Kennewick (cherrychalet.com)  
Located on a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation family cherry orchard that accesses miles of nature trails. Wander to your heart's content.

**CAMPING:** Charbonneau Park (recreation.gov)  
SE of Pasco with 52 campsites and a host of amenities, including a swimming beach and BBQ grills. Reservations recommended.



For paddling, head to the **Tapteal Water Trail** (4; Benton City; tapteal.org) on the Yakima River. The trail starts at a WDFW boat launch (Discover Pass required). From there, it winds for 30 miles to Bateman Island. There are 12 signed trailheads along the way where boaters will find brochures that map the route. Keep your binoculars handy; great blue herons, river otters and Chinook salmon frequent these waters.

For pedaling, there's no better place than the **Sacagawea Heritage Trail** (5; visittricity.com), a 23-mile paved loop that links Kennewick, Pasco and Richland. The trail meanders along the shores of the Columbia River, passing several stop-worthy parks along the way, and features interpretive signage. A good place to start the ride is Howard Amon Park in Richland. From there, you can go either direction on the path.

**GEAR RENTALS:** Didn't bring your kayak or bicycle to the Tri-Cities? Check out Greenies (Richland; greenielife.com), where you can rent by the hour or by the day.

For hiking, get in some good canyon time with a walk at the **Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area** (6; Benton City; wta.org). On this 5-mile route (Discover Pass required) you'll be treated to sprawling desert prairie, a winding path through a network of miniature canyons and glimpses of hillside badger burrows. You'll also likely see coyotes.

After your adventure, fill up at **Rosy's Ice Cream and Diner** (Richland; facebook.com/RosysIceCreamDiner) before you head back home. In addition to tasty burgers and old-school soda fountain beverages, this 1950s diner has board games and retro décor. For a fun splurge, try the Giant Mound of Ice Cream Challenge.

This high note ends your third day, but it doesn't have to be your last one in town. There are more adventures to be had in the Tri-Cities. Consider expanding your trip—or coming back soon for another long weekend—to see more wildflowers and wildlife, taste more local flavor and explore more trails. After all, there's no better place to be in late spring than in the Tri-Cities.



**Editor's Choice**

# BEST GEAR

**2015**



# Fab Tents

*Is it time to replace that leaky old tent you've been lugging into the backcountry for the last decade? This year has seen some innovative new designs in backpacking tents, including updates to classic models, new feature integrations and thoughtful arrangements for optimum wilderness living. After all, your tent is your home away from home. Here are a few favorites worth considering.*

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

*"A fantastic entry-level or weekender ... with a killer price point."*



## TOP PICK: Mountain Hardwear Shifter 2

Just when you thought Mountain Hardwear topped their game with the innovative **Optic Series** of tents last year (Editor's Pick 2014), they continue that streak this year with the new **Shifter Series**. The Shifter employs a versatile new fly design that lets you assemble one way for an airy "front porch" with a large, sheltered gear vestibule, or another way for a large, sheltered entrance and smaller storage area—key for just the right setup in the Northwest's fickle weather. Inside is ample living space for two people, which includes several gear pockets and a gear loft (included!). The Shifter also features the new style of roll-up doors to help keep them out of your way while getting in and out. Weighing in around 5.5 pounds—that counts the included footprint, too—it doesn't qualify as ultralight, but the killer price point for an all-inclusive tent makes it a fantastic entry-level or weekender model. Also available in 3P and 4P sizes. \$199



## REI Half Dome 2

The dependable Half Dome tent has been a mainstay with hikers for years—durable, simple and affordable. Over the seasons it's seen upgrades in pole structure and fly design to increase headroom, along with other improvements. This year, REI lets you add some flavor to your Half Dome tent by offering a variety of new fly colors. The rest of the tent remains just as you would expect: good living space, large doors and vestibules and superior ventilation—and still at a great price! \$199



## NEMO Dagger 2

Weighing in at just 3.5 pounds, the Dagger already qualifies as an ultralight tent option, but by utilizing the innovative Divvy Sack, you can split the tent components between yourself and your partner to reduce pack weight even more. The ample living space and high bathtub floor ensure that you and your gear will stay dry and comfortable through the nastiest of rainstorms. It's just a little perk, but a favorite feature is the small Light Pocket designed to hold a head lamp for use as a tent lamp. \$400



## Sierra Designs Tensegrity 2FL

A highlight at last year's trade shows, the highly innovative Tensegrity tent is making big waves in the outdoor community for its huge living space, monster-sized gear awning and rain-proof sidewalls that offer superior visibility and ventilation. It also keeps pack weight to a minimum (3 pounds) by setting up with trekking poles. *WT* didn't get to test one due to a shortage of samples, but we will, so look for a review to come soon. \$390



## Big Agnes Copper Spur UL2

When my wife and I head out on extended backpacking trips, when weight matters, this is our tent of choice. The oversized living space (compared to other 2P tents) offers plenty of room for us and our gear without being cramped. Recent improvements to the Copper Spur include even more headspace and a few ounces off the base weight. The latest iteration incorporates new mtnGLO LED lighting into the tent body—and it still weighs in under 3 pounds! \$450



## Smart Packs

*Looking for a new pack? New packs are lighter and more sophisticated, with smart features to suit all hiking interests, from dayhiking to long-distance trekking. The key is picking the right size and features for the kind of hiking you plan to do.*

- ▶▶ Choose a pack that fits your torso size, not your height
- ▶▶ Consider what kind of hiking you plan to do
  - Day hiking: 20–30L
  - 1–2 day backpacking: 40–50L
  - 3–5 day backpacking: 50–60L
  - 6+ day trekking: 60–80L
- ▶▶ Choose your pack size based on your existing gear, not buying a whole new outfit.
- ▶▶ If you plan fall or winter hiking, choose a pack that will accommodate bulkier gear and layers.
- ▶▶ Look for features that you'll actually use, like a bladder port, bottle pockets and a rain cover.

### TOP PICK: REI Trail 40

When it comes to functionality and economy, the oversized Trail 40 is an organized hiker's dream, with all of the bells and whistles that make packing and unpacking a breeze—and with a price point that's an absolute steal. The main compartment opens completely, allowing unrestricted access to everything you've packed, even if it's on the bottom of the pile. The roomy interior is enhanced with a variety of pockets and compartments. One large pocket sleeve comes with its own bungee compression system; another

is zipper-secured for valuables. There are also pockets of varying sizes on the outside of the pack, including sizable hip-belt pockets, perfect for your rain shell, snacks and mobile electronics. Add to that a bottom-of-the-pack stash for the included rain cover. With this kind of room, you'll be tempted to overpack—we did—and with the spring-steel perimeter frame and well-padded shoulder straps everything felt comfortable and light. Available in men's and women's styles. \$109



### Osprey Zealot 15

This great little daypack is tailored for cyclists (with its LidLock helmet attachment) but serves hikers just as well. The big 3-liter water bladder will keep you hydrated all day, while the small pockets on the shoulder straps will hold your Chapstick and sunblock. The best feature is the one you can't even see: hidden at the bottom exterior of the pack is a zipper-secured compartment and a detachable organizer for your bike tools. \$140



### Columbia Trail Pursuit 30

Even with this pack's 30 liters of cargo space, it is surprisingly light and compact. It features a ton of pockets and tiny compartments for keeping your Ten Essentials organized. Our favorites: a secondary compartment with a built-in organizer and a stretchy kangaroo front pocket. The pack also includes a padded laptop sleeve—perfect for hike commuting. \$119



### Montane Yarara 32

Thoughtfully designed for a woman's body, this pack sports a narrow profile, short length and compact form—making it one of the most comfortable packs we tested. Special fabric on the shoulder straps, waist belt and back helps prevent abrasion of waterproof shells, while a DWR finish increases pack durability and resists moisture. Plus, the wide-mouth opening makes it easy to access all of your gear. \$117



### Mountain Hardwear Scrambler 30

Rain? No big deal with this OutDry waterproof daypack. We took this bad boy out in the rain and snow and our contents stayed perfectly dry. The large main compartment holds all of the day's essentials, while side pockets, gear loops and attachments manage other items. Side gear loops even manage climbing pro if your route takes you from the horizontal to the vertical. \$130



## Osprey Atmos AG 50

The new Atmos—and for women, Aura—series of packs made a big impression at last year's trade shows, and earned a coveted Editor's Choice award from *Backpacker*. Due to its high demand, I didn't get to test one out on the trail before this issue, but did get to try it at the show—and wow! The innovative new mesh suspension system conforms to your body in a way that redefines comfort and load distribution. Watch for a more detailed review to come soon. Available in 50L and 65L sizes. \$230



