

Mountaineer

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

in this issue:

50 Years of The Ten Essentials

Safe to Say I'm Scared

Reclaiming Safety After
Traumatic Events

Recreating Safely
During Fire Season



Fall 2024 | Volume 118 | Number 4

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



On the cover: Dennis Eller teaching an Intro to Climbing course in Leavenworth. Photo courtesy of Dennis Eller.

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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.

Mountaineer uses:





Photo by Rick Meade.

The Mountaineers has a longstanding commitment to promoting safety in the outdoors. Historically, that commitment has focused on physical safety. I was thrilled last year when we rolled out Emotional Safety in the Outdoors, a new online course designed to help leaders and instructors foster emotionally safe trip environments that ensure physically safe outcomes.

Emotional Safety in the Outdoors has been well-received by our community. Through July 2024,

more than 75 people have completed the course. Emotional Safety in the Outdoors has also been a catalyst for important conversations across The Mountaineers as leaders and instructors commit to fostering emotional safety in an effort to become a more equitable, inclusive organization.

A great example of the work being done within The Mountaineers to encourage emotional safety is a recent emotional safety workshop hosted by leaders from the Foothills and Seattle Branches. The workshop created a space for participants to discuss how the ideas introduced in the course should be applied to programs across The Mountaineers. Following the workshop, the organizers shared specific, tangible best practices for building a culture of emotional safety in trips and within committees. Grassroots efforts like this demonstrate our leaders' broad commitment and willingness to lean into the ways we can and should change to create a stronger culture of emotionally safe trips with physically safe outcomes.

In outdoor leadership and risk management, we often identify emotional safety in the context of "human factors." Human factors are usually described in relation to brain functionality and the biases that lead to poor decisions. For example, "summit fever" is a bias that can cause our brain to disregard observations that would otherwise support a decision to turn back on an objective. The "expert halo" is another human factor that describes when members of a group defer to someone they perceive as being the expert which, at times, involves overriding personal responses to risky situations.

If we don't create an environment where emotional safety is prioritized, people can feel discouraged to speak up, causing inequitable and unsafe outdoor experiences. Feeling emotionally unsafe is a human factor that is just as dangerous as summit fever or the expert halo. If an individual doesn't feel their perspective is valued, they may not voice if they have a concern, thus creating a more vulnerable trip and compromising decision making.

As an AIARE 1 instructor, I've started integrating the emotional aspects of risk management into the course curriculum, alongside technical topics like snow science. The reality is that understanding and addressing human factors and creating emotionally safe environments in the backcountry are just as important as technical considerations such as route planning, terrain selection, and weather observations. For folks in our community - especially our leaders - who haven't yet taken the Emotional Safety in the Outdoors course, I'd strongly recommend it. Safe travels!

Tom Vogl

Tom Vogl
The Mountaineers CEO



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

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A fall morning biking through Ravenna Park. Photo by Skye Michel.



Skye Michel
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Photo by Kyler Martin.

Learning to do something new as an adult is a humbling experience. Last fall, I decided it was finally time to teach myself how to ride a bike – a somewhat embarrassing thing to admit when you’re over the age of eight. Thanks to the generosity of a coworker, I was the new and proud owner of an 80s aluminum Trek road bike. The blackberry-lined bike lanes of the Burke Gilman Trail were at my handlebar-gripping fingertips.

My first official bike to work was thrilling. I wobbled (only a little) each time I took my hands off the handlebar to adjust the downtube shifters on the bike’s frame. My second bike to work was even more exciting when my front wheel fell off mid-ride. I strolled into work – frame in one hand, front wheel in the other – and from across the Program Center plaza, CEO Tom Vogl got up mid-meeting to reattach my tire. The following week, my wheel came off again and bike fanatic Bayley Stejer taught me how to ensure the wheel’s levers were secured properly. A few weeks later, I couldn’t get my gears to shift and a crowd of coworkers surrounded my desk to fiddle with my bike.

In my first month as a bike rider, the mishaps were plentiful, but I always knew a handful of eager supporters waited for me at the office, happy to ease the growing pains. Given the state of my bike and my lack of expertise, I may not have been physically safe per se, but I felt safe knowing I had a supportive community who helped minimize my chance of injury on the roads. All this to say, because of the safety I felt within my community, I didn’t feel embarrassed being the only person in the office who didn’t know how to ride a bike.

Creating physically and emotionally safe environments is at the core of The Mountaineers mission, and the stories in this edition exemplify the various ways we show up to and navigate safety in our outdoor activities. This edition is (blackberry-)jam-packed with stories that offer insight on how to minimize risk outdoors, from swimming safely in the Salish Sea to planning a trip during fire season to packing accessible first aid kits, and more. We also celebrate 50 years of The Ten Essentials keeping us prepared in the backcountry, as well as the long-awaited tenth edition of the book aspiring alpinists turn to when learning how to recreate safely: *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*.

Whether you’re trying something new, re-trying something familiar, or curious about enhancing your sense of safety outdoors, I hope these stories inspire you to continue learning about safety so you can enter your backcountry adventures with less risk and more confidence.

