

# Mountaineer

E X P L O R E • L E A R N • C O N S E R V E

in this issue:

The Speed of Love

What's Your Eleventh Essential?

Not Another Day at the Dog Park

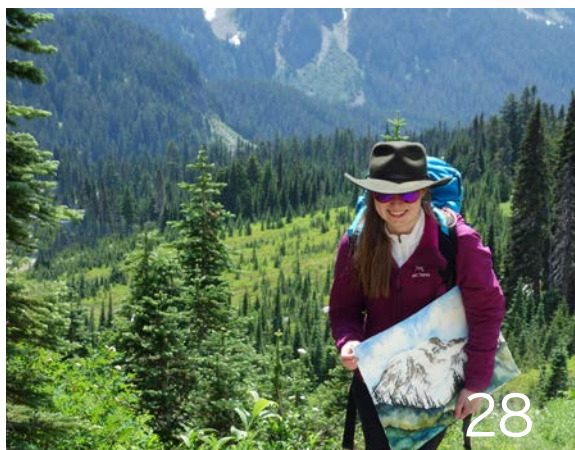
Celebrating Love





## Spring 2021 | Volume 115 | Number 2

The Mountaineers enriches lives and communities by helping people explore, conserve, learn about, and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond.



On the cover: Ashley McLoud and Molly Kirk on Ruth Mountain.  
Photo by Sarina Pizzala.

## Features

- 18 The Speed of Love
- 22 Celebrating Love
- 28 What's Your Eleventh Essential?
- 32 Not Another Day at the Dog Park

## Columns

- 3 Tying In
- 4 Editor's Note
- 5 Reader Feedback
- 6 Member Highlight  
Natalia Martinez-Paz
- 7 Peak Performance  
Create Your Own Training Program
- 8 Bookmarks & Staff Picks  
Mud, Rocks, Blazes
- 10 Youth Outside  
On the Road
- 12 Impact Giving  
Investing in the Future
- 14 Outside Insights  
Terrain Management
- 16 Conservation Currents  
The SOAR Act
- 35 Global Adventures  
An Unexpected Adventure in New Zealand
- 36 Trail Talk  
Love is in the *Plein Air*
- 40 GoGuide  
How to Get Involved
- 46 Did You Know?  
Owls in Washington

Mountaineer uses:



## Discover The Mountaineers

If you are thinking of joining, or have joined and aren't sure where to start, why not set a date to Meet The Mountaineers? Check the Branching Out section of the magazine for times and locations of informational meetings at each of our seven branches.



Photo by Rick Meade.

Almost exactly one year ago, the global pandemic began to impact nearly every aspect of our lives. Virtually no one has been spared from its devastating impacts. Yet, despite these tragedies, there have been some unexpected and positive surprises. For me, the silver lining of these hard times has been to experience the unwavering spirit of The Mountaineers community.

One of the first responses to the pandemic by our leaders was to move much of our in-person programming online, creating innovative hybrid learning courses that allowed people

to learn new outdoor skills from Mountaineers volunteers even with our program centers closed. Even our lodge committees have found ways to allow participants to connect with the outdoors and other Mountaineers. For example, even though our lodges are not able to host overnight guests, Meany Lodge has been offering day programming such as skiing and snowshoeing, and Baker Lodge has been supporting avalanche education courses. We're making the best of a difficult situation, and in many ways the creative solutions we've put in place will continue to benefit us long after COVID-19 is a distant memory.

One of the things that also struck me is how many people are connecting or reconnecting with the outside world as a respite from the negative impacts of the pandemic. People are trying new activities such as hiking, camping, and snowshoeing to get exercise and clear their heads while safely spending time in small groups. Sno-parks, trailheads, and urban parks are bustling as people look to the outdoors as an alternative to movie theatres, restaurants, or stores.

My guess is that many of the people new to the outdoors will continue these activities when life returns to normal. This presents an enormous and important opportunity for The Mountaineers, as many will be hungry to learn new outdoor skills to experience these wild places safely and responsibly. They will also look to us as a way to connect with a like-minded community, and to better understand the important role we all play in being advocates for our public lands.

The success of our publishing division, Mountaineers Books, has been proof positive of how much people are looking to the restorative power of the outdoors these days. Whether living vicariously through stories of others' adventures, learning new outdoor skills, researching places to explore, or getting inspired by conservation efforts, people are buying our books in great numbers, and in turn are supporting our mission and helping ensure our survival. Mountaineers Books is integral to how we communicate and amplify our mission beyond outdoor education programs, allowing us to touch hearts and minds here in the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

Another overwhelmingly positive surprise against the backdrop of the pandemic has been the generosity of our community. The success of our Year End Appeal fundraiser is a great example of how committed and big-hearted Mountaineers members have been this past year. The amount donated in this key annual fundraiser was up nearly 40% from last year, and leadership-level gifts (greater than \$1,000) were up 54%! The support of our community has been a vital part of our pandemic survival plan, especially when events such as our annual gala have been unable to be held in person. We're deeply grateful to everyone who has supported us financially, especially during these incredibly difficult times.

I don't think anyone will soon forget the experience we've been through this past year. My hope is that alongside our memories of personal loss and hardship, we'll not forget some of the positives that occurred and the far-reaching ways that The Mountaineers community banded together and supported one another.

Tom Vogl

Tom Vogl, Mountaineers CEO



The Mountaineers is a nonprofit organization, founded in 1906 and dedicated to the responsible enjoyment and protection of natural areas.

#### EDITOR

Hailey Oppelt

#### CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Kristina Ciari

#### DESIGNER

Sarah Kulfan, Beans n' Rice

#### PROOFREADERS

Tiffany Ban, Evy Dudey, Kate Regan

#### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Tom Vogl

#### EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER

Tom Helleberg

#### DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Amber Carrigan

#### PUBLICIST

Tess Day

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

##### OFFICERS

President Vik Sahney

Vice President Gabe Aeschilman

VP of Branches Peter Hendrickson

VP of Outdoor Centers Carry Porter

Secretary Roger Mellem

Treasurer Don Heck

Retiring President Lorna Corrigan

##### DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Rich Johnston

Brynn Koscianski

Mark Kroese

Maya Magarati

Steve McClure

John Ohlson

Manisha Powar

Paul Stevenson

Kara Stone

Steve Swenson

Siana Wong

##### BRANCH DIRECTORS

Maura Rendes, Bellingham

Matt Vadnal, Everett

James Henderson, Foothills

Jerry Logan, Kitsap

Mike Kretzler, Olympia

Alex Cowen, Seattle

Mark Kerr, Tacoma

The Mountaineer (ISSN 0027-2620) is published quarterly by The Mountaineers, 7700 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115. 206-521-6000.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Mountaineer, 7700 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115. Periodicals postage paid at Seattle, WA.

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of The Mountaineers.





Wildflowers with Glacier Peak in the backdrop. Photo by Ida Vincent.



Hailey Oppelt  
haileyo@mountaineers.org  
Photo by Paige Madden.

Love. The word can feel a bit corny, evoking images of tweety birds and cartoon hearts, but it really does seem to dictate our lives. The Mountaineers is centered around it - love for the outdoors, love for experience, love for community. People don't walk uphill in 40lb packs out of "like."

I feel very fortunate to have an abundance of love in my life. I'm often emailing, calling, or texting someone - the double-edged sword of distance and technology.

Weekly walks on the phone with one of my wise-cracking grandmas is a particular treat, and they aren't the only ones who rack up my phone bill. Friendsgiving, Palentine's Day, and other made-up holidays dot the year as a marker that not all family is blood, and they also deserve days of love, celebration, and quality grub.

I've fallen for many landscapes in Washington as well. It's hard not to. The dreamy sagebrush and red plateaus by Potholes, salty, hair-whipping winds on the coast, and bone-chilling mist rolling through the rainforest are a smorgasbord for the senses. The smell of pine trees and dirt on an early morning gives better goosebumps than any date night I've attended.

As we explore the theme of love & family in this edition, it's clear that these concepts exist in many different iterations for our Mountaineers community, too. On our cover we feature Ashley McCloud and Molly Kirk, newlyweds who tied the knot on Ruth Mountain in the North Cascades. Having used COVID-19 as an

opportunity for a mountain elopement, they offer tips for other couples hoping to hold alpine nuptials (and keep their dresses unwrinkled along the way). In *The Speed of Love*, Megan Bond explores her love story with legendary climber Fred Beckey, sharing his final years and final adventures together. From watercolor artist Claire Giordano we read about the concept of an "eleventh essential," those highly-personalized items we can't live without on the trail, before being treated to illustrations of the Ten Essentials in her signature style. Lastly, member Alison Dempsey-Hall shares a harrowing day on the trail, and how her and her sister's maternal instincts kicked into overdrive when a cougar attacked her dog Blue at Cooper Lake.

Our regular columns are full of great stories as well. In *Impact Giving* we hear about a mother-daughter duo who found new hobbies and shared experiences through our Basic Climbing course and teen-centered Mountaineers Adventure Club. *Global Adventures* explores how a surprise snow flurry in New Zealand opened the door to a food-lover's paradise, and fitness enthusiasts will be excited to know that we offer a special extended column for *Peak Performance*, outlining exactly how to create an exercise regimen tailored to your summer goals. In *Trail Talk*, Craig Romano shares what it was like falling in love with his now-wife on the trail - and the joy they have bringing their young son on their shared adventures.

Whether it's our craggy mountains, teasing spring sunlight, or the people you experience them with, I have a feeling there's something out there that makes you weak in the knees. The outdoors is a catalyst for big emotions. Could it be any other way? When faced with the splendor of nature and the warmth of loved ones, at the end of the day we're all a bunch of suckers. Corny or not, the truth is - tweety birds abound.

*Hailey Oppelt*





**In Adjusting for Conditions: Lessons from an Unexpected Year,** Teresa Hagerty shared her experience as the victim of a hit-and-run accident just after the “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order was issued, and the valuable takeaways she gained. Letters of support poured out from our community:

“Thank you, Teresa, for this beautifully written and meaningful message for all of us to bring into the New Year! Wishing you a very speedy recovery and great outdoor experiences in the New Year!”

-Ellen Passloff, 21-year member

“You express the most important things that have helped me through this year, too: just do today, be in the present moment, look for and appreciate beauty wherever you find it, express gratitude every day for all you do have, and never stop dreaming and planning. Thank you for sharing, and best to you in your recovery.”

-Elise Legare, Mountaineer magazine reader

“Thank you Teresa for sharing your experience and such wise words! I so appreciate your authenticity, insights. Wishing you continued healing, much joy and love in this New Year ahead!”

-Sherryl Marty Davey, 14-year member

“Absolutely beautiful and inspiring story Teresa - thanks for sharing!”

-Cheryl Talbert, 12-year member

**Leaders are at the heart of The Mountaineers, and we love to hear words of support for our dedicated volunteers:**

“Grand work and what a terrific spirit of cooperation and support OLY to TAC - we are stronger, smarter, and more creative when we work together across branches. CHS [Conditioning Hiking Series] has great power to build a hearty hiking community.”

-Peter Hendrickson, 16-year member, commenting on “Running a Course in the Middle of a Pandemic”



“Kimber's story is so inspiring - even for an old climber such as myself! What a gutsy young woman! And I loved the story about her student and student's mother. We should all be able to know someone as remarkable as Kimber is. I just wish I could climb with her - I'm sure it would be a blast!”

-Chris Richards, 21-year member, commenting on “Different & Able: A Profile of Kimber Cross”

“Hurrah to Steve, a hike leader's hike leader. Thanks for your unstinting support across a broad sweep of the club. Your empathy and support of back-of-the-pack hikers serves as a model to us all.”

-Peter Hendrickson, 16-year member, commenting on “Leader Spotlight: Steve Payne”



**A few times a year we ask our members if they would like**

**to continue receiving their physical copy of Mountaineer magazine, or save a few trees and go digital. One reader wrote in to thank us for the offer, and to express her appreciation for a tactile way to connect with our organization:**

“Dear Mountaineers,

With almost everything going digital, I can appreciate your request to follow in those steps and save in outgoing expenses. I would like to say how much getting this magazine in the mail makes me smile and cheers me. The photography is exquisite! The articles are interesting and the themes are always met with good content and stories! Thank you for continuing to be part of a counter culture and not stopping the printing of this magazine altogether. You asked in such an honorable way if it is something people look at or toss. Keep up the noble work. The options are freeing.”

-Ellen Hoffman, 3-year member



## member highlight

**Name** Natalia Martinez-Paz

**Hometown** Seattle (Swedish baby, RHS grad!)

**Member Since** April 2012

**Occupation** Telehealth and Rural Health Program Manager

**Favorite Activities** Skiing is the greatest joy of my life! But also climbing, mountaineering, backpacking, thru-hiking, sailing, sea kayaking, and more.



### Lightning round

**Sunrise or sunset?** Sunset - people have been known to break down a tent while I'm still inside sleeping...

**Smile or game face?** Game face

**What's your 11th Essential?** Chewie! A relatively new essential, Steve Payne gave me a Chewbacca stuffie on a CHS hike that now joins me on my rambles. He most recently climbed Mt. Olympus.

**What's your happy place?** When you are climbing/skiing and you feel that thin line align from the skies, through you, down into the earth. It's the moment of stillness within movement I've only ever experienced climbing and skiing. But in less philosophical terms, pretty much anywhere there are ponderosa pines.

**Post-adventure meal of choice?** Beer. Always beer. And preferably tacos alongside.

**If you could be a rockstar at any outdoor activity overnight, what would it be?** I would prefer to be highly competent at many things rather than a rockstar at any one. But ok, twist my arm - skiing.

### How did you get involved with The Mountaineers?

There was a point where my sport climbing friends didn't want to hike, and my hiking friends didn't want to climb, and all I wanted to do was combine the two. I took the Seattle Glacier course and then the Tacoma Basic course. I had learned to climb from friends in the late 90s and early aughts and figured I should probably double check that I was doing everything right!

### What motivates you to get outside with us?

So many things! I love teaching and watching people grow through learning and pushing their limits, but the community of people is phenomenal and what keeps me here.

### What's your favorite Mountaineers memory?

I have so many! Everything from volunteering with the MAC group to working with the basic students, it's all super fun! However, I think my fondest memory is working through my own fear and discomfort in snow travel as a basic student. My climb leader was extremely supportive, even though I was moving at a snail's pace on my first basic climb. I didn't know how to move in snow yet, but having that guidance and support broke the snow travel spell that had been hanging over me. That experience led me back to a peak that had scared me off two years prior and I comfortably climbed it with confidence. Thank you Julie Myer and Kevin Hornback!

### Who/what inspires you?

Being outside inspires me, and having a strong community inspires me! I spent 10 years of my life traveling and living literally all around the world and when I came home, I realized how special home had always been. Finding community in The Mountaineers has been an anchor in deepening that connection to place and people.

**As a donor and volunteer-supported organization, The Mountaineers is based on community support. How have you paid it forward, or how have you benefited from someone else paying it forward?**

I have spent a fair share of my time volunteering with the club and I've also been very fortunate to receive scholarships to complete my WFR and AIARE 2 courses. I'm very thankful for the support to continue my own outdoor education.

I'm on the Tacoma Basic Climbing Committee (two terms as Lectures Chair, one as Co-Chair, and two as Chair), the Progressive Climbing Education Curriculum Committee, serve on the E&I Steering Committee, and am also the Tacoma Branch Council Vice-Chair.