## Mountainsmith Lariat 65

Peak-baggers and base-campers, this is the pack you've been waiting for. No longer do you have to figure out how to cram an extra daypack into your bag. With the Lariat Series, the front compartment detaches to become an ultralight summit pack. Attached while you're trekking, use it as easy-access storage for your rain gear and essentials. Then leave the big pack behind and take the small pack on your side trips and summit attempts. \$200



## Exped Thunder 50

Designed for everything from long weekends to long treks, the alpine-styled Thunder Series of packs makes loading and gear access a breeze. The main compartment is accessible through both the top opening and a zippered front panel to keep gear where you need it, when you need it—especially handy when the weather goes south. Pack weight is kept down with the employment of a single central stay, and load is distributed through an adjustable suspension system for a light, comfortable ride. \$250



## Kelty Catalyst 65

For those who just can't seem to fit their packs just right, Kelty has the solution for you: Perfect Fit. Getting just the right fit for your size and comfort is as easy as following a 3-step adjustment—and you can dial it in on the fly so you don't have to take the pack off for minor adjustments. Plus, loading is a snap with plenty of pockets and main compartment access—including a removable compartment that converts to a daypack. Available in both men's and women's models; also 50L and 80L sizes. \$180



## TOP PICK: Gregory Baltoro 75

Gregory, a longtime favorite of dayhikers and backpackers alike has once again upped the ante with their newly redesigned Baltoro Series of expedition packs. How do I even begin to pick my favorite features? Let's start with the oodles of organizational options: a zippered front compartment to stash my rain gear, hat, gloves and other essentials—not to mention the included rain cover hidden within for quick and easy deployment; a stashable side bottle pocket angled for easy access to my drink so I'm not dislocating my shoulder trying to reach behind me; a big, stretchy side pocket for carrying my lightweight camp chair or camera tripod (again, for easy access); a 3-compartment lid to keep the rest of the essentials organized; and a weatherproof hipbelt pocket for keeping my phone and snacks dry. But the feature that really made me geek out over the new Baltoro is the removable hydration bladder sleeve that doubles as an ultralight summit pack—awesome sauce! And no matter how much gear I cram into this beast, the fully customizable harness keeps it feeling light and comfortable. Warning: This pack is guaranteed to make you start planning bigger, longer trips! Also available in 65L and 85L sizes. \$319

*"The removable hydration bladder sleeve that doubles as an ultralight summit pack—awesome sauce!"*

*"It's like a big, warm full-body hug."*



## Bed Time

*Sleeping well outdoors can be a tricky proposition, often with just a few thin layers of nylon between you and the elements. The key is a good bag.*

### TOP PICK: Mont-Bell Down Hugger 900 #2

Recently, I attended the ALDHA-West Cascade Ruck, where PCT thru-hikers gather to get information, share ideas and plan their treks. At the event, Mont-Bell was showcasing their Down Hugger bag, a 2014 *Backpacker* Editor's Choice award winner, and favorite bag of long-distance hikers. I had to try one. And after my own experience with it—in the chilly Northwest winter—Mont-Bell can add another feather to their cap with a *WT* Editor's Choice selection. Simply put, this bag is amazing. It features a stretchy spiral construction that allows you to toss, turn, curl up and roll without getting all twisted up. Then, when you settle into a comfortable position, the bag cinches in to eliminate open spaces and air pockets—it's like a big, warm full-body hug. Plus, a neck baffle and draft tubes minimize cold air leakage to keep you comfortable through the night. This is the bag that will be with me on the PCT this year. \$519

- ▶▶ Select a sleeping bag for the type of camping or backpacking you plan to do, considering these factors:
- ▶▶ **Temperature:** Choose a bag with a temp rating that will keep you comfortable in the coldest weather you plan to be in.
- ▶▶ **Weight:** For backpacking, go for lightweight bags with good compressibility.
- ▶▶ **Insulation:** Down bags are lighter and more compressible; synthetic bags are better at repelling moisture.
- ▶▶ **Roominess:** You want a bag that will be comfortable and let you move in the position that you normally sleep.



### Mountain Hardwear HyperLamina Spark

Here it is: the lightest, warmest, most compressible *synthetic* bag you will find. You just won't believe it's not down. Strategically-placed Thermal.Q insulation keeps you warmest where you need it most, and a single center half-zip keeps weight to a minimum (under 2 lbs.!) while allowing you to sit up in the bag. Plus, the killer price point makes it a no-brainer. \$220



### Big Agnes Lost Ranger

The Lost Ranger updates the traditional mummy bag with modern technology and comfort. 650-fill DownTek insulation keeps you toasty, while special baffle construction keeps the insulation in place to eliminate cold spots. Pair it with a Double-Z sleeping pad (see review) for the ultimate bedtime comfort. Available as the Roxy Ann for women. \$280



### Therm-a-Rest Mira HD

The popular women's Mira bag just got better. Now fully wrapped in 750-fill Nikwax Hydrophobic Down (read: water repellent) and designed to a woman's shape, this bag will keep the gals warm and toasty through all the backpacking seasons—especially with extra insulation in the footbox. An added heat-reflective lining provides extra warmth and insulation. A similar model, the Antares HD, is available for men. \$490



### Sierra Designs Backcountry Bed Duo

One of my favorite sleeping bags is now made for two—perfect for cuddling in the backcountry. The Backcountry Bed takes a whole new approach to sleeping bags with a zipperless down design that employs a quilt-like blanket over the upper bag; pull it in close just like you would with your comforter at home—just don't let your partner hog the covers! \$500



*"Think of it as a pillowtop mattress for the wilderness."*

### TOP PICK: Big Agnes Insulated Double-Z

Sleeping on the cold, hard ground is no fun. And waking up the next morning after a restless, uncomfortable night on the cold, hard ground is even less fun. That's where a good pad between you and the ground is imperative. After all, good rest will keep you energized and moving down the trail with ease. Choosing the right sleeping pad has a lot to do with how sensitive a sleeper you are, and how much weight you're willing to carry to be comfortable. I know I'm a sensitive sleeper in the backcountry so I'm willing to carry a little extra to ensure I sleep well (and kink-free) so I'm not stumbling down the trail like a zombie. That's why I pack along the Insulated Double-Z Pad. With its 4 inches of cushioned thickness, think of it as a pillowtop mattress for the wilderness. Plus, the PrimaLoft Hi-Loft insulation reflects heat back at me to keep me warm, and keep the cold ground away. \$109



### Therm-a-Rest EvoLite

Always a leader in sleeping pad technology and comfort, Therm-a-Rest does it again with the new EvoLite. This ultralight, (just 1 pound!), self-inflating pad incorporates alternating layers of air channels and foam to offer campers and backpackers a comfy night's rest with minimal effort. And talk about compressible! Deflated and rolled up it's smaller than your Nalgene bottle, making it as space-saving as it is comfortable. A perfect 3-season pad for lightweight treks in your favorite places. \$120



### Klymit Insulated Static V Lite

When your trekking schedule is not dictated by a calendar, and you need gear to perform in any climate and any season, look no further than this 4-season insulated pad for a good night's rest on any mountain. The unique body-mapping design of Klymit's pads ensures that you are getting the support you need in all the right places. You may expect a full-size pad like this to come at a premium, both in cost and pack weight. Think again. \$100



### NEMO Tango Solo

Is it a sleeping bag? Is it a bed? It's kind of both. The innovative Tango Solo is a down comforter that combines with a sleeping pad (any 20- or 25-inch pad will do) and slipcover to create a unique kind of ultra-lightweight backcountry bed. Forget the constriction of a traditional sleeping bag. With a Tango sleep system you can toss and roll all you like and still stay comfortable and covered. A favorite from last year's trade show, I only got to preview this before press time, so look for a thorough on-trail review to come soon. \$330



### Helinox Cot Lite

If the hard ground just doesn't do it for you, and you have to have an even sleep surface, pack along the Cot Lite. It'll add 2.6 pounds to your pack, but it's more than worth its weight in sleepy comfort—just ask my wife! Setup is quick and easy with lightweight DAC poles, and the sleep surface is firm and supportive. In fact, my wife didn't even use a sleeping pad with it (a pack weight trade-off) and still found it uber-comfy. Her only comment: on cold nights, stuff extra clothing underneath to keep cold air from seeping up. \$250

# Camp Kitchen

*Knowing how you plan to eat on trail can help you select the proper type of cook kit.*

- ▶▶ Canister stoves are lightweight, compact and easy to use, while requiring little maintenance.
- ▶▶ Integrated canister systems are ideal for the quick cooking of pre-packaged foods, soups and hot drinks.
- ▶▶ Liquid fuel stoves are more versatile and dependable in below-freezing and high elevation environments.
- ▶▶ Supplement your cook kit with tiny containers of salt, pepper and other favorite spices to add more flavor.

## TOP PICK: Jetboil MiniMo

When it comes to backcountry cooking, there are usually two camps: the backpacking gourmets, who pack in fresh or home-prepared ingredients, spices and tiny bottles of olive oil, and the rest of us, who prefer their meals light, fast and easy. I definitely fall into the latter category. That is why I am, and continue to be, and avid fan of the Jetboil. You just can't beat the Jetboil's ease and efficiency. And with the new MiniMo, the Jetboil just got better—now it simmers! When you want to do more than just boil water and add it to your freeze-dried chili mac—say, simmer soup, cook pasta, or scramble eggs—the MiniMo's new regulator allows you to control the burner just right. And, of course, true to Jetboil fashion it comes with an insulated cup sleeve, sippy lid and fuel canister stand, all of which pack neatly into itself for a lightweight, compact cook kit for any backpacking trip. The MiniMo also claimed a *Backpacker* 2015 Editor's Choice Award. \$130



## MSR Pocket Rocket

The very first backpacking stove I bought was an MSR Pocket Rocket. I still have that little guy, and it still works as good now as when I bought it 15 years ago. This little powerhouse has been around for a long time, and is still one of the best-selling, most reliable portable canister stoves available. Even with all the newer, integrated cook systems available, you just can't beat the light, compact convenience the Pocket Rocket continues to offer. \$60



## Optimus Elektra FE

This compact, all-inclusive cook system has definitely covered the bases for camp cooking. It starts with the fuel-efficient (FE) Crux Lite stove combined with a heat-exchanger cooking pot. This let you control the burner for everything from boiling to simmering. Add to that a piezo lighter and handy lid/bowl. But the best feature is the durable, snap-on windscreen for consistent cooking performance in any camp conditions. \$95



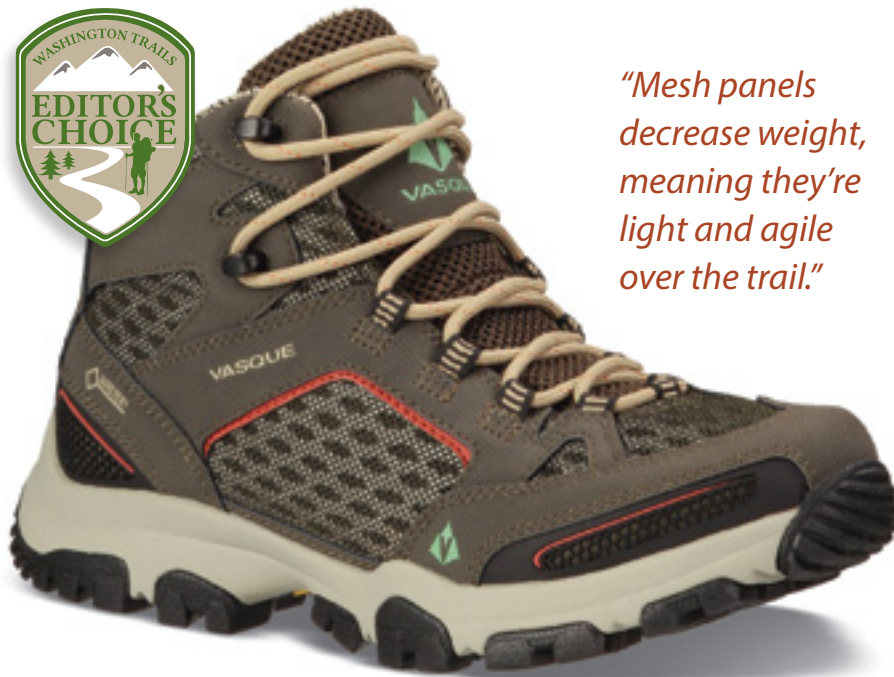
## GSI JavaPress

Coffee drinkers rejoice! The popular GSI Commuter JavaPress is now available in a vacuum insulated stainless steel model. So forget those little packages of instant "coffee" and treat yourself to your favorite blend with this durable, spill-proof coffee tumbler. The new stainless design ensures that your favorite 15 ounces of coffee will stay hotter longer whether you're traveling to the office or the trailhead—or kicking back in camp. \$33



## Hydro Flask Growler

So you want to go camping and take along some of your favorite microbrew or kombucha—but don't want to deal with a bunch of container trash? No problem. Put your favorite beverage in this 64-ounce, vacuum insulated bottle and you're good to go. The BPA-free, double-wall construction will keep your cold drinks cold and bubbly, and your hot drinks hot and steamy. The wide-mouth opening makes it easy for filling and cleaning. \$55



*"Mesh panels decrease weight, meaning they're light and agile over the trail."*

## Footwear

*Your trail footwear can make or break your hiking experience. Here are a few tips for selecting your next trail treads:*

- ▶ Choose a boot for the kind of hiking you plan to do, e.g., lightweight for dayhiking or sturdier for backpacking.
- ▶ Buy half a size larger than you normally wear to give your feet room to swell.
- ▶ Break them in on short hikes and walks around your neighborhood.
- ▶ Wear breathable, synthetic or wool hiking socks that offer plenty of cushion in high-impact areas.
- ▶ Add a lightweight sock liner for more foot protection; try Injinji Micro socks.

### TOP PICK: Vasque Inhaler GTX

When it comes to hiking boots, I tend to select traditional hightop styles for the extra ankle support they have to offer. But a beefier boot usually means a heavier boot—something we don't usually notice at first, but once we're into double-digit miles they can really weigh you down. No more. Lace up a pair of Vasque's new Inhaler GTX boots and you can have your camp cake and eat it, too. I did, and the best way I can describe these boots is like having a cool, sweat-wicking shirt for your feet. By incorporating 3D mesh panels around the boots, my feet stayed cooler and drier than any other

boot I've worn. Plus, those mesh panels decrease weight, meaning they're light and agile over the trail. But what about handling the elements and varied trail conditions, you ask? A Gore-Tex liner keeps it cool and dry inside while keeping the wet outside. And the tread on these things is just sick, thanks to the Vibram Pneumatic MegaGrip sole. If you've got hot weather hiking on your itinerary this summer—and it looks like it could be a scorcher—you need to give the Inhaler a test run of your own. I'll be on the PCT in my Inhalers this summer. Available for men and women. \$160



### AKU Nuvola GTX

Trail tested by our own Cassandra Overby, she gives these Gore-Tex-lined kickers an enthusiastic thumbs-up. Liking them to a retro bowling shoe crossed with a lightweight hiking shoe, the Nuvolas are deceptively stylish, while packing a punch in functionality. She found the Air8000 upper to be ultra-breathable for keeping feet cool and dry, and the Megagrip sole great for stepping confidently on sharp rocks and slick spots. \$160



### Forsake Hiker

Is it a skate shoe? Is it a hiking boot? Whatever it is, it's awesome. Billed as an outdoor crossover shoe, this bad boy is just as functional walking across town as it is walking up a mountain. And don't let the street-shoe comfort fool you—the waterproof lining, taped seams and moderate tread can hold their own over just about any Northwest trail conditions. Who says you need to take your boots off after your hike to hit the pub? I don't. \$130



### Oboz Bridger BDry

Testing hiking boots is a time-consuming process. It usually takes a few hikes to break in a pair of boots to truly evaluate their comfort and performance. Not so with the Bridger—this is a comfortable boot from the start, thanks in part to the BFit footbeds. On the trail, I especially liked the rugged, grippy tread, which performed admirably. Plus, they're lightweight and waterproof—a solid boot for any season. Available in men's and women's styles. \$165



### Lowa Vantage GTX

I get to test a lot of hiking boots—and there are a lot of good ones out there. But I always head back to my favorite Lowas (the Renegade) when the testing is done. This new trekking boot is amazingly lightweight for its beefy ruggedness. The extra-high ankle gives superior support and stability over rough terrain, and the deep tread handles scree, mud and snow like nobody's business. These may just give my Renegades a run for their money. \$245

# TRAIL MIX

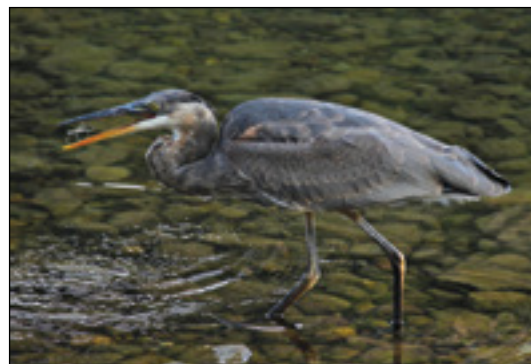
## Nature Nook

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: Great Blue Heron

Graceful and poised, the majestic, long-legged great blue heron is often spotted wading along river edges or standing completely motionless while stalking fish near lakes, ponds and tidal flats. As the largest and most widespread heron in North America, its disheveled head, chest and wing plumes give it a unique appearance. Its chest feathers aren't just for show, though; they are used as specialized tools to remove fish slime and natural oils from other feathers as it preens. Thanks to special photoreceptors in its eyes, the heron is able to hunt during the day and night—and spends about 90 percent of its waking hours doing so. A distinctively-formed vertebrae allows it to twist its neck to strike prey quickly from a distance. Look for great blue herons wherever you find bodies of water.