### What does adventure mean to you?

Adventure to me means the unknown, when you're not quite sure about where you'll end up. I actually don't put outdoor sports into that category as we hope to enter with as much training, information, and support as possible. For me, a true adventure (and in many ways my ideal adventure) is just me, myself, and I, wandering a new city or country with a backpack. Preferably somewhere I don't speak the language. Bonus points if I ended up there by accident. Now that is adventure.





# Create Your Own Training Program

By Courtenay Schurman, MS, CSCS, PN2

Photo by Luke Helgeson.

**W**ith summer around the corner, it's time to train for upcoming outdoor goals. In this edition of Peak Performance, I hope to help you assess the components of your alpine sport, and describe how to put together a safe, suitable, and personalized training program.

## Training components at a glance

The figure "Fitness Elements by Activity" (p. 38) illustrates the degree to which different sports require a greater-than-average level of fitness in five key areas: aerobic, anaerobic, upper body strength, lower body strength, and flexibility. As you can see, aerobic needs are high for mountaineers, scramblers, and hikers, and flexibility needs are around what the average healthy adult has. However, mountaineers need to be comfortable carrying a heavy backpack for hours over varied terrain, and will need an above-normal or high amount of lower body strength. People engaged in mountaineering, climbing, or scrambling activities also need to include more anaerobic and upper body strength training than hikers. In short, if your current fitness program consists primarily of walking, running, or biking, and you want to be adequately prepared for the rigors of alpine travel, adding pack-carrying and strength training several times a week can help you be much better prepared for a satisfying summer season.

## Evaluate yourself

Once you have a training objective, figure out your starting point so that you can map out small, safe increments to reach your goal. For mountaineers in the greater Seattle area, Tiger

Mountain (six miles and 2000' gain) and Mt. Si (eight miles and 3400' gain) make great repeatable benchmark hikes against which you can compare your times to make sure your program is working. If you get faster, go farther, have less soreness, or carry more weight in the same amount of time as earlier, your program is working.

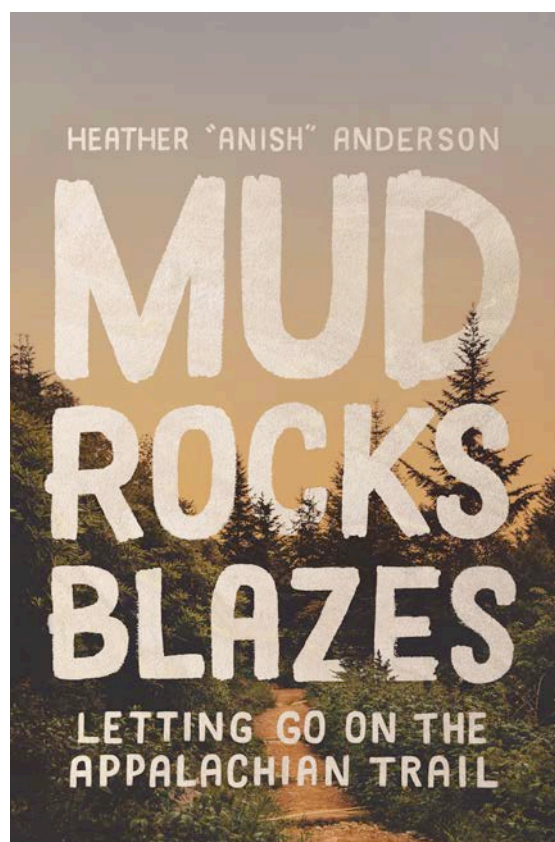
The biggest mistakes we see people make include carrying too much weight on their first hike of the season or trying to go too far. Unless you've consistently hiked several times per month through the winter, don't try to do whatever you did last season. Go light and short. You can always add weight or distance on the next trip. Be honest with yourself about how you feel, where you feel weak or slow, and what feels good, so that you don't waste time where you're already competent. Focus on fixing weaknesses first.

If you have knee issues on the descents, you may want to strengthen the quadriceps. If you can run six miles in under an hour, but carrying a pack slows you way down, add exercises for the hamstrings, glutes, and core, and consider a mid-week pack-carrying session. If your hips ache during or after a hike, add hip stretches to increase your mobility.

## Set mini-goals

If you have three months before your first trip, set short-term goals for one and two months from now. If you plan on doing some backpacking or multi-day trips, include back-to-back training days (i.e. successive pack-carrying days with no rest day between) at the ten week mark.

*Continued on page 38*



## Mud, Rocks, Blazes: Letting Go on the Appalachian Trail

By Heather "Anish" Anderson

Enjoy an excerpt from Heather "Anish" Anderson's latest book, *Mud, Rocks, Blazes: Letting Go on The Appalachian Trail*, a follow up to her bestselling 2019 memoir, *Thirst*.

I went to the Pacific Crest Trail to find my limit. I'd imagined my fastest known time attempt ending with me on hands and knees – dry heaving – at my utmost breaking point. Yet that never happened. I started the hike with my little plastic trowel, intent on digging deep as I'd learned to do over many ultramarathons, but the PCT laughed at that, and within a few days had handed me a full-size shovel instead.

*Dig with this*, it said.

Every day I hollowed myself out deeper and deeper. The sleep deprivation piled up, the calorie deficit compounded, and the wear and tear on my body increased. Every day was just a little harder than the day before. At the end of each – long after darkness fell – I stood panting, unable to fathom digging

any more. I was empty, devoid of strength. But no matter the difficulty, I still had desire – to meet the goal, to reach the border, to cover the miles. And so, I journeyed farther into myself than ever before.

Many times I thought I saw my limit, a shadow in my periphery as I dug through layers of strength and willpower. Yet, I never found it. It was ephemeral, though I knew it must exist. I sought it in every climb, in every mile beyond forty I hiked in a day. I sought it in the pouring rain and hail, in the blistering triple-digit heat. I sought it when I was dizzy with thirst or hunger. I sought it even when my quads began to weaken in the last eight hundred miles, when my hamstring locked up and for a week I was unable to bend down to tie my shoe. But I simply could not find my limit, and after 1,900 miles I realized why.

My limit wasn't a wall. It wasn't a point of no return where I would lie on the ground in the fetal position unable to continue. My limit was an ephemeral shadow that recoiled, reformed, and retreated, leaving me to dig even deeper. I learned that it was a game of cat and mouse I'd agreed to without knowing the rules. At first I felt betrayed, but eventually I realized that this relentless search enabled me to move forward inexorably. Dumbfounded, I saw that my limit had not been a finite destination, but rather a daily achievement.

Now home in Washington State, only a few weeks away from the daily effort of the trail, I needed to recover from the quest to find my limit. But I also needed to prod at where it resided in the shadows, to reassure myself that what I'd found was real. I needed to redefine it.

I ran the dark path alongside Bellingham Bay with no headlamp. Keenly aware of the stars above, the water to the west, and the moonrise in the east, my feet lifted and struck in rhythm, landing in blind faith on an Earth I trusted was there. Centering my gaze on the black horizon, and my thoughts on my breathing, I leaned into the run, ignoring the protests of my legs. I sought what I'd felt in those final miles of the Pacific Crest Trail. It hurt, but inside me a mantra blossomed: *I have an incomprehensible ability to suffer*.

I ran up Taylor Dock at full speed. My quads quivered with the need to give in. My lungs ached and a metallic taste rose in my mouth. I faltered. The taste brought up memories of gushing nosebleeds every day for a month as I hiked through the arid regions of the PCT, and how, unable to stop them, I'd tipped my head back, drinking my own blood until I wanted to vomit. Then leaning forward while I walked and watching fat, red droplets plummet to the sand in little puffs of dust, I choked on the memory.

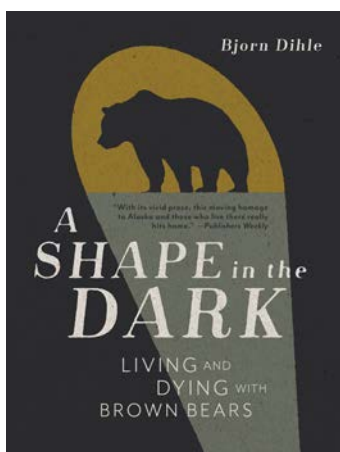
*I have an incomprehensible ability to suffer. Incomprehensible even to me. Run.*

I reached the car, rubber legged and gasping. I'd discovered that the problem with proving you are capable of more than you believed possible is that you no longer have excuses, only reasons to push harder. *How can I possibly push harder than I already have?* ▲▲

---

*Mud, Rocks, Blazes is available for purchase at our bookstore, on [mountaineersbooks.com](http://mountaineersbooks.com), or wherever books are sold.*

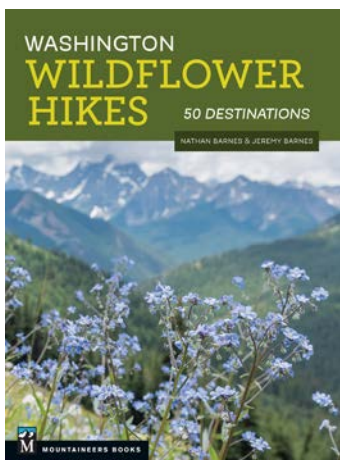




## ***A Shape in the Dark: Living and Dying with Brown Bears***

By Bjorn Dihle

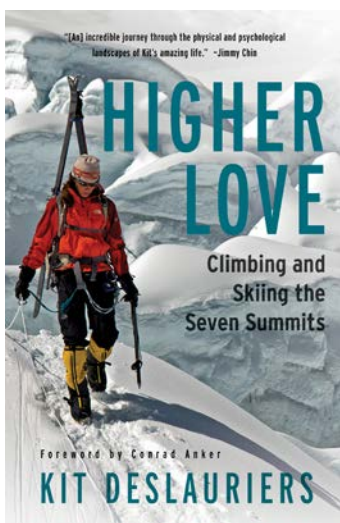
Few predators have achieved as iconic a status as Alaska's brown bears. Since his first encounter with a brown bear as a child, wilderness guide and lifelong Alaskan Bjorn Dihle has spent much of his life immersing himself in their story: encountering bears in the backcountry, leading clients to view them, researching historical accounts of human-bear encounters, and interviewing other guides and experts. *A Shape in the Dark* blends his personal experience with historical and contemporary accounts to fully explore the world of brown bears, from frightening attacks like that on Timothy Treadwell, to the animal's place in Native cultures, to the ways habitat degradation and climate change are threatening the species. Thoughtful, nuanced, and vivid, Dihle has created a gripping and authentic portrait of these awe-inspiring creatures.



## ***Washington Wildflower Hikes: 50 Destinations***

By Nathan Barnes and Jeremy Barnes

From flower-filled alpine meadows to streams lined with delicate Scouler's corydalis blooms, our state offers something for every hiker and flower lover. Brothers Nathan and Jeremy Barnes (authors of *Alpine Lakes Wilderness: The Complete Hiking Guide*) lead hikers on 50 trails to stunning seasonal floral displays. Each trail showcases a particular flower, and includes a detailed topo map, turn-by-turn route description, history of the area, and information about other wildflowers found along the trail. This full-color guide is sure to provide many hours of delightful exploration. Plus, find tips for photographing wildflowers, the basics of wildflower identification, and a convenient "Hike Finder" that includes information on flowering season, trail difficulty, distance, and more to help you easily select the right trail for the day's adventure.



## ***Higher Love: Climbing and Skiing the Seven Summits***

By Kit DesLauriers

Inspired by a chance meeting with Dick Bass, the first man to climb the famed Seven Summits, Kit DesLauriers would go on to become the first person to ski from the summit of the tallest mountain on each of the seven continents. In *Higher Love*, Kit shares the ups and downs of her global adventures as she worked to achieve this phenomenal goal. A freeskiing world champion, Kit has never shied away from a challenge - she's survived 40 below zero temperatures in Antarctica, waited for 800 miles of storm clouds to clear on Denali, and taught her wolf pup to accept her as the alpha in their pack of two. But pushing off on her skis from Everest's summit at 29,032 feet took it to a whole new level. *Higher Love* is a testament to the power of believing in yourself and in your ability to accomplish extraordinary things.

# On the Road

## How our youth van helped us navigate COVID-19

By Andy Bassett, Youth Education Manager



The youth van at our Seattle Program Center.

A little over a year ago, a colleague and I ventured about an hour north of Seattle to the little seaside town of Anacortes. Although tempted by views of nearby Mount Erie State Park, we were on our way to pick up the newest addition to The Mountaineers: a 15-passenger van. The vehicle was fated to take Mountaineers youth to the lakes, trails, and mountains surrounding Puget Sound.

For the past 10 years, we have been fortunate to see our youth programs grow into multiple opportunities to get kids out and enjoying those places we hold so dear. From day camps to after-school programs to multi-day field trips, I get excited each year as we find new ways to get kids outdoors and away from their computer screens. And although as staff we can spend as much time as we like packing food, checking gear, and looking up weather conditions, at the end of the day these things don't matter if we can't get our kids to the trailhead.

Transportation many times ends up being the hidden barrier to getting outdoors. Recognizing this issue, in the summer of 2019 we set a goal of raising \$30,000 to purchase a 15-passenger van. The purpose of this was twofold: to provide transportation options for youth and their families, and to minimize the financial, environmental, and trailhead impacts of multiple vehicles. Thanks to 34 unique donors, by the end of

the summer we had secured funding to purchase a van.

In the first few months of 2020, our van was booked nearly every weekend to transport kids to cross country ski trips, day hikes near Snoqualmie Pass, and snowshoe days at Paradise. We even used it to transport gear from our Gear Lending Library to other branches. However, the van found its true place as we approached another hidden barrier: running youth programs in the midst of COVID-19. Sarah Holt, our Tacoma Program Manager, reflects on this past summer:

### A camp conundrum

It's late June, and like many of us, I'm obsessing over the news. I'm tracking COVID-19 case counts in Pierce County, hospital capacity, and every metric we have to hit to transition out of Phase 2. Using traditional programming, we would need to be in Phase 3 for our summer camps to be permitted under the new state regulations, and things weren't looking good. But when it came time to hit that "Cancel Course" button, I just couldn't do it. There had to be another way to make this work.

One of our most beloved summer camp offerings, our Rainier Overnight Week consists of up to 20 kids, four or five staff, and two to three parent drivers. We set up camp on the Irish Cabin Property on the Carbon River, less than a mile from the park



entrance, and go on daily hikes and adventures around Mowich Lake, the Carbon River, and Summit Lake. With miles of rugged gravel road, we rely heavily on staff and chaperones with high-clearance vehicles and SUVs.

But now, with a group size limit of eight households, we only had room for two staff and six households of kids at a time. We came up with a compromise - everyone gets a half week of camp. Group 1 got to enjoy Monday through Wednesday, while Group 2 would camp Wednesday through Friday. Great care was taken to make sure the two groups could never cross paths. But with only two of my staff able to drive and facing social distancing requirements, how could we make that work?

## A solution presents itself

We soon realized that the flexibility and size of the van was the key to making summer camp a reality. Trying to plan who went in which group was a jigsaw puzzle of pods, siblings, parent drivers, vehicle capacity, and more. We spent the week before camp scrambling to get everyone scheduled into a group and to make sure we had everything we needed to run camp safely. We had individual tents, extra hand-washing stations, extra masks, and so, so much hand sanitizer.

2020 had taught me not to be too optimistic, but it seemed like camp might actually happen. Of course, fate (or road conditions) wasn't done with us yet. The road to Mowich Lake was still gated six miles from the lake, and the section that was open, was... rough.