### BEAST: Black Bear

With an estimated statewide population of 25,000 to 30,000 animals, odds are, if you've spent large amounts of time hiking in Washington state, you've seen a wild black bear—or possibly a few. While the black bear's fur is primarily black, is also comes in a variety of colors, including brown, rust and cinnamon. Black bears are exceptionally smart, with curved claws for clawing at tree bark and climbing trees, whereas grizzly bears have long straight claws for digging. Female black bears give birth to one or two cubs in the winter months, which are weaned at 6 to 8 months and then stay with their mother for a year and a half or more. When hiking in the backcountry, keep your eyes open for evidence of bears: claw marks on trees, overturned stumps, broken limbs in huckleberry patches and paw prints.



### BLOOM: Red Columbine

If you see hummingbirds or butterflies flitting about as you wander along the trail, you might look around and see if you spot the common but elegant red columbine growing nearby. This adaptable plant is found on open hillsides, in natural rock gardens, along creeks and streams and in damp meadows, where it gracefully sways its bowed head with each light breeze. The red columbine is easily identified by vibrant red and yellow flowers, which droop from narrow stems, attracting pollinators to the nectar that is located along the flower's spurs. Native Americans once infused various parts of the plant to help with ailments such as heart pains and fever. While most plants only live 3 to 5 years, they freely re-sow new seedlings each year that thrive in the damp Northwestern climate.



Photos by Tami Asars



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**Chasing the light.** This photo of the American Alps is an example of a high-contrast scene where the human eye sees the dynamic range better than the camera eye. To best capture this scene with wide variances between light and shadow, I shot in RAW format, while watching my histogram and highlight alarm. Back home I selected the best-exposed frame and adjusted highlights and shadows in Adobe Lightroom. This helped create an end result that's more lifelike and representative of our Cascadian Highlands. 14mm, ISO 400, 5.0 sec, f/11. — Buff Black



# 101: Outdoor Exposure

Chasing the light on  
our splendiferous

Washington trails is the stuff of legends. And what better way to chronicle and memorialize our adventures than by capturing that very light in well-exposed images. But with newer technology—through-the-lens metering, highly capable camera sensors and post-processing software—do we really need to focus on exposing our images well? The answer is an unequivocal YES!

Sure, digital technology allows us to poke and prod pixels, even in poorly exposed snapshots to some extent. But it's in the well-exposed captures where it all comes together, where the technical and the artistic can form an inspirational fusion. With this in mind, here a few tips for capturing a well-exposed single shot with whip:

## 1. Play With Your Display

Does it look too dark? Too light? Goldilocks right? The display screens on modern DSLRs, point-and-shoots and smartphones are great at giving a ballpark sense of exposure.

## 2. Set Your Highlight Alarm

When this is turned on, the overexposed portion of a picture will blink to alert you that your highlights are heading toward detail-less white or black (clipping). This helpful alert prevents dimensionless, blown-out clouds and waterfalls.

## 3. Shoot in RAW

Compared to regular JPEGs, RAW files store much more highlight and shadow detail than meets the eye. In post-processing on your computer, this extra detail can be added back in, making for photos that more closely match what our eyes originally saw in the scene.

JPEGs are great for snapshots, but if you're playing for keeps, you want to shoot in RAW.

## 4. Get Hysterical About the Histogram

Yes, technical. Yes, statistical. But if you want artful and dynamic photos, embrace it. The histogram is the rectangle that contains a graph that looks like a mountain range. The goal is to have all of this graph fit between the left (black) and right (white) sides of the rectangle. If the graph is hitting up against the left side, that means there's too much black (underexposed); if the graph is hitting up against the right side, that means there's too much white (overexposed). Using the histogram takes practice, but it's a wonderful tool to help you perfect your exposures.

## 5. Learn the Racket of Bracketing

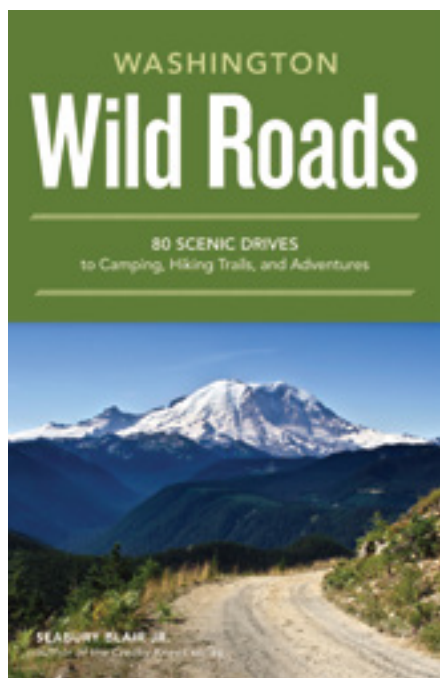
Bracketing means taking multiple frames of a scene at different exposure values (EVs). On DSLRs and many point-and-shoots, you can control the EV—it's that line that has a zero in the middle, positive numbers on the right and negative numbers on the left. The zero spot is where your camera's light meter computes the best exposure. To be sure you've got the best exposure, you can take additional frames at, say, +1.0 and -1.0. +1.0 EV is one stop overexposed, which lets in twice the light; this helps ensure good shadow detail. -1.0 EV is one stop underexposed, letting in half the light; this helps ensure good highlight detail (e.g., clouds). Experiment and see what you get. You can get even more creative by combining three bracketed exposures to create an HDR (high dynamic range) image—but that's a lesson for another day.

WTA's next **Northwest Exposure** photo contest is coming. Start honing your photo-craft now and be ready to enter this summer.

# TRAIL MIX

## Bookshelf

By Cassandra Overby



### Recommendation:

4/5



# “ROAD TRIP!”

*I'm happy to report that some roads—I call them “wild”—insist, by the quality of their surface or the scenery they traverse, that you slow down. They lead you to the edge of wilderness, through forests so tall the sky is a narrow slot overhead, up mountainsides to flower-filled meadows and August snowfields, across sagebrush prairies and stark basalt coulees. They are the last examples of the byways that existed everywhere seven or eight decades ago, roads built simply to be enjoyed.*

— Seabury Blair Jr.

Looking for a new adventure to go along with the new hiking season? Instead of revisiting your long-time favorite spots in Washington this year, challenge yourself to fall in love with somewhere new. For inspiration, hidden gems and good road trips that are also close to home, let *Wild Roads Washington* be your guide.

Rediscover the simple pleasure of driving with *Washington Wild Roads*. This book offers a selection of 80 drives that lead to campsites, hiking trails and adventures—but are also great to drive in and of themselves. The drives are geographically organized, which makes nearby ones easy to find. And each includes a variety of handy information, from maps to what kind of vehicle is required (most are accessible by two-wheel-drive vehicles) to what you'll see along the way. Also included in several of the drives are brief descriptions of trails where drivers can stretch their legs.

## TRY ONE OF THESE SAMPLE TRIPS:

### Lake Quinault Loop (Olympic Peninsula)

**WHY GO:** Good views upstream to the Quinault Valley; mountain views

**DETAILS:** 28.4 miles; year-round

**GOOD FOR:** 2WD

**CONDITIONS:** 360.288.2444



### Windy Ridge (Mount St. Helens)

**WHY GO:** View the inside of Mount St. Helens' crater

**DETAILS:** 36.1 miles one way; summer/fall

**GOOD FOR:** 2WD

**CONDITIONS:** 360.449.7800



### Skyline Divide Road (Mount Baker)

**WHY GO:** Climb from a river valley to an alpine trailhead

**DETAILS:** 12.7 miles one way; summer/fall

**GOOD FOR:** 2WD

**CONDITIONS:** 360.599.2714



# WHAT'S MISSING FROM THIS PICTURE?

(besides the top of the mountain.)

ANSWER: YOU

Get in the picture! Pick up *MAP 332S - Mount St Helens National Volcanic Monument*, brand new for 2015.

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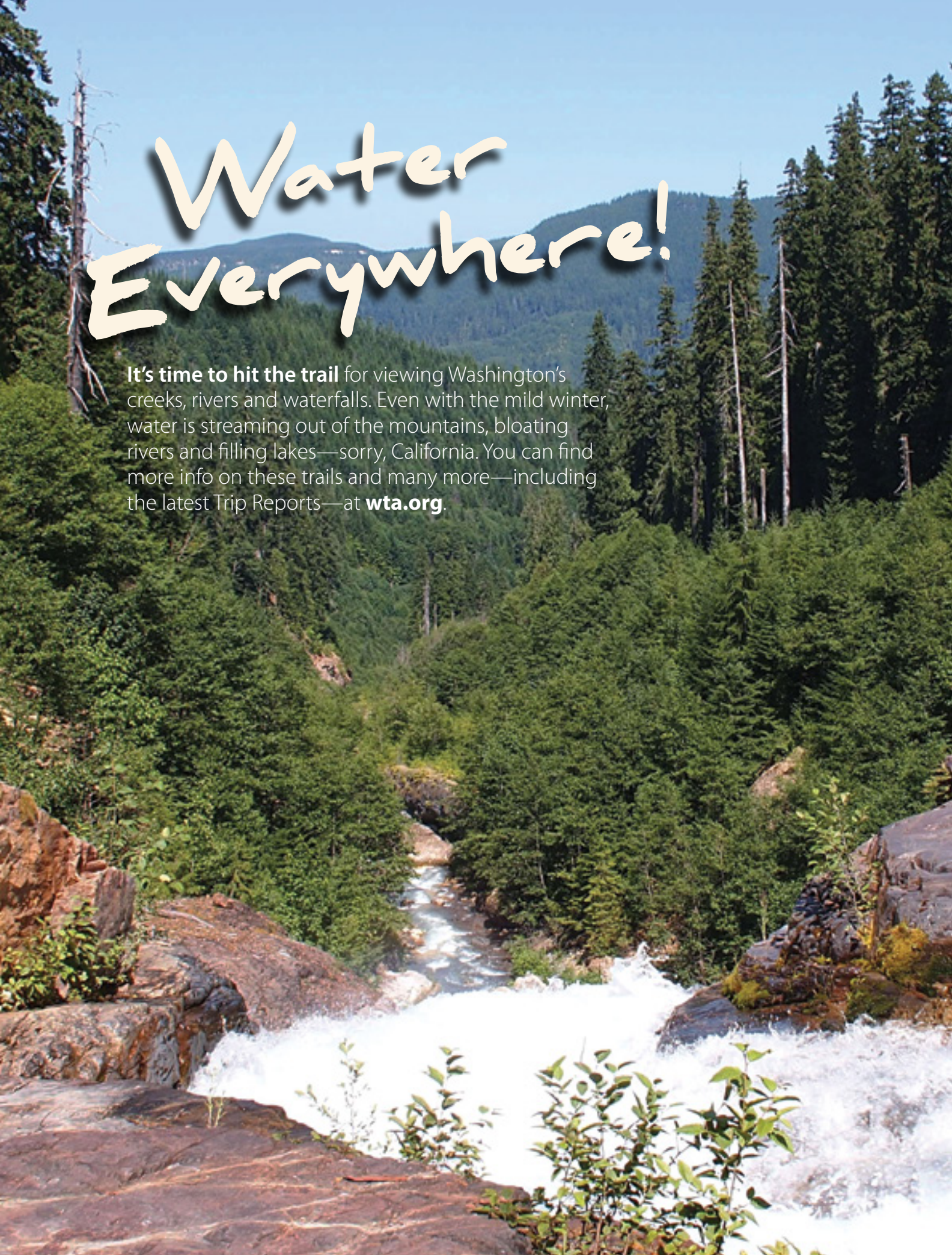


**GREEN TRAILS MAPS™**

*We love these places*

# Water Everywhere!

It's time to hit the trail for viewing Washington's creeks, rivers and waterfalls. Even with the mild winter, water is streaming out of the mountains, bloating rivers and filling lakes—sorry, California. You can find more info on these trails and many more—including the latest Trip Reports—at **wta.org**.





## HIKE IT: Lava Canyon

**DISTANCE:** 5 miles, RT  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,600 ft  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 2,800 ft

**PERMIT:** NW Forest Pass  
**DOGS:** Not permitted  
**MAP:** Green Trails 364

## 1 LAVA CANYON *This trail begins with an amazing, ADA accessible, interpretive trail before proceeding down a steep rugged canyon to a one-of-a-kind swinging bridge.*

There are three sections of the Lava Canyon Trail, each distinguished by increasing difficulty. From the parking lot the trail quickly descends into the canyon on a paved path with a gentle grade. The first section is perfect for everyone from youngsters new to hiking to those with stubborn knees. This section comes to an end at the waterfall viewpoint. Below, the trail becomes more difficult as the route narrows and skirts along high cliffs. This segment forms a loop, which crosses over a 125-foot suspension bridge torn from the pages of a Hollywood movie script. On the bridge you will be treated to an amazing view of the canyon below and gushing water right under your feet. The sight can be unnerving, so watch your footing.

The trail eventually returns on the south side of the canyon, crossing a steel bridge upstream of the waterfalls and rejoins the paved trail. But before you get there you will need to drop farther into the canyon. If you are fearful of heights, this segment is not for you. After the bridge, the trail crosses an exposed face, followed by a water crossing, where a cable is present to assist hikers make the ford. A metal ladder then descends a vertical cliff providing access to the canyon's thunderous waterfalls. The trail soon intersects Ship Trail (the return route), which climbs to a viewpoint atop a lava formation that overlooks a long series of waterfalls in the lower canyon. A bit further, the canyon begins to broaden and flatten as it approaches a large alluvial fan spreading into the Smith Creek valley.

**SEE MORE:** For more volcanic geology, check out the nearby Trail of Two Forests, the location where a series of lava tubes formed when a lava flow crawled through an old growth forest and cooled. When trees decayed, vertical columns were formed where the old-growth trees once stood.



**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/lava-canyon](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/lava-canyon)

**TRAILHEAD:** From I-5, take exit 21 and drive east on SR-503 for 28 miles to Cougar. Continue east on FR-90 past the Swift Dam. Turn onto FR-83 and proceed 12 miles to the trailhead at the end of the road.

*Hike by Ryan Schreiner; Photo by Patrick M.*

**DID YOU KNOW:** Washington is home to more than 3,100 glaciers and 8,000 lakes—all feeding countless creeks, streams and rivers.

## 2 KALAMA RIVER *Lake hike or river hike? How about a hike with both! Start with an exploration up the verdant Kalama River, then proceed to McBride Lake.*

Begin at the Kalama Horse Camp trailhead and head east upstream along the river. At 0.2 mile, the trail descends slightly to cross a tributary on a small footbridge. Turn right to stay on the Toutle Trail and follow the river upstream. The route proceeds through the Cinnamon Trail junction and continues along the Kalama. The river valley is lush and quiet, but you can tell it has a darker past. The dark black basalt along the water hints at the area's volcanic history. Today, however, the river's soft pools and mossy forests are hardly intimidating.

At 0.7 mile, the trail switchbacks to the top of a ridge with views of Mount St. Helens, Goat Mountain and Mount Adams. On bluebird days, you may even be lucky enough to get a peek at far-off Mount Hood. The trail snakes back down to the water at 1.6 miles, and then crosses an old logging road at 2 miles. Continue on, climbing very slightly through mixed conifer forests with a decent spread of old-growth timber. Along the river, look for sneaky American dippers flying in and out of the water. At 3.3 miles, turn right on an abandoned road, the Blue Horse Trail, and cross the Kalama. On the other side, turn left to follow the Toutle Trail past a small waterfall and McBride Lake's south shore. This meadowy river valley occasionally hosts grazing Roosevelt elk, as well as a happy collection of birds and small forest critters. The trail then climbs away from the lake, but this makes a good place to enjoy lunch before heading back by the same route.