"The people in the very back of the van - honestly everyone in the van - were getting completely tossed around on the insanely bumpy, pothole-filled backroads," remembers camp counselor Abby Orgish. "They would bounce so high they would hit their heads on the ceiling of the van! Fortunately, it brought lots of giggling." We also discovered that the van was a champ on rough roads. We came up on two Jeeps who were going slower than we were!

## Sunny days at Mowich Lake

With the road gated we sought out new hikes and adventures, taking Paul Peak Trail to the Mowich River and Grindstone Trail to Mowich Lake. I thought there would be some disappointment that we didn't get to visit our usual, more epic destinations of Spray Park and Tolmie Peak Lookout, but as I'm reminded every year, if there's water around kids know how to have fun. At Mowich Lake kids searched for frogs and newts and practiced boot skiing through the snow. Down at the shores of the Mowich River, they dared each other to see how long they could stand in the fresh glacial melt off and practiced balancing and doing yoga on the logs. We played long games of "20 Questions" and "Contact" to get back up the many switchbacks.

So far so good, but we knew camp could get shut down at any time. "Let's just get through this week," we would say. "Let's just keep doing what we can until they tell us to stop." "Tolerance for Adversity and Uncertainty" became my daily mantra. Every day I dreaded getting that contact tracing phone call - but it never came. Use of the van allowed us to split our day camps into two or sometimes three groups



Campers crossing a creek near Mowich Lake. Photo by Lauren Ashbaugh.

and use different locations - cycling through the Tacoma Mountaineers Program Center, Point Defiance, and Exit 38. When all was said and done five weeks later, the van had completed eight trips to Exit 38, two trips up Summit Lake Road, five trips up Mowich Lake Road, and four trips out to the Irish Cabin and back. In a summer of trying to accomplish what seemed impossible, the van was our lifeline. And in the midst of a global pandemic, our kids got to experience not just a bit of normalcy and human interaction, but the beauty of the Pacific Northwest and the memories that make summer camp magical. We all needed each other, and the outdoors, more than ever.

After a full summer of adventures with Tacoma campers, our van is currently facilitating after-school programs in Olympia. When we first set out to buy a van, we had visions of how it would ease transportation concerns for the families we serve. But as the year ticked along, we realized that it provided the flexibility we needed to successfully navigate COVID-19 and get our kids outside. Thanks to the cooperation of our campers, their parents, and our champ of a van, Tacoma Mountaineers youth had the chance to experience the delight of the outdoors during a most unusual summer. ▲▲

*The youth van was made possible through the generosity of our Mountaineers community, with elevated support from the Bradley Family Foundation, the Gary E. Milgard Family Foundation, and donors Ken Seamon and Jane Biddle.*



# Investing in the Future

## A Conversation with Lily and Amber Walker

By Brianne Vanderlinden, Assistant Director of Development



Amber and Lily Walker on the summit of Mt. Pugh. Photo courtesy of Amber Walker.

Sometimes a story asks to be told. As part of my role as Assistant Director of Development, I have the privilege of connecting with members to learn how Mountaineers philanthropy has positively impacted their lives. In last fall's #GivingTuesday scholarship fundraising effort we introduced 18 year-old scholarship recipient Lily Walker, a five-year member of our year-round teen program, the Tacoma Mountaineers Adventure Club (MAC). For weeks after reading her story, I found myself reflecting on her genuine love for our community and her spark for conservation.

I couldn't help but think that she's someone we'd all benefit from knowing a little better. To my delight, Lily was excited to share more about her Mountaineers story - something she quickly credits to the generosity of our donors and volunteers.

### A love that spans generations

To better understand Lily's story, it's helpful to first learn about her mom, Amber. Long before Lily became involved with the Tacoma MAC program, Amber found her way to The

Mountaineers through the Basic Alpine Climbing course. She always enjoyed being outdoors, and at the prompting of a friend, joined our community nine years ago to learn more technical climbing and decision-making skills.

Climbing soon became a family affair. When Lily was just three years old, Amber took her to Edgeworks Gym for her very first rock climbing experience. Amber shared, "Lily could tie into a climbing harness before she could tie her shoes." She's been climbing ever since.

### Growing up in the Mountaineers Adventure Club

In a twist of fate, Amber met fellow climbing students Sarah Holt (now serving as our Tacoma Mountaineers Program Manager) and future volunteer Kevin DeFields through her course. She had no idea that one day in the not-so-distant-future, both Sarah and Kevin would be mentoring her daughter in her own outdoor journey.

Under the guidance of skilled staff like Sarah and dedicated volunteers like Kevin, MAC participants meet two to three times a month for skills practice and trip planning. They also get out



- a lot! In her time with MAC, Lily has honed her rock climbing, mountaineering, backpacking, snowshoeing, and navigation skills.

In Lily's words, "I am sure that because of The Mountaineers, my friends and I will continue to hike, climb, backpack, and snowshoe together for the rest of our lives."

## A different kind of higher education

Empowered by the education received through The Mountaineers, Lily and Amber have been able to enjoy many special trips together, including a memorable six-day climb of Mount Kilimanjaro. As Lily described, "It was a very challenging trip, because before this experience, everything I had done came easily for me. Kilimanjaro was kind of scary and something I really had to train and work toward. The experience allowed me to face a fear of taking on a really big challenge, which was a big moment in my life."

While Kilimanjaro was a once in a lifetime trip, the mother-daughter duo has shared many local outdoor adventures together and continues to learn from each other along the way. "One of the things I've learned from my mom is the importance of persistence. She will never give up on anything, and she has the ability to inspire and push people to keep on going. It's something she's done for me all my life, and I think it was a major reason I was able to do Kilimanjaro."

For Amber, she's often inspired by Lily's drive to tackle big goals. "It's been really fun to watch Lily grow up through the MAC program. For me, I've learned from her as she builds self-confidence and pushes past barriers that she thought she had, both physically and mentally. I've learned so much watching her take on new challenges and be successful."

## When the student becomes the teacher

After five years in MAC, Lily now instructs new students entering the program. Program Manager Sarah Holt shared how she's witnessed Lily's transition from student to teacher:

"Lily is one of the 'original' MAC kids who's been with us since our first year. She was an 8th grader then and is now a senior, so I've witnessed her growth throughout her whole high school career. This past summer on a climb of Unicorn, I was proud to see just how far she's come. During Lily's first summer in MAC, she attempted Unicorn but was unable to complete the steep snow approach. This past July, Tacoma MAC climbed the peak again. This time, not only did Lily complete the climb, but she carried the rope, led the 5.6 pitch in mountaineering boots, belayed up all of her peers, and coached all of them through the rappels. Watching her confident display of leadership was truly one of my rewarding moments as an educator in MAC."

## How donors support lifelong learners like Lily

Like so many others within our Mountaineers community, Lily's story was made possible through the support of donor-funded scholarships. Over the last year, The Mountaineers awarded \$62,000 across 282 scholarships to support 23 youth and 99 adults (as many activities require a series of courses, students often receive 2-3 scholarships per year). As one of the many initiatives made possible through philanthropy, scholarships offer more than just an outdoor education. Scholarships

foster community, create future volunteers, and serve as an important bridge between recreation and conservation.

In Lily's own words, "I am so grateful to be a part of this organization. It has been a huge part of my life. I was able to be a part of this adventure club because of the donors who made the scholarship program possible. Since joining, I have grown relationships with people who love the same things I do. People who love to learn and who thrive in nature, just like me."

"The Mountaineers also gives people a reason to spend time outside, which in turn gives them a reason to protect the outdoors. Being a part of MAC has taught me a lot about the importance of conservation. The Mountaineers helps so many people fall in love with outdoor recreation, which ultimately helps protect our wild places. I mean it from the bottom of my heart when I say that I am so grateful to have received a scholarship from The Mountaineers."

After joining The Mountaineers as a spirited 13-year old, Lily had the opportunity to grow and learn in ways that will shape her life in incredible ways. Community, resilience, confidence in the outdoors, and the desire to give back are all gifts that she had the chance to cultivate through our organization. We are proud to have the ability to offer scholarships to young adults like her, and we look forward to seeing the next generation of youth climbing mountains and exploring incredible places thanks to the generosity of our community. ▲▲

---

Through the support of our members and donors during #GivingTuesday 2020, we are more than halfway to our scholarship fundraising goal. With the support of our community, The Mountaineers is able to expand access to our outdoor education programs for youth and adults across our seven branches. If you feel inspired to make a difference by helping us meet the remaining \$20,000 in scholarship support needed for students like Lily in fiscal year 2021, we hope you'll reach out to [development@mountaineers.org](mailto:development@mountaineers.org) or give us a call at (206) 521-6006.

*As a 501(c)3 organization, gifts made to The Mountaineers are 100% tax-deductible. The Mountaineers, Tax ID 27-3009280, is located at 7700 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115.*

## Scholarships in Fiscal Year 2020

- \$62,486 awarded
- 121 youth & adults supported
- 20%-90% of course costs covered for scholarship recipients
- 146 donors provided \$37,890 in restricted scholarship support
- \$24,595 of the total \$62K awarded contributed through unrestricted donations

# Active Terrain Management

By Tony Tsuboi, Climb Leader



Jill and Wesley Thornton with sons Werner and Townes on the summit of Buckhorn Mountain in the Olympics. Photo courtesy of Wesley Thornton.

One of my first jaunts into the alpine was blindly following friends to the summit of Kaleetan Peak. As we climbed, rocks whizzed passed me, kicked off by my friends above. On the descent, my roommate slipped on a slick patch and was nearly swept down a steep chute that dropped a hundred feet below. He was saved by the quick action of another companion, grabbing him by his collar. I count experiences like these as part of our nine lives, and by now I have burned through more than half of my own.

Today, as one of the club's safety officers, I read incident reports and I harken back to days like those and the lessons I have learned along the way. Frequently, these are minor incidents and are largely inconsequential. However, there are often incidents and near misses that could have been catastrophic in result, often with lessons for how we might do things differently in the future. In the incident report form, we ask the reporting parties to reflect on what occurred and why. Often, the comments are something along the lines of, "There's nothing we could have done about it. It was bad luck." Well, was it?

At The Mountaineers, we have not yet built the type of safety culture that treats close calls like these as actionable lessons to learn from. Every incident is an opportunity to reflect, a

chance to think through what, if anything, we might have done differently. In the ski and avalanche culture, we call these free lessons. I'm challenging us to adopt that mindset.

As an example, take the climbing classes we run in Leavenworth. Is it bad luck when one of our students slips on a thick mat of dry pine needles and tumbles down a rock slab, or might there have been things we could have done to prevent what occurred or mitigate their consequences? Seasoned climbers know instinctively that dry pine needles on hard slabby surfaces slide. We intuitively tip toe through, choosing islands of exposed rock to step upon. We avoid stepping squarely on thick mats of needles on slabby slopes.

One action we could take is sharing simple awareness with the groups we are managing - something along the lines of, "Hey, these pine needles are slick. Be careful as you head down this gully." That should be enough to get the attention of our group and put them on guard. We can model the desired behavior. "Watch how I'm stepping only on the exposed rock, not the pine needles, and I will use handholds so I can maintain three points of contact as I descend this step." As an instructor, I am applying kinesthetics to show what to do in an experiential manner that others can observe and apply. Lastly, I can position myself below a crux or location of concern to spot





Trip leaders Stephanie Schiller and Ronnie Parker on the approach to the Coleman Glacier. Photo by Emma Agosta.

the participants. That way, if they fell, I would be positioned to direct their mass and mitigate the fall. Instead of a twisted ankle or broken arm, spotting can reduce this to just a scrape and a bruised ego.

These three things - sharing awareness, modeling behavior, and taking steps to mitigate accidents - go with our awareness of the hazard in the first place. As leaders, our job is to manage the party, and we need to be watchful of hazards and opportunities to manage the group. As these emerge, we vocalize our concerns with the team. We can then take additional steps of showing those new to the craft what to do and how. If needed, we can position ourselves to spot or to take other measures to manage the risk.

The same principles would apply to snow. As a leader, I know instinctively that hazard spikes as the snow hardens and/or as the slope angle increases. As this scenario materializes, I'll share my concerns with my team. If it's hard snow, I may stop and suggest we put on micro spikes. If it's steep snow, we may need our ice axes. If I have novices in the party, I will demonstrate what I mean by a firm self-belay with an ice axe. If there are high consequences, I may pull out a rope. In each situation, I am applying additional layers of protection to build a safety margin.

Rockfall is another scenario. All too often, rockfall is party-induced where someone above is not paying attention and kicks loose rocks. It only takes a rock the size of a marble

to knock you off balance, and anything bigger than a golf ball can kill you. To highlight how big a role awareness plays, I often play a game with my climbing students when we encounter talus. In this game, you score one point if the boulder you step upon rocks and others can hear it. You score three points if the talus you step on rolls or releases other rocks. Like golf, we are aiming for a low score. My students always score points initially. However, after some period, I will reset the game. Then, without fail, the students' scores drop dramatically, sometimes to zero. Why? Because students are incentivized through competition to pay attention to where they are stepping and how. Awareness is the key, and this game helps me to model and teach novices how to climb through talus without sending down a shower of rocks.

We can apply active terrain management in a variety of settings. How often have you been the more seasoned and skilled member in a group? Have you stepped up to point things out to the new and uninitiated? As a leader or an instructor, we are the senior parties in the group. We will be more aware of the hazards out there, and it is incumbent upon us to share those concerns and advice on how to manage them. This is how we actively manage the terrain we enter, and it all originates from the actionable lessons we reflect upon. ▲▲

*Tony Tsuboi is a long-time member of The Mountaineers. He is a Climb Leader, AIARE Instructor, and past chair of The Mountaineers Safety Committee.*



# The SOAR Act

## Reimagining our Federal Permitting Processes

By Betsy Robblee, Conservation & Advocacy Director



Mountain Workshop participants from Young Women Empowered enjoy a day at Mt. Rainier National Park in 2018.

**T**eaching kayak self-rescue on a bleary Northwest day. Practicing crevasse rescue with a “fallen climber” twice your size. Encountering surprise sleet and snow on a backpacking trip. Of the many challenging situations they encounter, navigating federal permitting processes is one of the few that make our volunteer leaders groan.

Designed to facilitate safe and responsible access to the outdoors, these processes unfortunately have become a barrier to the outdoors themselves. Outdated, inconsistent, and challenging to navigate, our local and federal permitting systems are long overdue for an upgrade.

### A tangled web

Inconsistencies are one of the major concerns we face when attempting to secure permits. The rules are different for each land manager, and they can even vary between districts in the same National Forest. Permitting requirements can change from one year to the next as well, making it challenging to keep up with the many moving parts.

In Washington we’re fortunate to have wonderful folks managing our public lands, who work hard to partner with providers like

us. While this spirit of partnership goes a long way towards meeting everyone’s needs, the complex permitting system remains slow and adds to the workloads of our land managers, our staff, and our volunteers.

These challenges aren’t just a bureaucratic headache. When outdoor education organizations like The Mountaineers aren’t able to get the permits we need to conduct our programs, our scope becomes far more limited. We miss out on opportunities to train the next generation of outdoor leaders and stewards, or to introduce kids to the wonders of nature.

### Coalition for Outdoor Access

Through conversations with other organizations and businesses, we realized that we weren’t the only ones struggling to figure out this complex process. In fact, issues with the outfitter guide permitting system were preventing groups like YMCA BOLD & GOLD from taking groups of youth from underrepresented communities to National Forests near Seattle. “We take young people to Canada for many of our rock climbing programs because we can’t get a permit locally,” said BOLD & GOLD admissions director Robin Chiles. A variety of



factors, from permit moratoriums to lack of staffing capacity, limit access to the outdoors for those who need it the most.