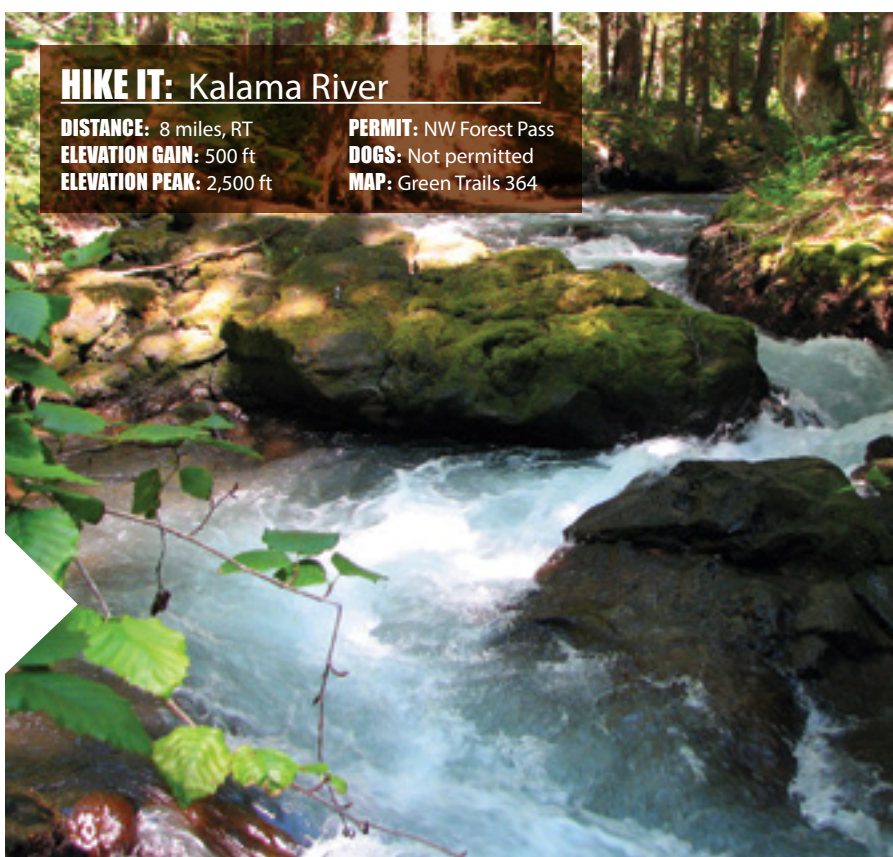
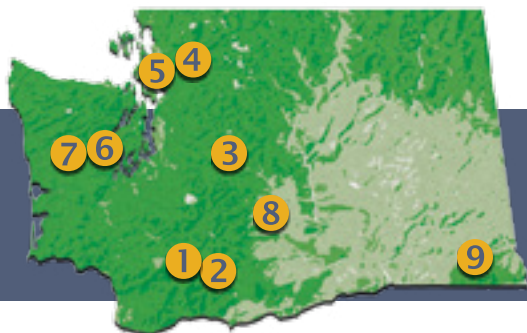
**TRAIL TIP:** This trail winds in and out of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, so be sure to observe all posted signage, including pet restrictions.



**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/kalama-river](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/kalama-river)

**TRAILHEAD:** From Cougar, drive FR 90 east 1 mile past the Swift Dam. Turn left onto FR 83 and continue 3 miles to FR 81. Turn left to the Kalama Horse Camp and trailhead.

*Hike by Brittany Manwill; Photo by Ron Melin*



### HIKE IT: Kalama River

**DISTANCE:** 8 miles, RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 500 ft

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 2,500 ft

**PERMIT:** NW Forest Pass

**DOGS:** Not permitted

**MAP:** Green Trails 364

**TEN ESSENTIALS:** To avoid contracting giardia from mountain water sources, always use a water filter or purification tablets.

**3 HYAS LAKE** *The relatively flat hike to this long, shallow lake makes an excellent destination for families with children or an easy overnight camping trip.* Follow the Cle Elum River Trail as it moves through wooded forest and over bubbling streams while surrounded by a bevy of local berries: thimbleberry, bunchberry, mountain ash and huckleberry. The initial gentle incline flattens out after the first 0.5 mile as you continue through the woods. After 1 mile, the forest begins to open as the trail nears the lower portion of the main lake. Listen for birds singing in the forested canopy, as they tend to gravitate toward the lake—this means you're close. At 2 miles the lake comes into view. Arriving at the lower shores, you'll find plenty of picnic and camping options. The trail continues to the upper lake to offer incredible views of Cathedral Rock and Mount Daniel, which create a striking contrast to the flat valley holding the lake. Return by the same route.



**DISTANCE:** 4 miles, RT  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 100 ft  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 3,500 ft

**PERMIT:** NW Forest Pass  
**DOGS:** Leashed  
**MAP:** Green Trails 176

**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/hyas-lake](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/hyas-lake)

**TRAILHEAD:** From I-90 take exit 80. Drive north on SR-903 to Salmon la Sac. Fork right and continue up Cle Elum Valley Rd (FR-4330) for 12 rough miles to the trailhead.

*Hike by Kristen Sapowicz; Photo by Arien Ensley*

**4 MONOGRAM LAKE** *This gem of an alpine lake is ringed by verdant meadows and frequented by resident wildlife.* The path begins by ascending steeply through a seemingly endless series of switchbacks between Lookout and Monogram Creeks, where rushing water is heard but not seen and views are limited. After slogging upward nearly 2.5 miles and gaining 2,400 feet of elevation, the trail comes to a refreshing creek. Shortly beyond, the Lookout Mountain Trail veers left; stay right to enter North Cascades National Park and continue on to the lake. After another mile the trail breaks out of the tree cover and enters a splendid world of subalpine meadows. Continue another 0.5 mile to crest a ridge and take in expansive mountain views. Just 500 feet below and 0.7 mile away sits sparkling Monogram Lake at the base of Little Devil Peak. Head down and relax along the lakeshore—you've earned it!

**TRAIL TIP:** Overnight camping at the lake requires a national park wilderness permit and a bear canister.



**DISTANCE:** 9.8 miles, RT  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 4,675 ft  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 5,720 ft

**PERMIT:** None  
**DOGS:** Not permitted  
**MAP:** Green Trails 47

**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/monogram-lake](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/monogram-lake)

**TRAILHEAD:** From Marblemount on SR-20, drive 7 miles east on Cascade River Rd to the trailhead.

*Hike by Lindsay Leffelman; Photo by Mike Morrison*



**LEAVE NO TRACE:** When camping near water, use established campsites, or choose a new campsite on a durable surface at least 200 feet from the water source.



**5 SQUIRES LAKE** *This short loop trail around a quiet lake is a great place to enjoy an after-work outdoor stroll or take the kids on an easy outdoor excursion.* From the trailhead, the route makes a quick, moderate climb for 0.3 mile before easing and offering a look at tree-ringed Squires Lake. Here, the trail forks to loop around the lake. Turning left leads to views of the dam, a waterfall and the full length of the lake; right leads uphill to a junction with the South Ridge Trail. A short side trail branches off the main trail to a beaver pond. Be quiet and still, and you may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of a beaver at work. As you circle the lake, several benches offer respite to sit and enjoy views of the calm water and relax among the pleasant peace and quiet.



**DISTANCE:** 2 miles, RT  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 200 ft  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 680 ft

**PERMIT:** None  
**DOGS:** Leashed  
**MAP:** Chuckanut Rec Area

**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/squires-lake](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/squires-lake)

**TRAILHEAD:** From I-5 in Burlington, take exit 242 and go just 0.5 mile on Old Highway 99 to Squires Lake Park.

*Hike and photo by Mike Morrison*

**6 SKOKOMISH RIVER** *Venture up the Lower South Fork of the Skokomish River for an abundance of flora and fauna amid lush old growth.* Start with a short series of switchbacks to ground high above the river. The wide, well-maintained trail breezes past trees that are hundreds of years old, then descends to the riverside and then proceeds with only minor elevation changes. Note how the forest transitions from stands of maple and alder to hemlock and fir. A good destination is the bridge and waterfall at 4.25 miles, shortly past the old Camp Comfort site. Watch out for herds of Roosevelt elk that frequent the area.



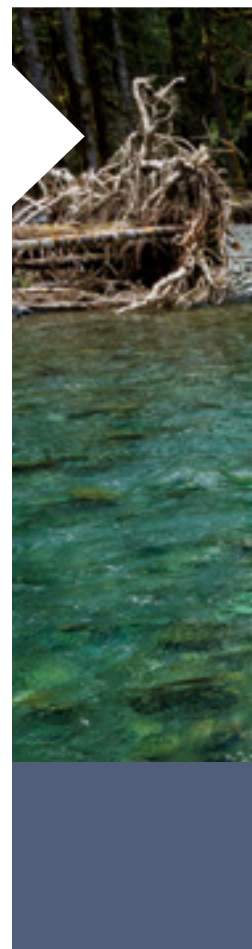
**DISTANCE:** 8.5 miles, RT  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 800 ft  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 900 ft

**PERMIT:** NW Forest Pass  
**DOGS:** Leashed  
**MAP:** Green Trails 199

**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/lower-south-fork-skokomish-river](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/lower-south-fork-skokomish-river)

**TRAILHEAD:** Near Shelton, take Skokomish Valley Rd 5.5 miles to FR-23. Continue 9 miles to FR-2353, then turn right over the river. Turn left at a four-way junction and proceed less than 0.5 mile to the trailhead.