In 2014 The Mountaineers collaborated with a wide range of local and national outdoor groups to identify solutions and speak with a unified voice. This effort, formalized as the Coalition for Outdoor Access, unites nonprofit outdoor education organizations, outfitters, guides, and the greater outdoor industry to advocate for improvements to the permitting process. By working collaboratively, we've made significant strides in how federal land management agencies are approaching facilitated access for outdoor recreation. However, due to the extent of the dysfunction in our permitting systems, federal legislation is necessary.

## Simplifying Access to Outdoor Recreation (SOAR) Act

After years of work behind the scenes, The Mountaineers and our partners worked with members of the U.S. Congress to introduce the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation (SOAR) Act. The SOAR Act will help fix the current recreational permitting system that creates barriers for people hoping to experience the outdoors. We helped shape this bill because it impacts an integral part of who we are as Mountaineers: our volunteer-led trips, courses, and youth programs.

The SOAR Act will simplify the permitting process for both land managers and permit holders like The Mountaineers, freeing up staff and volunteer time. It will provide more flexibility by allowing us to engage in activities that are similar to those specified in our permits: for example, if we already have a permit for snowshoeing that same permit could be used for backcountry skiing. The bill will also create a process to allow for multi-jurisdictional trips under the same permit. For instance, a scrambling trip that starts in the Olympic National Forest and ends in Olympic National Park wouldn't need two separate permits. Finally, it would ensure that we don't lose permit days due to unforeseen circumstances like weather or wildfire, which increases the safety of Mountaineers trips.

While these improvements may seem technical, collectively they will help to improve access to the outdoors. This is fundamentally an issue of equity, as many people are first introduced to the outdoors through some sort of "facilitated access" like our Mountain Workshops. Not everyone is fortunate enough to have an aunt who rock climbs or a neighbor with extra camping equipment. Helping more people experience the value of public lands will create future conservationists as well. At The Mountaineers, our courses and trips connect people to public lands, and we've seen time and time again that this is the first step to becoming an outdoor advocate. People protect what they love.

We're proud to be able to bring the voices of Mountaineers leaders to national lawmakers through our advocacy for the SOAR Act. Our on-the-ground perspective is valuable to members of Congress. "It is often said that all politics are local. To be successful advocating for policy change in Washington DC, it is essential to lift up the voices of the people and organizations from outside the beltway that are most impacted by policies developed at the federal level," said



Mountaineers Adventure Club students rope up for a climb at Leavenworth.  
Photo by Carl Marrs.

Paul Sanford, National Director of Recreation Policy at The Wilderness Society. "The Mountaineers have been a key player in this campaign."

## Next steps

The SOAR Act passed a key House committee last year, but it did not pass the full House and Senate before the end of the 116th Congress. We've made great progress in securing bipartisan support and working out the differences with stakeholders, and we remain optimistic that the SOAR Act could pass Congress and get signed into law. There's still a long way to go, but "without The Mountaineers participation, we would not be on the cusp of passing legislation that will make a real difference," said Sanford.

While writing legislation can be a grind and regulatory reform isn't the sexiest subject, The Mountaineers and our fellow SOAR Act advocates continue to push for change because we know the transformative power of time outside. We want our members and volunteers spending their time hiking, skiing, climbing, and teaching - not grappling with permits. We want to get more kids outside, from all parts of our greater Washington community, to experience what the Northwest has to offer. There are so many barriers to getting outside, and these are often compounded by bureaucratic red tape. By removing those barriers, we can look forward to a more accessible outdoors. ▲▲



Megan and Fred at Icicle Canyon after a day at the crags, 2007. Photo courtesy of the Fred Beckey Archives.

## THE SPEED OF LOVE

### Going the Distance With Fred Beckey

By Megan Bond

**W**hile traveling solo to remote and wild places, I had been in some dicey situations. The risks were real, but I knew of no one else interested in exploring the nether regions of wilderness, nor the Himalayan front range from east to west, nor the ancient trade routes that connect Tibet to India through massive ranges, passes that cut deep, from north to south where borders often go unmarked - and so I had gone alone.

Almost six feet tall, with hair that typically looked like a yellow hayfield post-windstorm, no - I would never blend in with the people of the Himalaya, which might have allowed me safer passage.

I was in Seattle, and making plans again, enthused about another return to the collar of the Indian Subcontinent; it was here I met Fred. He was in his early eighties, also alone, and stalling when our paths crossed. He looked road-weary from outrunning time; it seemed he needed a jump-start and a push, and this I could provide. Fred quickly jumped on board, sharing his maps, giving advice - and jokingly offered to carry my bags as he highjacked my trip.

He was eager to explore, and vibrated with restless energy and a brilliant mind. He had made multiple trips to the Himalaya and was also anxious to return.

We were immediately joined at the hip, and then the heart; friendships are sometimes sudden - just like that! Our heads were conjoined, and our brains synced.

Fred was thirty-five years my senior, and I was a mid-life forty-something. Neither of us was ever alone again.

We made a great team.

We became inseparable and laughed and wisecracked constantly. Fred was the master of side-splitting one-liners and kept me grinning from ear-to-ear, the sort of smile that went on for so long that my face hurt. We shared jokes and wordplay, and everything from meals to secrets to books and warm clothes. But the greatest thing we shared was that we each loved mountains.

Fred was Fred Beckey, the most famous mountaineer and explorer most people have never heard of. He gave everything to the alpine world, and in return, the alpine world gave him breath and life.

Through a lifetime of dedication and commitment to his passion, Fred had studied and climbed mountains the world over, creating new routes, and ascending rock walls and monoliths that challenge his followers to this day. He shared his findings and routes generously with other climbers, authoring intensively researched guidebooks and contributing





Photo credit: Jim Stuart



Top: A group photo with the horse handlers who led Fred and Megan to basecamp of Mt. Po'nyu, Tibet, 2013. Photo by Megan Bond. Bottom: Fred and Megan in a café in Darjeeling, India, 2012. Photo by Beren Moloney.

to journals and magazines to do so. He inspired climbers to achieve earthly summits and unworldly renewal.

I loved exploring the high, natural world too, but my needs were simpler and not so bold. I aimed for regions where other people seldom traveled: remote, wild and unseen, and craved putting distance between myself and the artificial world. I wanted to see changes in topography, to walk the terrain and through the seasons, to silently observe wildlife and watch birds.

We both took a great interest in other cultures; there was so much to learn.

With his short list of bare essentials and a vast mental repository of what could be procured elsewhere, he could leave at a moment's notice. Anything he considered superfluous, like a toothbrush, was not worth taking. He would have been fine with just a knife and a blanket.

His gray shaggy hair, hunched frame and visible antiquity brought immediate respect to our unexpected twosome. No one would maltreat an elder on remote mountain treks, in latitudes where age earned reverence, and particularly not in nations where ancestors were worshiped. Luckily, proximity to this respect trickled over to me. Those margins where a lone woman might find herself in jeopardy gave way to less peril and I was now out of harm's way. In this way, Fred's presence protected me on our far-flung travels and in return I kept him going.

## Slowing down

As our years together increased, age permeated his skin and slowed his heart, but he battled on. His chest wheezed and a cataract made an ill-timed performance, blurring his vision but not his outlook. Arthritis molded his spine into a permanent arch, creating a stooped posture, and he appeared to be carrying a heavy rucksack, with his face and shoulders bowed into a fierce wind, even with no load and no breeze. The effect was fitting for a man who had spent his life doing exactly that, but the pain was a terrible load for him to carry.

Travel to Asia was already compounded by language barriers, and near-deafness added to his struggle. He had taught himself to lip read and observed body language carefully to help him interpret people's sentences.

Fred had struggled with this hearing loss for twenty years, which by then had become rather acute, but for some reason he could hear my voice, or at least intuit with ease what I communicated. I became the eyes, ears and interpreter on our travels, but he sat in the pilot's seat as navigator and guide.

Our speed decelerated in those later years. Aches, illness, weakening legs and lungs slowed the pace to a crawl. But still we went, and Fred went on, pained but insisting he was up for any journey - nudging one foot in front of the other. Our bivouacs - spawned by misadventure or necessity - became



Fred enjoying the sunshine, Ventura Beach, CA, 2017. Photo by Megan Bond.

less frequent, but the sleeping bags were still put to good use as we camped out and star gazed. Our faces crevassed with time, but as we wrinkled, so did we beam.

## Dreaming of the Valley of Flowers

By the spring of 2017, we had spent a full year planning our next trip to the Himalaya, and had pushed our planned journey into 2018 to accommodate uninvited afflictions.

Fred had beat-back death on more than one occasion: sometimes by luck, usually by skill, but more recently by sheer stubbornness.

Regardless, he insisted we were heading to the Garhwal in the Northern India State of Uttarakhand, and the Bhyundar Valley, known as the Valley of Flowers. A journey to this lush, high altitude basin near the Zaskar had been a dream of mine since I was a teen, after I read a book of the same title by the Himalayan explorer Frank Smythe, and Fred was intent on making this dream come true for me. The Valley of Flowers is more accessible than most places we had ventured, which Fred described as pedestrian by comparison. Nevertheless, we anticipate a 2018 spring departure.

Magnifying glass in hand, Fred would spread maps of the Himalaya out on the table and pour himself into them, highlighting various colored spirals that represented elevation gains, topographical features, or mountain roads. He would drink cold coffee as he plotted lines and routes from point A

to point B to point C, and I would use my primitive Tibetan language skills to find meaning in various place-names he occasionally asked me about. Sometimes I was even right.

By then, Fred was ninety-four years old, and reluctantly using a wheelchair, pushed by me. As a result, this forthcoming exploration to the Garhwal was incorporating the need for porters to shoulder him in a hoisted sedan chair to access our remote trekking destination. With such accommodation, surely, we could keep going and reconnoiter this isolated mountain valley.

We made further, long-term itineraries for adventures that went years into the future. How could we know that these would be the last few months of his life? But our dreams had been delusions and would not live beyond the fall.

## Saying goodbye

By the time our twelve years together had ended - at his death that October - we had explored thousands of wild miles and treacherous mountain passages. We had traversed overland on foot and by horseback, and hitched rides in impressively deft vehicles, held together by rust, twine, and salvaged wire.

This middle-aged woman and that elder of a man had wasted no time. Together we explored nine countries, scrambled and climbed in eleven U.S. states, crossed countless snowfields, and bushwhacked through jungled vines and branches. Our





Fred Beckey on the summit of Grand Teton, 1963. Photo courtesy of the Fred Beckey Archive.

explorations had taken us worldwide, but there were also trips within North America, including the desert southwest, the Coastal Range of British Columbia, the Sierras, Moab, the Rockies, and hikes and climbs within our beloved Pacific Northwest. We had wriggled under giant, fallen trees that were too high to climb over and too horizontal to go around, pushing and pulling each other and our backpacks underneath toppled timbers to the other side of the blockade.

As companions and the best of friends, we had traipsed through literal hell-and-high-water, enduring lowland floods, mountain storms, and had trucks and buses break down on eroding roads at high-altitudes in Tibet and Nepal. We figured out how to fend for ourselves when logistics failed, and nature overwhelmed us. We had a blast.

We shared nearly every day of every year, either in the wilds or the city, and occasionally by phone if one of us was away, but we remained connected to one another in either world.

Fred spent close to twenty percent of his adult life with me, and by then thirty percent of my own grown-up years were with him; our time together had outlasted most marriages. No wonder I miss him so much.

He felt obliged to make up for the pace of our journeys not being swift and quick, and would mutter the dictum to me as much as for himself: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with a friend."

For most of his life, and well into his middle age, Fred had been a torpedo, outdistancing climbers half his age who struggled to keep up with him. He would sometimes lose patience if these young cragsmen fell too far behind as he gunned up mountains, and they were left humiliated and frazzled in his dust.

## Lives intertwined

In the last week of his life, Fred intoned a tender and unwarranted apology. Repentant, he said to me, "I'm sorry I held you back."

But I insisted that there was no apology necessary.

I would never have traded circling the Earth in long distances with Fred, for racing around the world without him.

I wouldn't have wanted our journeys any other way. ▲▲

*Fred Beckey was a legendary Northwest climber, environmentalist, historian, and Mountaineers Books author. He wrote the original guidebooks for the North Cascades (the Cascade Alpine Guides, published by Mountaineers Books), and is noted as "one of America's most colorful and eccentric mountaineers." He's earned unofficial recognition as the all-time world-record holder for the number of first ascents credited to one person. On October 30, 2017, he died in Megan's arms after a brief illness. He was 94 years old. Megan is working on a biography of Fred, to be published by Mountaineers Books.*

# CELEBRATING LOVE

## A Ruth Mountain elopement

By Kristina Ciari, Membership & Communications Director





**E**scape. Flee. Run away. Most likely derived from the 1500s Middle Dutch word *lopen*, the meaning of the word elope has shifted over time. From its origins describing a simple, non-romantic escape, elope morphed to mean a scandalous affair wherein a married woman ran off with her lover. The affair disappeared, but the scandal remained, when eloping changed once again to mean a secret marriage without parental consent.

Today, many of us associate eloping with a small destination wedding. Or, in 2020 terms: the only type of wedding option available. I know a handful of folks who faced the impossible decision of postponing or drastically reducing their weddings last year, but, as with many things during the pandemic, they found silver linings. More flexibility. Fewer people to coordinate. Not needing to stress over things like décor, bridesmaids dresses, and cake flavors. These details are fun for some but stress inducing for others.

A few of my friends were secretly excited to have an excuse for a smaller wedding. With the pandemic, they got to do things their own way. One such couple was Ashley McCloud and Molly Kirk. On July 25, 2020, high atop Ruth Mountain, the two shared their vows in a small ceremony, forever weaving their love for one another with their love of the mountains.

### **"I didn't know that people could be this outdoorsy!"**

Molly and Ashley first met when Molly was finishing the Everett Basic Climbing Course. Molly, with her easy-going nature, love of all things colorful, and self-professed ability to be both a morning and a night person, postponed their first date a few times because the mountains were calling. "Molly was climbing like, a big mountain every weekend when I met her," said Ashley. "I didn't know that people could be that outdoorsy!"

No wallflower herself, Ashley, with her huge smile and warm, magnetic personality, always kept bouldering shoes and art supplies in her car. They spent their first weeks together outdoors, hiking and scrambling and backpacking. When Molly wasn't off with The Mountaineers, she and Ashley explored the areas around Stevens Pass and spent long weekends backpacking through pristine areas like the Lake Chelan Sawtooth Wilderness. "It was an intoxicating world to enter into," said Ashley.

They'd been together a few months when Ashley signed up with The Mountaineers and enrolled in Basic Scrambling. The following year, with Ashley taking the Basic Alpine Climbing course and Molly helping to instruct, they continued to grow their community within the Everett Branch. Before they knew it, Ashley's calendar was as busy as Molly's, but they worked hard to make sure they could still get out together as much as possible. They also both savored the freedom and the ability to grow as individuals as their relationship deepened.

In October 2019, a little over two years after they met, the couple set out on a hike up Easy Pass to view the larches and enjoy the stunning views of Fisher Valley. With a few friends in tow, Molly knew this was the perfect trip to propose. She'd been thinking about it for months.



Ashley and Molly. Photo by Sarina Pizzala.

At their destination, she handed a friend her camera and whispered a quick, *I'm going to propose, get photos.*

"I walked out to Ashley and told her how much I cared about her and how great life is with her," said Molly. "Then I handed her a card I had an artist make with an illustration of a dolphin on the front. Ashley loves the water, and if she were any animal a dolphin would be it.

"On the back I had written, 'Will you marry me?' She kept looking at the card, and was staring at it for a solid 15 seconds. I thought we'd be standing there forever. Finally, she turned it over and said, 'Yes!'"

Thrilled, the newly engaged couple began planning their wedding. While they knew they wanted to have something in town, they also wanted the mountains to play a role in their big day. "We'd been planning to get married in the mountains," said Molly. "It wasn't just a pandemic thing. We had already blocked out this weekend in our spring planning session to do the ceremony."

Both Ashley and Molly felt strongly that if they were going to elope on a mountain, they needed to do it for the right reasons. "There has to be a connection to your values with why it's important to you," said Ashley. "I think our values have been that marriage is important to us, but we don't necessarily believe it's a pivotal moment where you become a different person or a different couple.



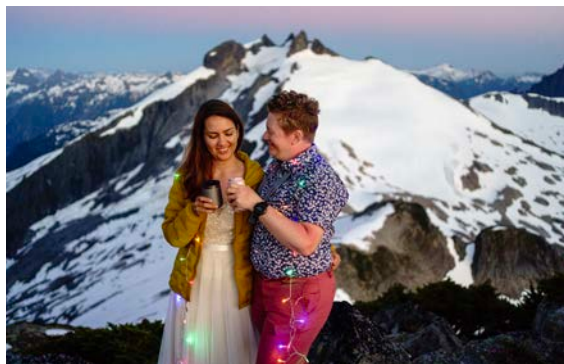
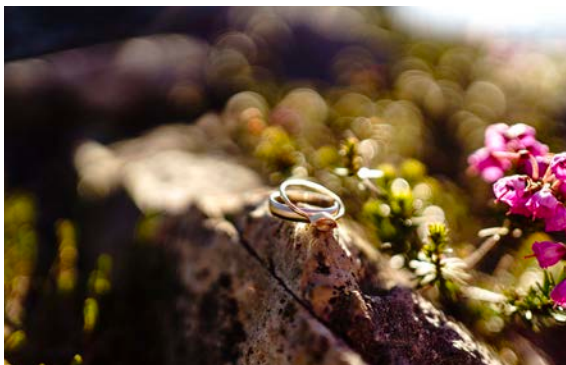






"Live in the sunshine, swim in the sea, drink the wild air."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson



Photos by Sarina Pizzala.

So much of our commitment has been in stages and through conversations. Reflecting on our values, both in how we see our relationship and in what's important to us, it made sense to have a mountain elopement."

### **"It was a celebration of the community we've created in the mountains."**

With two different dates to choose from, they opted for the second in hopes of better weather. Mother Nature delivered and the crew enjoyed hot, sunny skies for their two-day, one-night wedding. All of their guests were folks they had met through The Mountaineers.

After a bit of stress around wedding licenses and last-minute permit challenges, their crew of 12 set off from the trailhead at 7am with huge packs in tow. In a pre-trip planning email, Ashley invited the guests to bring lights and any other surprises, and the open invitation resulted in a night to remember. Friends

carried Ashley's dress and can upon can of champagne. Even though fancy clothing was completely optional, most everyone opted to bring nice attire for the ceremony too. At the trailhead, everyone's excitement was proportionally reflected in the size of their packs, but if anyone minded the 50+lb loads, they didn't say.

Twelve hours later, Ashley and Molly were married in a sunset ceremony near the summit of Ruth Mountain, enveloped in the love they felt for one another, the mountains, and their community.

While so much of the day was truly memorable, both Ashley and Molly said their favorite part was the toasts. And the cake. "People hauled up like, 10lbs of cake, and we were all just eating it with our hands," said Molly. People brought champagne too, and each, in turn, delivered a heartfelt message for the newlyweds.

"It was a celebration of the community we've created in the mountains," said Molly. "I couldn't imagine it any other way." ▲▲



# Ten Tips to Plan a Mountain Elopement

By Ashley McLoud and Molly Kirk

If you're feeling pulled toward a small mountain wedding, check out these tips from the newlyweds to aid in your planning. Start first by thinking about what will make you happy and fulfilled. Plan your wedding with those reasons in mind.

## Location

Ruth Mountain had always been on our bucket list, and when we realized it was a relatively short approach, it felt like the absolute right choice. Think about who you are planning to invite, and pick an appropriate location, or, if location is most important to you, be mindful that it will limit who can attend. Don't pick a location just because of the scenery. At the end of the day you might not get great weather, and you want the ceremony to still be meaningful.

## Planning

We had two dates picked out, which was a good idea, and we recommend giving yourself a lot of lead-time for logistics. Apply for your marriage license early to be sure you'll have it in time, and as soon as you decide on a location, look into what permits you'll need. Plan to coordinate permits for everyone in your party if you can, and communicate with your small guest list early and often about expectations. It's much easier to have a group of folks who can take care of themselves on the big day. On the day of the event, put someone in charge of timing on the hike in. Give yourself HOURS of extra padding. For example: avoid stressing about arriving at sunset for pictures and plan instead to arrive midday or go the night before.

## Guests

Because we were going to have an in-town ceremony and a mountain ceremony, we had already invited friends and family to the in-town celebration. Because of the pandemic, we had to share the news that our elopement would be our only celebration for now, and honestly, that was the hardest part. You might decide to keep your elopement a secret for this reason. Whatever you decide, be sure you have a good communication plan before you make any announcements.

## Registering

We ended up getting a ton of questions about where we registered, which was a surprise. We hadn't registered yet, but in retrospect, we should have. Go ahead and do it, that way if people ask, you have something quick and easy. Then, be sure to send thank you cards.

## Safety

We had to think about mountain safety and COVID safety, and we were sure to have a lot of discussion with everyone who was coming. We knew about their mountain competencies, but discussed comfort levels with COVID protocols and decided

on a set of norms we collectively agreed to. It wasn't a risk-free event, but at the end of the day, we're Mountaineers and we have risk management conversations all the time. Be open, honest, and respectful, and you'll land in a place where everyone is comfortable.

## Attire

This is your event. You should wear what you want. If you're planning two events, don't feel like you need two dresses. Wear what you want, where you want. However, having your clothing be lightweight isn't a bad idea if you're hiking with them. We also recommend you fold everything carefully so it won't wrinkle, and pack your clothes in a place that they won't get smashed or have anything spill on them. We definitely recommend changing right before your ceremony rather than hiking in your wedding attire.

## Décor

We invited our guests to bring lights for their tents and any other surprises. This open invitation was incredible and displayed how excited our friends were for us. We had twinkle lights, another friend made us the "Just Married" sign, and we had 10lbs of cake complete with beautiful cake toppers. Our friend Rob even brought up a bouquet of cams. You don't have to go all out to have a few special touches, and they're well worth the extra weight.

## Mini-moon

We got married on a Saturday and were back at work early on Monday morning. Having something planned, even if it was just going to stay at an Airbnb close by, would have been a nice way for us to unwind and enjoy a few special days together. Plan a mini-getaway, even if it's just to stay at home together without other obligations. We regret that we didn't have time together immediately after to let our experience sink in.

## Sun protection

The weather for our big day was a dream, but it was hot and the sun was brutal. You can see sunburns on a few of our guests in the photos, and we didn't come away unscathed either. If sunburn/tan lines in your photos are going to be a bummer for you, be sure to cover with sun protective clothing and lots of sunscreen.

## Photography

We could not be more thrilled with the amazing photographs by Sarina Pizzala (@sarina\_pizzala). We weren't originally going to have a photographer, but are so glad we have these memories of our special day forever. Great photographs end up being especially important in sharing your wedding with everyone who didn't attend. Get a photographer. You won't regret it.



# WHAT'S YOUR ELEVENTH ESSENTIAL?

## Celebrating the Ten Essentials

By Claire Giordano, Watercolor Artist

**T**he last patch of shade disappears in a wavering blue line, distorted by the heat. I sit on the scorching sand in exasperation. We are still five miles from the car, and I feel like garbage. I'm dizzy, a bit nauseous, and have a headache. After a year of hiking in the Northwest, I've forgotten about the unrelenting desert sun and my 2.5 liters of water was not nearly enough... I am dehydrated, and badly.

This is my first experience with bad dehydration, and what started as a great day hike has deteriorated into a sufferfest. I know better. It is scary to think that my simple oversight could be much worse if it weren't for my hiking partner, who prudently carried more water than I did and gave me everything they had left. Bringing extra water is one of the Ten Essentials, and for good reason. As I later learn in a first aid course, dehydration takes time to develop, and even longer to bounce back from. I'm surprised by how many hours it takes to feel better.

### The Ten Essentials

I first learned about the Ten Essentials when I was six years

old. My dad made a child-sized emergency kit that I carried with pride in my small backpack. Understanding how to take care of myself outside was a rite of passage in our house, and choosing the right gear was a family activity before every trip.

Today, as an avid outdoorswoman and plein air watercolor artist, I spend a lot of time outdoors. I still have the kit my dad gave me, which has grown substantially in size as I cultivate my own outdoor knowledge. After a ten-day wilderness first aid class my medical supplies doubled in volume, and since my desert experience I always bring more water than I think I'll need (and purification tablets, just in case). It brings me comfort and confidence to know that I always have the essential gear I need to spend an unexpected night outside and to care for myself and others. I also see each mistake or forgotten item as a learning opportunity to refine my essentials kit for next time.

What I love about the Ten Essentials is that, while everyone has the same key categories, the specifics are incredibly personalized. Some of my friends count the grams of their emergency kit and scour the internet for the lightest pair of





Claire painting at Lac Blanc, a popular alpine lake above Chamonix in the French Alps. All images courtesy of Claire Giordano.

tweezers. Personally, I go the other way. I always carry two warm puffy jackets in the mountains because I paint beside glaciers; the katabatic winds that blast off the ice are incredibly cold, especially when I sit still for three hours.

I also love that every good Ten Essentials list usually has a story like mine, with items added based on an outdoor mishap or a never-forget-again omission. I once spent a night outside without a pad of any kind and vividly remember waking up in the middle of the night sliding on the tent floor. My sleep-addled and overly-imaginative brain was momentarily convinced a bear was pulling me out of the tent, and I am still amazed that my friends weren't woken up by the massive ruckus I made. I never forgot a sleeping pad again, and today you'll find an ever-evolving pre-trip checklist on my phone.

One of my favorite questions to ask people is, "What's your eleventh essential - the one thing you can't live without on a trip?" For me, this is my small palette of paints, quickly followed by a sleeping pad. Do you have a good Ten Essentials story? Share on Instagram or Facebook and tag The Mountaineers. And, for today's creative exercise, I invite you to join me by drawing, painting, or writing about your Ten Essentials! ▲▲

*Claire Giordano is an environmental artist and writer following the interwoven patterns of people, place, and climate change. See more of her work at [www.clairewanderings.com](http://www.clairewanderings.com) or follow her on Instagram at @claireswanderings.*



Field sketches created by Claire at the HJ Andrews Experimental Forest in Oregon, in Greenland, and in Arches National Park.



# THE MOUNTAINEERS TEN ESSENTIALS

ILLUSTRATED BY  
CLAIRE GIORDANO

The Mountaineers invented the Ten Essentials in the 3rd edition of *Freedom of the Hills*, published in 1974. Still written entirely by volunteers, *Freedom* released a new, improved version of the Ten Essentials in the 9th edition to reflect the collective wisdom of hundreds of outdoor skills instructors. Here are a few of Claire's favorite essentials and tips for picking your own.



NAVIGATION

## 1. NAVIGATION

Knowing where I am and where I'm going is critical, so I like redundancy in my navigation tools (especially when I hike alone). I use the Gaia app on my phone and always carry printed maps from the CalTopo website. I also have a compass and my Garmin inReach Explorer+, which I use primarily for communication.

## 2. HEADLAMP

Always bring extra batteries! There are many awesome headlamps out there, but the few times my light died I was most grateful for the spare batteries. When hiking in groups, we bring one spare set between us to save weight.



HEADLAMP



SUN PROTECTION

## 3. SUN PROTECTION

As someone who burns easily, I take my sun protection seriously. I started wearing sun gloves three years ago to protect my hands while hiking and painting for hours outside (you only sunburn the sides of your fingers once). I also wear a sun hood to protect my neck, and I use SPF 50 sunscreen so I can reapply less frequently.

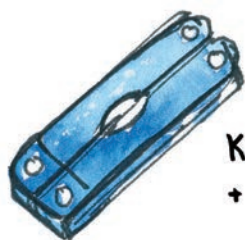


FIRST AID KIT

## 4. FIRST AID

In my everyday first aid kit I carry Band-Aids, a wound care pack that includes Steri-Strips, and basic medication such as Ibuprofen, Benadryl, and laxative and antidiarrheal meds. On longer day hikes and backpacking trips, I have a comprehensive medical kit that weighs about a pound and has enough supplies for two people for six days. If you're interested in outdoor medicine, I highly recommend enrolling in a Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or First Responder (WFR) course. The processes and skills I learned have been invaluable, and it helps to know exactly how to use everything in my kit.





**KNIFE  
+ REPAIR KIT**

## 5. KNIFE & REPAIR KIT

This is where your preferences shine! Some of us love big knives, others multi-tools. I personally have a multi-tool with scissors and a small repair kit with thread and a patch for torn gear.



**FIRE (+ STOVE)**

## 6. FIRE

On every hike I have a small box of waterproof matches and a tiny lighter. On longer trips I carry a lightweight camping stove and a small fuel bottle. I've recently enjoyed two stoves from MSR: the Pocket Rocket and the Windburner (which, as the name implies, excels in windy conditions).

## 7. SHELTER

The first emergency item my dad gave me was a super lightweight space blanket. It weighs next to nothing and should be in every pack as emergency shelter. My current favorite tent is the Hilleberg Akto, an all-season solo shelter that is lightweight for how durable and warm it is (and the red color makes it easy to find in a whiteout, too!). I also carry a foam pad to sit on, which would make a huge difference if I ever have to sleep outside unexpectedly.



**SHELTER**

## 8. EXTRA FOOD

Snacks! I love snacks, as all my hiking buddies can attest. Whether I am walking one mile or ten, I always have extra food because you never know when someone will get hangry (me). Current favorites: macadamia nuts and banana chips.



**EXTRA FOOD**



**EXTRA WATER  
(OR PURIFIER)**

## 9. EXTRA WATER

Drinking enough water is critical and I always scout maps beforehand for water sources, carry extra if the trail is dry, and bring a pack of Aquatabs to purify water if I run out. For negligible added weight, I never have to worry about drinking dirty or microbe-laden water. Make sure you read the directions to know how many tabs to add and how long to wait before drinking.



**EXTRA CLOTHES**

## 10. EXTRA CLOTHES

The only thing I enjoy more than too many snacks is a good puffy jacket on a cold day. Whether I'm on a day hike or painting for three hours by a glacier, my go-to favorite layers are the Arc'teryx Proton LT Hoody (light, and warm even when wet), and a down jacket from Feathered Friends (made with responsibly sourced down). It's a really good idea to bring a rain shell, too, because the one day you don't bring your jacket will be the day it rains!



Alison and Blue on a snow excursion. Photo courtesy of Alison Dempsey-Hall.