*Hike and photo by Nate and Jer Barnes*





## 7 WYNOOCHEE LOOP *Cross creeks, marvel at old growth and watch for wildlife along the shores of tranquil Wynoochee Lake. Begin at the Wynoochee Dam and follow the west shore of the lake, passing by the day-use area and Coho Campground. At the boat launch, enjoy sweeping views of the lake and surrounding mountains before proceeding on to the junction with the Working Forest Nature Trail. Continue on the Lake Shore Trail through stands of second-growth Douglas-fir and hemlock. At 1.9 miles, hop rocks across Scatter Creek. Just past 2.5 miles, cross two more creeks. Continue on the trail through a series of road junctions, smaller creeks and peekaboo views of the lake.*

Begin at the Wynoochee Dam and follow the west shore of the lake, passing by the day-use area and Coho Campground. At the boat launch, enjoy sweeping views of the lake and surrounding mountains before proceeding on to the junction with the Working Forest Nature Trail. Continue on the Lake Shore Trail through stands of second-growth Douglas-fir and hemlock. At 1.9 miles, hop rocks across Scatter Creek. Just past 2.5 miles, cross two more creeks. Continue on the trail through a series of road junctions, smaller creeks and peekaboo views of the lake.

Nearing Trout Creek, the trail ascends along a high bluff to a junction with FR-2294. Walk the road, passing the game gate and crossing Trout Creek. Continue to a fork; travel right to the Lake Shore Trail sign. Descend to the West Shore river ford at 6 miles and proceed across. On the east bank of the river, pick up the trail and continue south into impressive stands of old-growth timber. Through a series of ups and downs, enter and exit mossy ravines with creeks to the Road 140 junction at 9 miles. Once back on the trail, ascend high above the lake and continue through second-growth timber. At 10 miles, cross Sixteen Creek and continue to the Wynoochee Dam. Follow the asphalt walkway back to the trailhead.

**TRAIL TIP:** If river conditions won't allow safe fording, continue on FR-2294 to the bridged river crossing near Maidenhair Falls (this option adds 4 miles). From the falls, follow the trail back to the junction with the Lake Shore Trail.



**DISTANCE:** 12 miles, RT  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,100 ft  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 950 ft

**PERMIT:** None  
**DOGS:** Leashed  
**MAP:** Green Trails 198

**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/wynoochee](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/wynoochee)

**TRAILHEAD:** From SR-12 near Montesano, drive north on Wynoochee Valley Rd (FR-22) for about 35 miles. Turn left and continue to FR-2294, then right. Continue 1 more mile to the Coho Campground and trailhead.

*Hike and photo by Kelsie Donleycott*



**USE CAUTION:** When fording a river, first scout up- and downstream for the safest crossing location. If the water is fast-moving, icy cold or above your thighs, do not attempt to cross and return the way you came.

## 8

**ROBINSON & AINSLEY CANYONS**

*This is a loop with wildflowers and aspen groves that wind through meadows above the canyons, past an old stone building and back into the canyons.*

From the parking area, follow the road into Robinson Canyon. After about 0.25 mile, watch for a trail going off to the left; if you reach a big washout, you've gone too far. The trail crosses the creek and shortly comes to a fork. The main trail goes to the right up Robinson Canyon, but for this hike take the trail to the left, traversing up the hillside to a large open flat and an intersection with a well-used 2-track. Turn right here, going straight ahead at the four-way intersection, and proceed to a low saddle with nice views of the surrounding countryside. Follow the road across the saddle, watching for a fainter 2-track heading downhill to the right. This track leads down through a grove of aspen and across a creek to intersect another trail.

Turn left here and follow this trail past a beautiful grove of aspen and into a large meadow. Where the trail bends right, look across the meadow to spot the old stone building. After exploring the building, continue across the meadow and find another old 2-track heading downhill into Ainsley Canyon, just above the confluence with Robinson Canyon; turning left takes you up Ainsley Canyon; to go up Robinson Canyon turn right, then left where the trail forks. Whichever way you go, do not return along the bottom of Robinson Canyon because the road is completely washed out below Ainsley Canyon. Instead, follow the obvious trail that climbs above the canyon and then drops down to your original crossing of Robinson Creek.

**TRAIL TIP:** This area can be subject to seasonal closures from December 10 to May 1 to protect wintering elk herds.



**INFO:** [wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/robinson-canyon-ainsley-canyon](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/robinson-canyon-ainsley-canyon)

**TRAILHEAD:** From I-90, take exit 101 and turn south on Thorp Hwy. Veer right onto Killmoor Rd and continue 2.5 miles to Robinson Canyon Rd. Turn right and proceed to the gate at the road's end.

*Hike and photo by David Hagen*



### **HIKE IT:** Robinson & Ainsley Canyons

**DISTANCE:** 6–10 miles, RT

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 700–1,200 ft

**ELEVATION PEAK:** 3,400 ft

**PERMIT:** Discover Pass

**DOGS:** Leashed

**MAP:** DNR Wenatchee

**WILDLIFE VIEWING:** Animals can often be spotted near lakeshores and alongside streams and rivers. When selecting a backcountry campsite near water, look for signs of wildlife. If present, perhaps consider another location.



**9 TUCANNON RIVER** *Hike up a deep canyon alongside the rippling Tucannon River through lush groves of old-growth fir, spruce, pine and larch. Start by crossing Sheep Creek, then traversing a bench above the Tucannon River where the trail skirts the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness. The 177,465-acre wilderness was created in 1978 to protect the habitat of one of the largest herds of Rocky Mountain elk. While most of this trail is outside the wilderness, the 12,600-acre Upper Tucannon River Roadless Area it traverses is as wild and pristine as any part of the adjacent wilderness area. The way passes through some recent burns, but plenty of towering trees survived the fires. The forest here is lush and cool—and where sunlight penetrates the canopy to kiss southern slopes above the river, wildflowers grow in profusion. Pass through dark groves of spruce and open groves of pine. The river is always nearby, gracing the forest with water music.*

At about 1.5 miles, come to Ruchert Camp. Just beyond, the river passes through a tighter canyon where accompanying breezes funnel through, helping to keep the valley cool. Pass more riverside campsites and impressive groves of old trees. At about 4 miles (just past where Bear Creek tumbles down the slopes into the river) reach a junction where the Bear Creek Trail first heads left to climb steeply out of the valley, and then heads right to ford the river (difficult in early season) before steeply climbing out of the valley. This a great spot to turn around and head back.

**CAMP HERE:** Pitch your tent at the riverfront Tucannon Campground; or from September 15 to June 10 rent the 1909-built Tucannon Guard Station.



**DISTANCE:** 8 miles, RT  
**ELEVATION GAIN:** 500 ft  
**ELEVATION PEAK:** 4,050 ft

**PERMIT:** NW Forest Pass  
**DOGS:** Leashed  
**MAP:** Umatilla Nat'l Forest

**INFO:** [fs.usda.gov/umatilla](https://fs.usda.gov/umatilla)

**TRAILHEAD:** From Dayton, head east on Patit Rd for 14 miles. Turn left onto Hartsock Grade and follow for 4 miles, turning right (south) onto Tucannon River Rd (which becomes FR-47). At 13.2 miles bear left onto FR-4712 and continue to the trailhead in 4.7 miles.

*Hike and photo by Craig Romano*



**HIKE MORE:** Explore more east side lakes and rivers with Craig Romano's *Day Hiking Eastern Washington*, featuring 125 hikes in the Okanogan, Spokane, Colville, Columbia Plateau and Blue Mountain areas.



**C**limbing from the edge of the rugged Pacific Coast to the glacier-capped peaks of the Olympic Mountains, Olympic National Park presents hikers with a unique opportunity to experience multiple wilderness ecosystems in a relatively small area—and the only way to see the majority of it is by trail. In addition, the Olympics are home to a vast assortment of unique and endemic flora and fauna that rewards visitors and hikers with wilderness experiences unlike any other.

Hike by  
**ELI BOSCHETTO**

While there isn't one "official" traverse across Olympic National Park, the expansive network of trails throughout the park presents the opportunity to custom-create park traverses to suit just about every hiking passion and skill level. Most routes begin low in dense rainforest laden with wild berries—and wildlife!—before climbing into the alpine for wide meadows, sparkling lakes and stunning panoramas. This 42-mile traverse across the southern portion of the park put on display some of the best the Olympics have to offer, with fewer crowds than the popular northern routes.

**THE TRAIL:** Begin your journey at the **Graves Creek Trailhead**, a short drive east from **Lake Quinalt**. The trail meanders easily forward, paralleling the **East Fork Quinalt River** for the first 2.5 miles before crossing at **Pony Bridge**. A small backcountry campsite, convenient for late starts, can be found here. The trail then heads up the valley on a gently undulating track, maintaining close proximity to the river, though it's rarely seen through the densely wooded forest. Near the 7-mile and 10-mile marks are two additional campsites, **O'Neil Creek** and **Pyrites Creek**, each with easy rock-hops across their respective namesakes. At 13 miles, the trail crosses the Quinalt River on a high log bridge then proceeds into the wide, idyllic **Enchanted Valley** basin. During early summer runoff, countless waterfalls stream down the sheer walls of the valley. Here, you'll find a large camp area, as well as the historic **Enchanted Valley Chalet**, once imperiled by the shifting Quinalt River but recently relocated to solid ground. The trail then begins climbing earnestly to 4,464-foot **Anderson Pass**, with its parklike meadows and tarns accompanied by in-your-face views of Anderson Glacier and Peak. The route descends to the east, passing **Camp Siberia** on the way to a junction near 19.5 miles. Proceed south over 5,566-foot **La Crosse Pass**, then switchback way down to the **Duckabush River** at the next junction at 26 miles. Proceed east down the Duckabush, recently logged out by WTA trail crews, past **Ten Mile** and **Five Mile** camps (at 31.5 and 36 miles, respectively) and finish at the **Duckabush Trailhead**.

**LOGISTICS:** Leave a shuttle car at the Duckabush Trailhead (or other ending destination), or arrange for pickup and transport back to Graves Creek at the completion of your hike.

## FOOD STORAGE:

The Enchanted Valley area is known for its wildlife population: deer, elk, small critters and black bears. When camping there, be sure to maintain control over your food supply at all times. To prevent animals from getting into your food, use one of the food hanging wires in the camp area, or carry your food in a bearproof canister. Never feed wildlife, as this can get them habituated to human food and put both the animal and other hikers at risk.

# BITS & PIECES

Explore everything the Olympic Wilderness has to offer, from dripping rainforest to icy alpine passes, on hikes long and short or by tailoring your own Olympic traverse.



## HIKE: PONY BRIDGE

**DISTANCE:** 5 miles **ELEVATION GAIN:** 900 ft.

Not ready for an Olympic Wilderness experience just yet? Set up camp at the Graves Creek Campground at the end of South Shore Road and take a pleasant stroll up the Enchanted Valley Trail to Pony Bridge at the 3-mile mark. This high bridge crosses a narrow, moss-draped channel where the blue-green waters of the East Fork Quinault River rush through underneath. The first couple of miles of trail are wide and comfortable, the remains of an old road that used to extend all the way to the bridge crossing; the last 0.5 mile to the bridge narrows to hiking trail, all while surrounded by lush, towering rainforest.



## BACKPACK: ENCHANTED VALLEY

**DISTANCE:** 26.4 miles **ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,700 ft.

A popular weekend destination, Enchanted Valley is best visited midweek when crowds are minimal. Before heading out, pick up your Olympic Wilderness permit at the Quinault Ranger Station. There are several backcountry campsites along the 13.2-mile route that make fine locations for stretching out your trip. Most of them are near tributary streams for convenient topping-off of your water supply. When you arrive in the valley, pick a campsite in the large camping area, settle back, keep your eyes peeled for wildlife and enjoy. If you've ever visited the tropical valleys of Maui or Kauai, you may start having flashbacks.



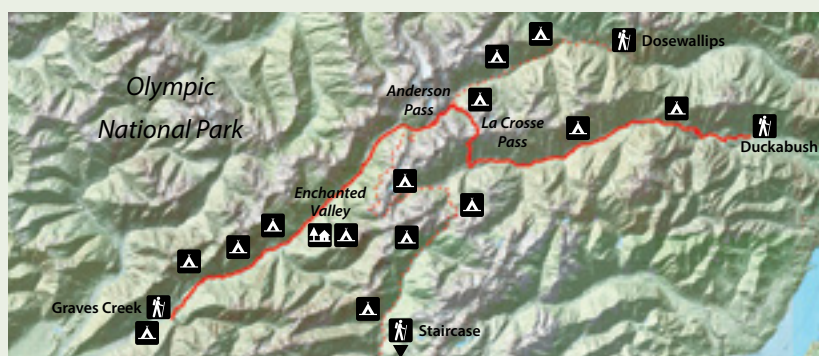
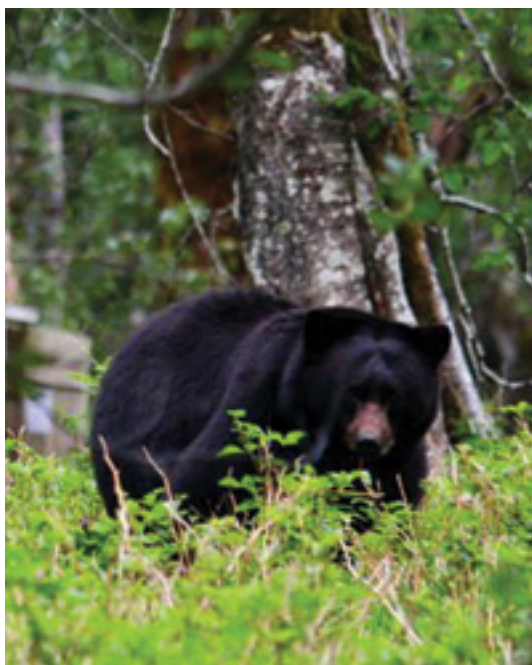
## TREK: OLYMPIC TRAVERSE

**DISTANCE:** 41.9 miles **ELEVATION GAIN:** 8,170 ft.

There are several routes you could take to put together a traverse across the southern portion of Olympic National Park. This particular route visits some of the area's not-to-be-missed highlights. For a slightly longer route (+4 mi.) to the Duckabush, head for O'Neil Pass from Anderson Pass (instead of La Crosse Pass) and proceed to Marmot Lake and Upper Duckabush camps. There are two additional options for exiting as well: a shorter route (-7.7 mi.) to the Dosewallips trailhead, where the last 5 miles are a road walk, and a comparable route south along the North Fork Skokomish to finish at the Staircase trailhead.

Opposite: Anderson Pass crossing, by Laura Jacobsen; Bits & Pieces by Eli Boschetto (left, center) and Laura Jacobsen (right).

It's not uncommon to spot a curious bruin or two roaming the Enchanted Valley area.  
Photo by Dan Maxwell.



## Southern Olympic Traverse

**DISTANCE:** 41.9 miles (to Duckabush TH)

**HIGHEST POINT:** La Crosse Pass at 5,566 ft.

**LOWEST POINT:** Duckabush TH at 420 ft.

**BEST SEASON:** Late July through October

**TRIP TIME:** 4 to 7 days

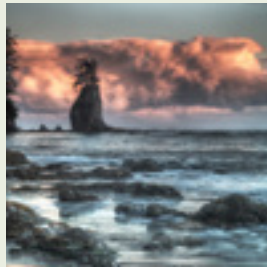
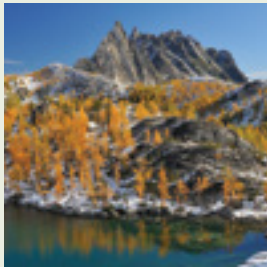
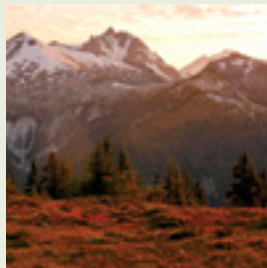
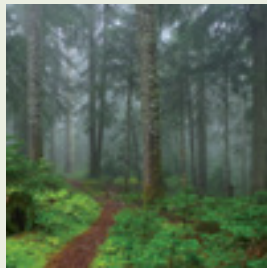
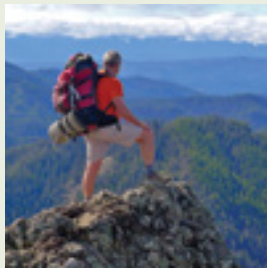
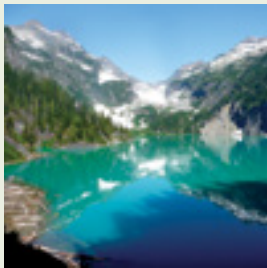
**MAPS:** Green Trails 166–168

**PERMITS:** NP Wilderness

**INFORMATION:** [nps.gov/olymp](http://nps.gov/olymp)

**CLIMATE:** Located at the edge of the Pacific Ocean, the west side of the Olympics is often cool and subject to very dramatic and sudden weather changes at any time of year; the east side is typically drier and warmer.

**WILDLIFE:** Watch for deer, Roosevelt elk and black bears in the valleys and mid-elevations; look for mountain goats, pikas and marmots in the alpine climes.



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FOR TRAILS!