# NOT ANOTHER DAY AT THE DOG PARK

## Surviving a cougar attack at Cooper Lake

By Alison Dempsey-Hall, 13-year member

We've all experienced a moment of true fear. Your fingers grow cold and your stomach drops. Time slows while your mind and body prime to react, and all you can think is, "This is actually happening." As Mountaineers, we've been there. You can expect the unexpected in the outdoors: a loose boulder tumbling down a narrow gully being traversed, or foreboding clouds rumbling closer as you quickly finish summit snacks and reverse course down the mountain. Almost always, instinct and training move us to safety.

Then there are those rare occurrences many of us have only heard stories about. You never expect it to happen to you, and when it does, all you can do is accept it as your reality. And hope to escape unscathed.

### A walk in the woods

This past November during a family vacation to Roslyn, Washington, my sister Melissa and I decided to take a midafternoon hike to Cooper Lake with my 65-pound Labrador, Blue. Nestled in the heart of the Cascades, old growth forest and snow-capped mountains ring the pristine 120-acre lake. It was the perfect opportunity to stretch our legs and give the dog some exercise.

The path to the lake is well-traveled, and after passing a few other couples with dogs we were wrapping up the last mile to the lake. Taking in the scenery with Blue trotting in front on-leash, we were looking forward to the deep blue waters ahead.



Then the unthinkable happened. We turned a bend in the trail and came face-to-face with a 130-pound cougar.

I imagine it's what a car crash would feel like; you blink and it's already happened. With Blue leading the pack, he was within feet of the cat, who didn't miss a beat. In a second the cougar closed the gap, eyes locked on the dog. Neither animal moved a muscle. The cat latched onto Blue's head and pulled him to the ground. Dinner was a bite away.

## Defending Blue

Quickly moving past fear, my fur-baby mama instincts kicked in big time. Using what we knew about deterring predatory wildlife, my sister and I did our best to make ourselves big. We stood tall, arms outstretched and yelling, slowly backing away from the cougar. Blue laid pinned on the ground by the cat, the leash still connecting us. I could only make it back a few steps before the lifeline was pulled taut. Still latched onto Blue's head, the cougar slowly began dragging him into the brush.

Now standing 10 feet behind us, my sister was grasping for a new tactic. She grabbed a big branch and lobbed it at the cat. It proved to be our saving grace. Startled by the attack, the animal quickly snapped out of predator mode. The cougar released and ran off down the hillside, and I turned to see Blue inexplicably pop up out of the brush.

## After the attack

Even with bloody head wounds, I could see my reliable trail dog still had his wits about him. We got moving, knowing that in any rescue situation (human or canine), if the injured party can walk themselves out you need to get down the trail. Blue's resilience amazed me. Injuries and all, he trotted out of the woods as if it was just a really bad day at the dog park!

Although it felt far longer, the whole encounter lasted less than two minutes. Even given my proximity to the cat, we never made eye contact. The cougar was so fixated on the dog I'm not sure it even realized we humans were there.

Once back at the trailhead, it was time to take Blue to the vet to recover from the fight of a lifetime. With quite a few stitches and weeks of healing time, we were sure to take it easy for a while. Fortunately, he has since fully recovered, and his trusting exuberance hasn't changed a bit. After enhancing my pack with a few animal-deterrent extras, we've hit the trails a few times since the attack. I'm thankful every day that we escaped with only superficial wounds and a scary story to tell around the campfire.

We are lucky it ended as well as it did, but also realize we had this outcome because we knew what to do. This included reporting the incident to the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), who is responsible for tracking incidents like this across the state.

## Cougars in Washington State

While cougar attacks are rare, they do happen. According to the WDFW, there are approximately 2,100 cougars in Washington State. The agency said the last cougar attack in the greater Roslyn area occurred about four years ago,



Alison and Blue on a backpacking trip to Sourdough Gap. Photo courtesy of Alison Dempsey-Hall.

also against a dog. For humans, there have been 18 non-fatal attacks and two fatalities caused by cougars in Washington State in the last 97 years.

While cats will be cats, the cougar we ran into was more than curious - it was brazen. My sister and I were mostly in our own heads as we ambled up the path, and there's no way a normal cougar wouldn't have heard us coming with the crunch of twigs beneath our boots and the jangling of Blue's tags. I've reminded myself that as with any living creature, there are exceptions to normal animal behaviors. In the wild, predators experiencing starvation or illness become less alert, or desperate. Could that have been part of the explanation?

It's challenging to know, but what is clear is that territory can be scarce. With Washington one of only 13 states with a healthy cougar population, and the craggy expanses of our mountains one of the few places here they can roam freely, there are limited places for an adult cougar to go. A cougar's territory can be anywhere from 20 to 640 square miles, depending upon the concentration of prey in its area. Female cougars often have smaller territories that overlap with that of both males and females, but male cougars face a different set of circumstances. With no hope of overlapping boundaries with other males, juvenile male cougars often search for hundreds of miles for a territory of their own. Because of this, they are more likely to come into contact with humans - and be hungry when they do.



Above: Photo by NaturesFan1226, <http://bit.ly/3tALh1x>. Below: Blue recovering immediately following the attack. Photo courtesy of Alison Dempsey-Hall.



Many outdoorspeople have heard stories of recreationists or joggers being stalked by cougars, though far fewer have come in close contact. My Uncle John, an avid outdoorsman and hunter for over 70 years, has said that in mountainous, heavily-timbered country with ample human activity, wild animals create separate game trails that often parallel our trails. They will be less than 100 yards uphill, just out of sight -

hearing you, smelling you, and seeing you. Wildlife are usually just as invested in staying out of your way as you are of theirs.

I can't help but consider how exponential growth in development and outdoor recreation in the Northwest has influenced cougar behavior in recent years. The influx of out-of-towners in what used to be quiet rural areas has transformed them into hubs of activity, with fewer and fewer places for these animals to roam free and undisturbed. Although I understand I'm unlikely to be hit by lightning twice, a few things have changed since that fateful day on the trail. I scan the hillside just a little more frequently, and I yodel from time-to-time so that no one is surprised to see us coming around the bend. ▲▲

*Information in this piece is courtesy of Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and Western Wildlife Outreach. For more information about cougars and how to respond to an encounter, visit Western Wildlife Outreach at [westernwildlife.org](http://westernwildlife.org).*

## How to prevent attacks and protect yourself and others

When we recreate, we are guests in the homes of wild animals. I view training not only as an act of self-protection, but as an act of respect towards creatures as we travel through their domain. After doing some research, these are the tactics that I use to prevent and be prepared for unwanted cougar encounters:

### Prevention

- Keep dogs on-leash.
- Wear a bear bell.
- Keep bear spray easily accessible.
- Periodically call, "Yodel-ay-hee-hoo!" In other words, "Wildlife, I'm here! Don't be startled."

### Response

- Get big: hold up trekking poles, hold up your arms, gather together, and pick up children.
- Get loud: Yell, "Hey cougar!"
- Don't scream - you want to show dominance, not fear.
- Back away slowly, but never run. It triggers predatory instincts in the cat.
- When in very close proximity, throw rocks and branches.
- If you are attacked by a cougar, fight back at all costs.



# An Unexpected Adventure in New Zealand

By Cheryl Talbert, Global Adventures Leader



A tramper on Luxmore Ridge. Photo by Cheryl Talbert.

**A**s we neared the ridge crest, the wind blasted snow pellets into my face like hot shrapnel. Just ahead of me, Bob's blue pack cover snapped once, hard, then blew off his pack and into the white.

Our Mountaineers group of twelve hardy trampers<sup>1</sup> had set out in a gentle snowfall that morning from the Luxmore Hut on the Kepler "Great Walk," high above Lake Te Anau in Fiordland National Park on the South Island of New Zealand. We were heading for our next stop, the Iris Burn Hut. It was mid-February, high summer in the southern hemisphere, but the weather gods hadn't gotten the memo. The forecast posted on the wall at the hut was heavier snow later in the afternoon, so we'd launched briskly ahead with the idea that we could complete the first six miles of high exposed ridge walking before the worst of the weather hit. Now I could barely see the hikers in our group, twenty feet ahead and behind.

At the lee of a bend in the trail, we gathered up. The snow and cold were beginning to alarm the group. "This is insane!" "We're not doing six miles of ridge in this weather!" "I can't feel my nose!" Reality demanded we surrender to greater forces and live to hike another day. Back down the trail we went, with a short warming stop at the hut where we'd started that morning ("no room for you tonight, sorry!"), and soon we had retreated

all the way down to our starting point in the little tourist town of Te Anau on the shore of the lake.

One thing you need to know about New Zealanders: their reputation for hospitality is no exaggeration. Two nights of hotel rooms arranged for twelve, in the middle of high season - check. Bags transferred to the new accommodations by the proprietor's husband - check. Hot showers and warm dry clothes - check. Just a few hours down from the maelstrom and still blinking snow from our eyes, we found ourselves sitting around a table in a lovely little Te Anau restaurant sipping fine New Zealand wine and sampling the culinary creations of a talented local chef. Who knew that in this small verdant country's tiny burg of 2,000 souls, we would find not one but several excellent chefs who serve up incredible fare and outstanding wine? Perhaps two days forced off the trail and away from our dehydrated meals wouldn't be all that bad!

We met our bus two mornings later to head to our next "Great Walk," fortified once again to take on the backcountry. The experience reinforced our realization that, if only you're open to it, adventure in an unfamiliar country can take many forms - including an unparalleled foodie experience where you least expect it. ▲▲

<sup>1</sup>Tramping is Kiwi for backpacking



## Love is in the *Plein Air*

### Exploring the land with the ones you love

By Craig Romano, Mountaineers Books Guidebook Author

Craig and Heather on their first camping trip at Curlew State Park, July 1996. Photos courtesy of Craig Romano.

Reading the journals of many naturalists, outdoorspeople, and adventurers, you immediately feel their strong love for the land. You can sense how this love touched their souls and tantalized their emotions. But what about romantic, familial, or platonic love? Did they experience that too while out and about in the backcountry? Thoreau spent an awful lot of lonely nights in his cabin on Walden Pond. He'd get bored and frequently visit his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson. While Thoreau may not have waxed poetic in his nature journals about his fellow transcendentalist, the deep friendship between them was integral to his observations.

And what about Farley Mowat? He never cried wolf, but did he cry out in passion way out there in the Canadian North? Apparently so - he and his wife Claire spent the first five years of their marriage living in an isolated fishing village in Newfoundland. They traveled extensively together, lived on the remote and tiny Magdalen Islands, and collaborated on several works.

In John Muir's *Mountains of California*, the naturalist fawns over Douglas squirrels, water ouzels, and California's mountains

- but not his California wife. After many miles tromping the mountains as a single man, Muir married at the age of 42. He then spent a decade working the family farm with his wife Louie, but the mountains were calling. He occasionally took his two daughters to the hills with him, however Mrs. Muir preferred to stay home and tend to the farm and orchards. She showed no interest in the backcountry. Muir yearned to go back into the wilds, and Louie understood how important that was for the writer-naturalist. She encouraged and supported his return to the wilderness.

Casual readers of these authors' works and that of many other outdoor writers may think that they were loners or outcasts who cherished a life of solitude. Many of their writings emphasized a strong personal relationship with nature, and at times appear to celebrate a romanticized individualism. These writings have tugged at my soul, enhanced my experiences on the trail and in the backcountry, and helped instill in me a strong love for all things wild. I have certainly spent many days alone on the trail and in the wilderness, observing, celebrating, and revering the natural world.

However, I am no loner. I delight in being in the woods with my





Heather, Craig, and son Giovanni hiking the Kettle River Range, October 2018.

loved ones - especially the two people I love the most, my wife and my son. Since my nascent years in the backcountry I have felt an intense love for the natural world, which at times grew selfish. But as my devotion to all things wild grew stronger, so too did the urge to share that feeling with others. Over the years I have found that being in nature with those I am closest to creates a synergy that enhances the love I have for wild places. It strengthens my bond with the people in my life as well.

I spent a good part of my first seven years in the Northwest roaming the region's wilds in solitude. I cherished the alone time, but also longed for a soul mate who would share the trail and wilderness with me. In 1996 I met the woman that would become my wife while I was attending graduate school at the University of Washington. One early June evening, Heather, an undergrad at the University, came into the restaurant where I worked as a waiter and sat in my section. Our conversation drifted from menu choices to travel, the UW and writing. And by the powers of fate, Heather had just read one of my weekly hiking articles in the UW Daily. She was not a hiker, but that didn't stop her from asking me to take her on one. After a "get acquainted" date, we went hiking together.

Our first hike together was to Surprise Lake in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness: that day led to many surprises. It was pouring rain when we got to the trailhead, but my inexperienced hiking partner was raring to go. The weather didn't dampen her spirit. And her attitude didn't dampen mine. We hit the trail, which was one I had hiked before. I was the seasoned outdoorsperson who relished many a mile in solitude, and Heather was an outdoors neophyte with the curiosity of a child. Nearly everything on that trail piqued her interest. I had long ago begun brushing off ubiquitous sights and sounds. Her astute attention quickly made me realize how much of the

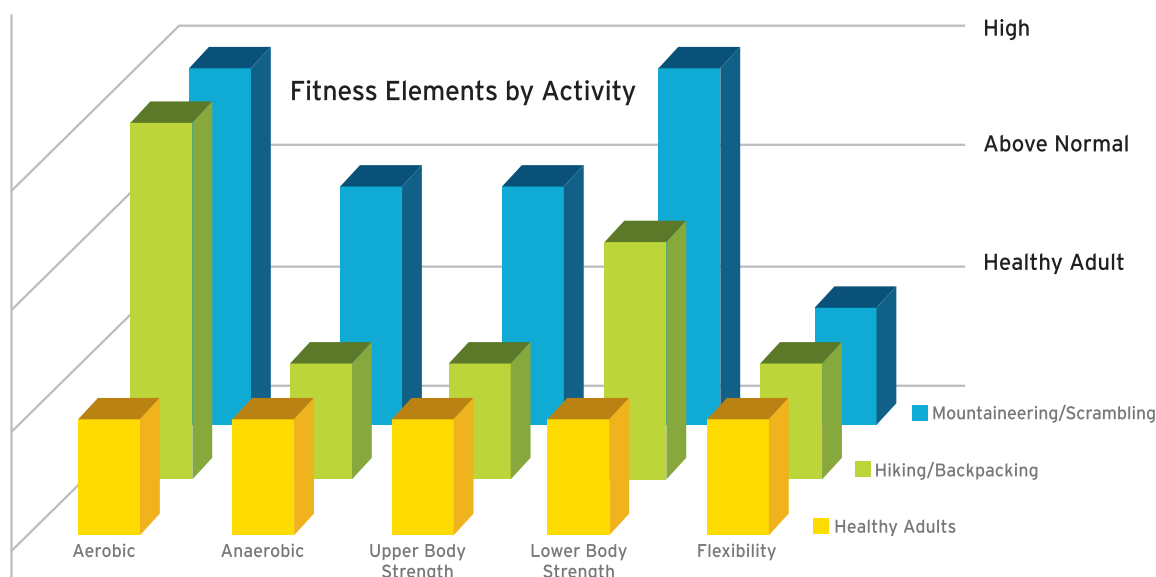
surroundings I now took for granted. I had grown complacent in many ways, seeking new territory and adventures at the expense of enjoying the moment.

While I started that hike assuming the role of teacher, Heather's unbridled curiosity had me learning quite a bit too. I did indeed love sharing my knowledge that I had accrued from years of being an outdoorsman, but seeing the sparkle in her eyes and contentment in her heart as she learned to navigate, discover, and appreciate a whole new world was even more satisfying.

Our love for each other grew as we continued to spend more time on the trail and in the backcountry - and no doubt our wild settings and outdoor experiences enhanced our love for each other and strengthened our bond. We were married at Curlew State Park in Northeastern Washington, at the campsite where we had first camped together. The Kettle River Range became "our mountains," and we go back frequently to celebrate anniversaries and our love. Our son of course is now part of those return trips and celebrations, and seeing his new experiences in the wild continues to enhance our relationship with each other and with the natural world.

I have sat on many a mountaintop and hiked many miles to incredible places. I am absolutely in love with the natural world and all things wild. The only thing that can be better than sitting on a wild deserted beach, atop a commanding hilltop, or by a sparkling alpine lake is to be there in the company of the people I care for most. All of those beautiful natural landscapes are too life enhancing to be loved alone. ▲▲

*Craig Romano is an award winning author who has written more than 25 books including Day Hiking North Cascades 2nd edition, Urban Trails Vancouver WA, and 100 Classic Hikes Washington (Mountaineers Books).*



Mini-goals will keep you motivated, train you physically and psychologically, and provide you with valuable feedback so that you can adjust your training program. Short-term goals also give you good benchmarks for when to change variables in your program.

## Develop building blocks

We like to recommend building a firm foundation, increasing sport-specific strength, and improving your stamina and mental toughness when you're training for an upcoming season.

In the first month, focus on perfecting your form while training with unilateral free-weight exercises (single limb movements such as dips, lunges, step-ups and downs, one arm rows, and presses) to make sure both sides of the body are working evenly. 2-3 sets of 8 exercises for 8-10 repetitions twice a week should suffice.

In the second month, build as much sport-specific strength as possible, doing 3-4 sets of 6-8 repetitions of 8-10 multi-joint or compound exercises. This might include pushups, deadlifts, squats, bench presses, or pull-ups. Try to increase the difficulty of each workout in some way, so that you make steady progress instead of repeating the same workout throughout the month.

In the third and final month of training, focus on building stamina by using lighter weights with higher repetitions and shorter rests. This might mean 2-3 sets of 10 exercises, with 12-15 repetitions each with very short rests between sets, moving fluidly from one exercise to the next.

## Include additional training

In addition to general cardiovascular, strength, and flexibility training, a well-balanced program will also include sport-specific training and skills development.

**Sport-Specific:** If you do scrambling or mountaineering, this means finding a way to travel uphill carrying a pack. You can go up and down stairs or short hills, or use an incline treadmill, stairclimber, or elliptical machine. Plan to increase your pack

weight, duration (time or mileage), or speed by no more than 10% per week. This will provide sport-specific conditioning that cannot be matched by any other training.

**Skills:** If your sport requires specific skills, plan to devote time to review, develop, and maintain them. For hiking, backpacking, and trekking, such areas might include traveling over challenging terrain, navigation with a map and compass, first aid, and general wilderness skills. For mountaineering and scrambling, this may also include ice axe arrest, rope handling skills, rest step, pressure breathing, and crevasse rescue practice.

## Prioritize building blocks

How do you know what is most important? If you run five days a week, you may benefit from reducing the number of times you run, adding a pack workout, and adding two strength training workouts. If you train in the gym four times a week, you may need to schedule time for aerobic training and pack-carrying outside. And if you hike three days a week but you are stiff all the time and feel weak, then you might want to replace one of your weekly hikes with some strength training and mobility training. Train smarter, not necessarily more.

With larger training cycles now in place, you're ready to create a weekly program. The highest priority for any alpine training plan is hiking-specific training to build aerobic stamina, lower body strength, and wilderness skills simultaneously. Walk uphill with a pack a few times each week. One day may include a multi-hour hike, perhaps on weekends when you have more time available to train. The other might be a shorter local hill walk, or training on an incline machine, with a pack. If you are planning a multi-day trip, be sure to train with a pack on successive days once or twice before your trip.

With some planning and special attention to where you know you need help, you can craft a program that will prepare you for your alpine adventures. If you have questions, feel free to email me at [court@bodyresults.com](mailto:court@bodyresults.com). I want you to succeed and enjoy your trips into the wilderness. ▲▲



## Sample Training Program

Listed in order of importance, a well-rounded training program for someone planning on doing a moderate backpacking trip in a month's time might look like this:

1. **Once a week:** longer hiking objective, building up to 4-8 hours on-trail with your target pack weight, ideally gaining 3000' of elevation. Pack weight should not increase more than 10% from week to week.
2. **Once a week:** interval workout on stairs or hills with a pack (using 10% more weight than your hiking objective), building up to 45-60 minutes of activity.
3. **Twice a week:** full-body strength workouts, spaced roughly three days apart.
4. **Up to twice a week:** unweighted (no pack) vertical training for 30-90 minutes depending on your current level of fitness and your goal fitness. Can be completed with hills, stairs, trail running, incline treadmill, elliptical, stepmill, stairclimber, or a Jacob's Ladder. This can be performed on strength days, leaving two rest days per week.
5. **Daily:** Stretching for flexibility and mobility, such as tai chi or yoga.

A sample week might look like this, with rest days following pack hikes:

**Monday:** strength and unweighted vertical training (no pack)

**Tuesday:** interval workout on stairs or hills with a pack

**Wednesday:** rest day

**Thursday:** strength training

**Friday:** unweighted vertical training (no pack)

**Saturday:** longer hiking objective with a pack

**Sunday:** rest day

**Daily:** stretching

membershipmatters

# DREAM BIG

with member benefits

## Rewire

15% off a high-altitude health and fitness training system

## Skratch Labs

25% off healthy training food and sports drinks

## Gaia GPS

100% off a 1-year subscription of Gaia Premium

## Diamondback & Raleigh Bicycles

10-40% off bicycles and accessories

For more information, visit [mountaineers.org/benefits](https://mountaineers.org/benefits)

Please keep in mind that some businesses may have adjusted hours/operations or may not be honoring discount benefits. Remember to follow CDC guidelines when shopping in person.

Photo by Ida Vincent.

[mountaineers.org](https://mountaineers.org)





## Virtual Education Center and Calendar

We're excited to invite you to check out our new Virtual Education Center and Calendar, your home base for accessing all of our great virtual learning tools! Find activities, events, and classes held online and browse our educational resources for skills and more.



Conservation & Advocacy



Fitness & Performance



Gear Tips



Leadership Skills



Preparedness & Planning



Technical Skills

### How to Get Involved

#### Step 1: Visit [mountaineers.org/courses/virtual-education-center](https://mountaineers.org/courses/virtual-education-center)

This is your first stop to find everything you need for outdoor education and exploration.

#### Step 2: Choose what you want to learn

There's so much to explore! With a wide range of topics - from leadership tips to how to coil a rope - there's something for everyone. We also have a special 'Just for Fun' section if you need a laugh.

#### Step 3: Decide what kind of learning experience you want to have

Would you prefer to read a blog or complete an online course? What about attending a live webinar with an open discussion? We offer multiple educational formats to choose from so that everyone can find what works for them.

### What You'll Find\*

14

Online Courses

100+

Educational Blogs

29

Virtual Events & Activities

\*As of March 1, 2021



## How to Sign Up for Activities

### Step 1

Visit our website

[www.mountaineers.org](http://www.mountaineers.org)  
Click on the big green 'Find Activities' button, or hover over the 'Activities' tab and choose 'Find Activities'.

### Step 2

Filter your activity search

Define your search using the filter options in the green column on the left. To view activities by location, choose 'Map' in the upper right.

### Step 3

Select an activity & register

Click on the activity of your interest to learn more. If you like what you see, select the orange 'Register' button. You'll be added to the trip roster and receive a confirmation email.

*Note: Activities **require registration** unless otherwise noted. You will also need a current waiver on file with The Mountaineers to participate.*

## How to Sign Up for Events

### Step 1

Visit our website

[www.mountaineers.org](http://www.mountaineers.org)  
Click on the 'Upcoming Events' button on the left of the main page, or click 'More' and choose the 'Events' tab.

### Step 2

Browse for local events

Scroll down to view our most popular events, or choose a branch or program center calendar for more events in your area. Browse through your options, and click on an event to learn more.

### Step 3

Select an event & register

Many events are free but require you to RSVP via the orange RSVP button. Events that require tickets will have a link for online ticket purchases.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What if I'm not a member?** Many of our activities - especially day hikes and urban adventures - are open to the general public. You simply need to sign up for a guest membership at [www.mountaineers.org/join](http://www.mountaineers.org/join). Guests can participate in two activities for free before joining.

**What are some easy ways to get started?** Sign up for an activity without prerequisites. These includes day hikes, backpacking trips, stewardship activities, photography outings, and occasional sailing opportunities! Also, consider taking a basic or introductory course like Basic Snowshoeing, Introduction to Rock Climbing, Navigation, and much, much more! Visit [www.mountaineers.org/courses](http://www.mountaineers.org/courses) to see what's currently available.

**How are events and activities different?** Activities are primarily daylong outings that require participants to use skills in an outdoor setting. Examples include hikes, naturalist walks, or snowshoeing - in short, you are outside doing something. Events are open to the community, and are primarily opportunities to see presentations and socialize. Examples include summer picnics, branch banquets, and our BeWild speaker series.

**What if I don't meet the prerequisites for an activity?** Some of our technical activities, like climbing and kayaking, have prerequisite skill requirements. If you want to learn the prerequisite skills, we encourage you to take one of our courses. If you already have the prerequisite skills, you might qualify for equivalency. Email [info@mountaineers.org](mailto:info@mountaineers.org) and we will help you apply for equivalency so you can participate at the appropriate skill level.

**Why do some activities say 'Leader Permission Required'?** All of our Mountaineers activities are led by volunteers. To assure everyone on a trip has a set of specific skills, some volunteers require you to contact them in advance to participate. Before signing up for a trip that requires leader permission, please contact the leader by clicking on their name in the course/activity listing and sending them an email. You can always email our member services team with questions at [info@mountaineers.org](mailto:info@mountaineers.org).

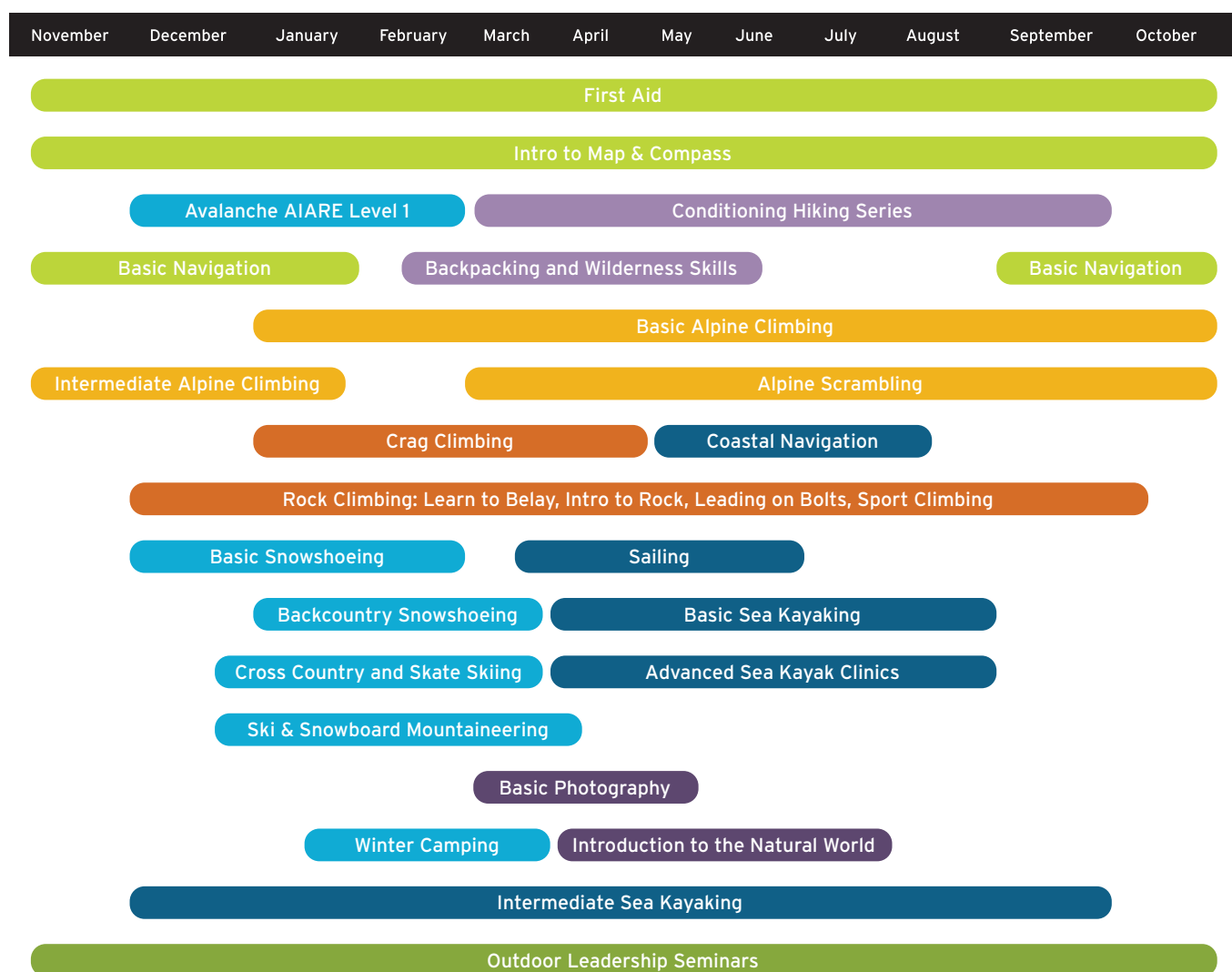
**What if the activity is full?** Sign up for the waitlist! Yes, it works. We have roughly a 10-20% drop-out rate in courses and activities, so spots often become available.



## The Mountaineers Course Overview

The Mountaineers is a volunteer-led community built around sharing knowledge and skills to safely recreate outdoors. We offer courses every season and some all year round. The same course may be offered by multiple branches, and you can take a course with any branch. Exploring our clinics and seminars is also a great way to refine or expand your existing skills. Practice skills taught in our courses, learn about new techniques or gear, and explore new possibilities within our organization, like becoming an activity leader. Our clinics and seminars are often open to both our membership and the general public.

To learn when our courses are coming, take a look at our course calendar:



You can access all of our offerings online, with up-to-date information on subject matter, materials, and rosters. If you already have the skills covered by one of our introductory courses and want to participate in that type of activity, contact member services at [info@mountaineers.org](mailto:info@mountaineers.org) to find out how to qualify for equivalency. To see our courses, visit [www.mountaineers.org](http://www.mountaineers.org). We hope to see you outside!



*Due to COVID-19 risks, activities, courses, and events may be canceled or postponed. Please visit [mountaineers.org/covid19](https://mountaineers.org/covid19) for more details.*

Open to Mountaineers members and the general public, our lodges provide visitors with unparalleled access to skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, and more. The Mountaineers is also home to the Kitsap Forest Theater, a historic outdoor theater showcasing two musical productions a year which are open to the public and a family favorite.

**LODGE WEBPAGES** Information about schedules, availability, meals, group rentals, and special events can all be found on the lodge webpages. You can also book your stay online. To access our lodge webpages, visit the direct links listed below or go to [mountaineers.org](https://mountaineers.org), click on 'More' in the top menu, and then click on 'Locations & Lodges' in the dropdown menu.

**VOLUNTEER** Our lodges and the Kitsap Forest Theater are run by dedicated volunteers, and they can use your help! Visit their webpages to learn how you can contribute to the teams that keep our outdoor centers running.



## Baker Lodge

[mountaineers.org/bakerlodge](https://mountaineers.org/bakerlodge)

Our rustic Mt. Baker Lodge is nestled in the spectacular North Cascades and is a beautiful getaway all year round. The lodge is located within walking distance of the Mt. Baker ski area and numerous summer and fall hiking trails. We are closed to general booking during COVID-19 measures, but may be available for single-purpose groups. Please direct inquiries to [mtbakerlodge@gmail.com](mailto:mtbakerlodge@gmail.com) or lodge chairs.



## Meany Lodge

[mountaineers.org/meanylodge](https://mountaineers.org/meanylodge)

Meany Lodge will be open for day use this winter! We operate a rope-tow on our ski hill for ski lessons, cross-country skiing, and snowshoe excursions. We are offering a simple hot lunch in open shelters, all participants must pre-register online. This year Meany Lodge will be most enjoyed by those happy to spend the day outside, with limited opportunities for rewarming. The lodge itself will be closed with bathroom access only.



## Stevens Lodge

[mountaineers.org/stevenslodge](https://mountaineers.org/stevenslodge)

Nestled near the Stevens Pass ski area, this rustic ski-in/ski-out lodge is open to PCT thru-hikers and mountain bikers in the fall, and skiers in the winter. Tired of the hustle and bustle of the big city? Come for a quiet respite to a cabin in the woods, with bunks for the whole family. Several trails are a short walk or drive from the lodge.



## Kitsap Forest Theater

[foresttheater.com](https://foresttheater.com)

Theater inspired by a magical place! Join us for a grand adventure as you stroll down the forested trail to our breathtaking theater and create a treasured family tradition. Due to COVID-19 concerns, both 2020 shows were postponed to 2021. Tickets are available online, save on our two-show package. Tickets already purchased are valid for this year's productions. Please see our website for show dates and more information.

**Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*:** This "tale as old as time" is perfect for the entire family. Be our guest for this heartwarming tale of true love and transformation, filled with unforgettable songs and thrilling pageantry.

***Bend in the Road - The Anne of Green Gables Musical*:** Join us for the Northwest premier of this high-energy, reimagined musical based on the beloved classic *Anne of Green Gables*. Retaining the heart of the original story, this warm, funny musical is perfect for all ages.

*Due to COVID-19 risks activities, courses, and events may be canceled or postponed. Please visit [mountaineers.org/covid19](https://mountaineers.org/covid19) for more details.*

The Mountaineers is home to seven branches, each offering a number of courses and seminars. Our branches also host a variety of events like picnics, film screenings, and guest speakers. Regardless of which branch you join, you can sign up for offerings with any branch. Learn more at [mountaineers.org/locations-lodges](https://mountaineers.org/locations-lodges).



## BELLINGHAM

**Chair:** Jack Duffy, [jackduffy12@gmail.com](mailto:jackduffy12@gmail.com)

**Website:** [mountaineers.org/bellingham](https://mountaineers.org/bellingham)

**COURSES & ACTIVITIES:** Climbing, first aid, hiking & backpacking, scrambling, and stewardship.

You'll find the Bellingham Branch tucked alongside the craggy expanse of the North Cascades. Our close-knit community offers climbing courses, hiking trips, and more. We're also home to one of the most popular Mountaineers getaway destinations, Mt. Baker Lodge.

**BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS** are on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Visit our branch calendar for details.

## EVERETT

**Chair:** Elaina Jorgensen, [elaina.jorgensen@gmail.com](mailto:elaina.jorgensen@gmail.com)

**Website:** [mountaineers.org/everett](https://mountaineers.org/everett)

**COURSES & ACTIVITIES:** Avalanche safety, backcountry skiing, climbing, cross-country skiing, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, scrambling, sea kayaking, snowshoeing, and stewardship.

Founded in 1911, the Everett Branch offers over a dozen programs. As a smaller branch, we value companionship and regularly host events including monthly open houses and annual gatherings like our Salmon Bake, Gear Grab & Potluck, Annual Awards Banquet, and more. Check our branch calendar for details. Our branch is also known for our unique Lookout and Trail Maintenance Committee, which restored and continues to maintain the historic Mt. Pilchuck lookout.

## KITSAP

**Chair:** Bill Bandrowski, [bill.bandrowski@gmail.com](mailto:bill.bandrowski@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Christine Grenier, [highroadhiker@wavecable.com](mailto:highroadhiker@wavecable.com)

**Website:** [mountaineers.org/kitsap](https://mountaineers.org/kitsap)

**COURSES & ACTIVITIES:** Climbing, exploring nature, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, outdoor leadership, scrambling, sea kayaking, snowshoeing, and youth & family.

The Kitsap Branch draws members from throughout western Puget Sound, from Gig Harbor to the Olympic Peninsula, including Pierce, Kitsap, Jefferson, and Clallam counties. Join us at our program center, conveniently located in Bremerton.

**BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS** are held in February, May, August, and November. Our annual branch celebration is in October; please join us! Visit our branch calendar for details.

## SEATTLE

**Chair:** Jared Pearce, [jared.pearce@gmail.com](mailto:jared.pearce@gmail.com)

**Website:** [mountaineers.org/seattle](https://mountaineers.org/seattle)

**COURSES & ACTIVITIES:** Avalanche safety, canyoning, climbing, cross-country skiing, exploring nature, first aid, folk dancing, hiking & backpacking, navigation, outdoor leadership, photography, retired rovers, sailing, scrambling, sea kayaking, snowshoeing, and stewardship.

The Seattle Branch began as the sole club location in 1906 when The Mountaineers was founded. Our Meet The Mountaineers open houses are held about once a month and are a great way for new and prospective members to learn about our many offerings. Our branch is also home to the Seattle Program Center, which features a book store, indoor and outdoor climbing walls, event spaces, and more.

**BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS** are held every other month to discuss new and ongoing initiatives. Our branch is growing rapidly, and we are actively seeking people to support our community - no prior experience required. Visit our branch calendar for details.

## FOOTHILLS (I-90/I-405 CORRIDORS)

**Chair:** Cheryl Talbert, [cascadehiker@earthlink.net](mailto:cascadehiker@earthlink.net)

**Website:** [mountaineers.org/foothills](https://mountaineers.org/foothills)

**COURSES & ACTIVITIES:** AIARE avalanche safety, backcountry and downhill skiing, conservation and stewardship, cross-country skiing, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, scrambling, snowshoeing, and trail running - and a brand new climbing program!

The Foothills Branch is the club's newest branch, founded in 2004 and encompassing the eastside communities along the I-90 and I-405 corridors. In addition to our educational and activity programs, we host stewardship events with the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, film screenings, guest speakers, and other community events. We are also excited to be a close partner with Meany Lodge!

Our branch is growing rapidly, and we are actively seeking people to support our community - no

prior experience required. We invite you to get involved in branch leadership and committees to get our communities outside. Contact the branch chair if you might be interested.

**BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS** are held every other month (except summer) to discuss new and ongoing initiatives. All branch members are welcome! Visit our branch calendar for details.

## TACOMA

**Chair:** Curtis Stock, [cstock34@msn.com](mailto:cstock34@msn.com)

**Website:** [mountaineers.org/tacoma](https://mountaineers.org/tacoma)

**COURSES & ACTIVITIES:** Avalanche safety, climbing, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, outdoor leadership, photography, sailing, scrambling, sea kayaking, snowshoeing, and youth & family.

The second largest of all seven branches, the Tacoma Branch maintains its own program center in the Old Town neighborhood of Tacoma as well as the Irish Cabin property located near Mt. Rainier. A great way get involved is our Meet the Tacoma Mountaineers event, consisting of a meet-and-greet and a 90-minute interactive presentation giving you opportunities to learn about our history, our website, and how you can get involved.

**BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS** are held every six weeks to discuss new and ongoing initiatives and general branch business. Visit our branch calendar for details.

## OLYMPIA

**Chair:** Bob Keranen, [keranen@hcc.net](mailto:keranen@hcc.net)

**Website:** [mountaineers.org/olympia](https://mountaineers.org/olympia)

**COURSES & ACTIVITIES:** Avalanche safety, backcountry skiing, climbing, cross-country skiing, exploring nature, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, outdoor leadership, scrambling, sea kayaking, stewardship, snowshoeing, wilderness skills, and youth & family. Our branch is known for its robust stewardship program.

**EVENTS:** Our speaker series and potluck is postponed until further notice due to COVID-19 concerns.

**BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS** are held on Zoom the second Wednesday of the month. Members are encouraged to attend. Contact Neal Kirby for info.



# Get Involved With Your Branch

**Visit Your Branch Page** Go to mountaineers.org and click on 'More' in the top menu; then click 'Locations & Lodges' and select your branch from the dropdown options. On your branch home page, you'll find branch news, upcoming events, contact info, and more. You can also access your branch page using the direct links listed in the branch summaries.

**Browse Branch Courses & Activities** To see what's available, visit mountaineers.org and click the big green 'Find Courses' button or 'Find Activities' button. You can then narrow your search by branch using the filter options in the green column on the left. Remember, you can sign up for courses and activities offered by any branch.

**Branch Events** With picnics, open houses, banquets, guest speakers, and more, our branches host an array of events for you to get involved. To check out what's next, visit mountaineers.org/events. From this page, you can select your branch calendar.

**Branch eNewsletters** Branch eNewsletters are a great way to stay up to date. To opt into these emails, visit mountaineers.org/profile. Login, then scroll down and make sure the box next to 'Branch Communications' is checked.\*

**Volunteer** Our branches draw on people with a range of skills and interests to power their programs. Instructors, event planners, admin help, and more are all needed. Volunteering is a great way to plug into our community. Reach out to your branch chair to get started.

*\*The Seattle Branch doesn't have a branch-wide eNewsletter, but several activity committees publish eNewsletters, including climbing, navigation, photography, and naturalists, and many activities have a Facebook presence. To learn more, contact the committee chairperson. To find a committee, input the committee name into our search bar at the top of our website.*

## Adventure with Purpose

### VIRTUAL GALA

Presenting the 2020 Volunteer Awards

April 29, 2021

mountaineers.org/donate/gala2021



# Owls in Washington

By Tiffany Ban, Communications Associate



A Boreal Owl. Photo by Doug Schurman.

**H**ave you ever been hiking alone and felt like you were being watched? It's quite possible you were under observation - by a stealthy owl, perched above you in a tree. Often heard but not seen in our forests, these amazing birds of prey can swoop down silently, blending in with the trees they inhabit.

While many people in our state may go their entire lives without seeing an owl, there are actually more than a dozen different species that call Washington home. The most common (and the most distinguishable due to its signature "horns") is the Great Horned Owl, but Barred Owls, Barn Owls, and Burrowing Owls are among the other species that can also be found in our state.

## The life of an owl

Owls can feed on small mammals, birds, and sometimes fish, but their diets primarily consist of small animals like rodents. When an owl has its dinner, it ingests the entire animal: bones and all. After mealtime is over the owl will regurgitate that which it couldn't digest, including bones and fur. These regurgitated masses are called "owl pellets," and can often be found below an owl's favorite roosting spot.

Many - but not all - owls are nocturnal. Night means cooler temperatures and more cover from predators, and much of their prey tends to be more active at night. Owls have special adaptations for hunting in the dark, including excellent night vision and a very sophisticated auditory system.

Owls' ears are located on the front of their faces, and are asymmetrical, which allows them to hunt primarily by sound. They can pinpoint the exact location of their prey based on the smallest rustle of a leaf. Their signature disc-shaped faces also act as kind of a "satellite" for receiving sound.

Most of these enchanting animals roost and nest high

up in buildings (such as barns) or in trees, often where a branch meets the trunk or in tree holes. They almost always repurpose nests built by other birds, as they themselves are not great nest-makers. A few species like the Burrowing Owl nest near the ground.

## Tips for spotting owls

As many owls are nocturnal, to have the best chance of viewing one you'll need to go on an "owl prow!" after nightfall. Don't forget to bring a headlamp or flashlight. Even during the light of day owls are pretty hard to spot, as they prefer to hang out in dense forests. Camouflaged, they silently stalk their prey while waiting for the right moment to attack.

Because owls sometimes roost or nest in deciduous trees, they might be easier to spot in winter, tucked between the bare branches. Keep an eye out for owl nests, as this usually means that the owl is somewhere nearby.

Another clue involves looking down at the ground rather than up in the trees. Because owls tend to have favorite roosting spots, if you can find areas where the ground is covered in owl excrement (which is white, and easy to spot) or owl pellets, you may just spot the bird above responsible for the mess.

If you're lucky enough to spot an owl, remember not to bother it! While they are fascinating animals, they have been known to occasionally "dive-bomb" people when they believe that their territory or young are threatened. We can emulate the fabled wise old owl by respecting wildlife and simply finding wisdom and joy in their presence, safely tucked away in the high trees. ▲▲

*If you're interested in learning more about owls or other types of birds, look for upcoming birding courses on our website, [mountaineers.org](http://mountaineers.org). Many local Audubon chapters also offer "Owl Prowls" for birders hoping to glimpse these nocturnal animals.*



# Hilleberg: Celebrating 50 years of making tents for everyone's adventures.



## ALLAK

Impressively strong, fully freestanding, remarkably light and comfortable all-season tent in our **RED LABEL** series. An excellent all-around, two vestibule tent for any trip. Available in 2 & 3 person versions.



David Freitag/BACH Backpacks

**FOR 50 YEARS**, Hilleberg has been making the highest quality tents and shelters available. Developed in Sweden, manufactured in Europe, and used worldwide, Hilleberg tents and shelters offer the ideal balance of high strength, low weight, ease of use, and comfort.

**HILLEBERG**  
THE TENT MAKER

ORDER A FREE CATALOG:  
**HILLEBERG.COM 1-866-848-8368**

Facebook.com/HillebergTheTentmaker [hilleberg.com](https://www.hilleberg.com) 47

The Mountaineers presents

# BEWILD

## Stories of Passion & Adventure

The Mountaineers is proud to present the BeWild speaker series, putting passion and adventure on the stage. Attend either of these talks - or both - and we guarantee you'll leave inspired to seek adventure, connect with nature, and work to protect wild places.

[mountaineers.org/bewild](http://mountaineers.org/bewild)

Graham Zimmerman mixed climbing. Photo by Chris Wright.

## Barney Scout Mann | Mar 11

In 2007 Barney Mann and his wife Sandy undertook the adventure of a lifetime, setting out on the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). Adopting the trail names "Scout" and "Frodo", their lives became intertwined with four of their fellow hikers: Blazer, Nadine, Tony, and Dalton. Unbeknownst to them, the year was fated to hold extreme weather conditions in which only a third of PCT hikers finished.

A once-in-a-generation drought, severe winter storms, shattered bones, illnesses, and helicopter rescues strengthened the hikers' bond as they made their way northward. Join us as Barney shares their compelling story, revealing the universality of our humanity and what it means to belong.

## Graham Zimmerman | May 13

From distant corners of Alaska to Pakistan, outdoor athlete, creative, and climate activist Graham Zimmerman has explored some of the world's most remote places. He'll show us how these journeys led him to climate advocacy, including being the captain of the POW Climb program and making a congressional testimony on the importance of climate change policy. Don't miss this exploration of wilderness and climate; learn how outdoor-minded individuals and organizations can help protect the places we love for generations to come.