Skye Michel



In **Conservation Currents**, we celebrated the incredible work our branch stewardship leaders are doing to give back to Washington's lands and waters, including trailhead outreach on the Olympic Peninsula and invasive plant removal and salmon habitat restoration on the Mountains to Sound Greenway. There are many ways to give back to our public lands. To learn more about stewardship and find stewardship opportunities, visit mountaineers.org/conservation/stewardship.

"Wow, how amazing to see people giving back to our beautiful planet. It is so important that we all understand how we can protect our environment and I am so happy to see you helping people to do that."

- Aoife Donnelly, *Mountaineer* reader



In our fall 2023 edition, we shared a list of the best places in Washington to sit back, relax, and enjoy a privy view. One reader was particularly excited by this list, reminding us that even the crappiest memories harbor nostalgia.

"Yes! Now I have a good wish list to strive for in the next season or two. I can't wait to share this article with my

mountaineering father in his 80s who took us to several of these when we were kids backpacking in the Olympics and Cascades."

- C Goehle, 1-year member



Last edition, we featured a playful piece sharing cautionary advice on avoiding precarious watery scenarios from members' own damp experiences. One tale revealed what happens when you misinterpret an age-old adage, and a generous reader wrote in to remind others of its proper meaning.

"I really enjoyed 'Cautionary Tales of the Watery Kind' in the latest issue of *Mountaineer* magazine. Just one clarification regarding the 'Wool is not warm when wet' piece by Steven Ellis. The old adage 'wool is warmer when it's wet' doesn't mean that wet wool is warmer than dry wool. It means that wet wool is warmer than other wet materials. So, for example, if you have a choice between wearing wet cotton or synthetic versus wet wool, choose the wool because it will be warmer when wet than other wet materials. It will, however, also be heavier."

- Sandra Relyea, 2-year member

After the print edition of our summer 2024 magazine, we recognized the implications of using terms like "bagging" which are associated with a culture of conquest over nature. Shifting our language and recreation frameworks is an ongoing journey. To honor our commitment to mindful engagement with the outdoors and the connections of Native peoples to the lands we love, we revised the online version of "Lake Bagging 101: Jumping In to Slow Down" to include ways to incorporate land acknowledgment and mindful and respectful recreation into your alpine lake visits. You can read the updated version at mountaineers.org/blog/jumping-in-to-slow-down-a-new-take-on-lake-bagging.

LAST SEASON'S TOP TRIP REPORT PHOTOS



Climbing South Early Winter Spire, Tim Schafermeyer.



Day hiking Dirty Harry's Balcony, Barbara Folmer.



Incident management training at Steilacoom, Caleb Fitts.



Scrambling Goat Mountain, David Judish.



Climbing The Tooth, Dan Sarver.



Climbing Silver Star Mountain, Emma Agosta.



Stewarding West Fork Humptulips River, Ginger Sarver.



Bikepacking Teanaway Ridge, Jessica Todd.



Day hiking North Kitsap Heritage Park, Jonathan Smith.



Scrambling Mt. Adams, Kurt Mallory.



Glacier climbing Little Tahoma, Laurel Geisbush.



Packrafting Grande Ronde River, Logan DeGrand.

Name Sushil Kumar, he/him

Hometown Ghaziabad, India

Member Since June 2022

Occupation Software Engineer

Favorite Activities Hiking, mountaineering, walking, nature photography



Sushil at the top of Mailbox Peak. Photo courtesy of Sushil Kumar.

What first brought you to The Mountaineers?

The appetite to learn and seek safety. I feel that to help myself and others outdoors, I should be equipped with skills, and that is what I seek from The Mountaineers: knowledge and experience.

Why do you like getting outside with us?

It always helps to be a part of the community and learn from the experiences of people with similar interests. I started hiking to improve my health after I got diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in May 2021. Hiking helped me a lot. I got rid of all medications by September 2021, and have been happily hiking and mountaineering.

Hiking not only improved my health but also gave me mental solace. I love the wildflowers, colorful lakes, mountain summits, using tools, and seeing smiles. I always feel this is the best thing that happened to me.

What's your favorite Mountaineers memory?

My favorite memory is when I succeeded in my first hike at Rattlesnake Ledge after an unsuccessful attempt at Poo Poo Point, which promoted a sense of belief in myself that I can do difficult things.

Beyond this, there are countless memories I made during my journey so far. The list can go on: watching alpenglow on the horizon, starting the new year from the top of Mailbox Peak, watching the shadow of Mount Shasta dividing the sky, summitting Mount Rainier, seeing mountain goats for the first time on my ascent to Aasgard Pass, and being surrounded by golden, beautiful larches on my first trip to the Enchantments.

Who/What inspires you?

I have always read that inspiration comes from within. I started hiking because of the diabetes diagnosis and when I saw that hiking was helping me to improve on this health anomaly, I could never take a back seat.

Everyone I see on the trail inspires me. Seeing the smiles all around makes me feel awesome.

Another thing that inspires me a lot is when I hear from someone that they were inspired by my actions or suggestions and went ahead to achieve a goal themselves.

What does adventure mean to you?

To me, adventure means being outside, enjoying the mountains, and coming back safely. ▲▲

Lightning round

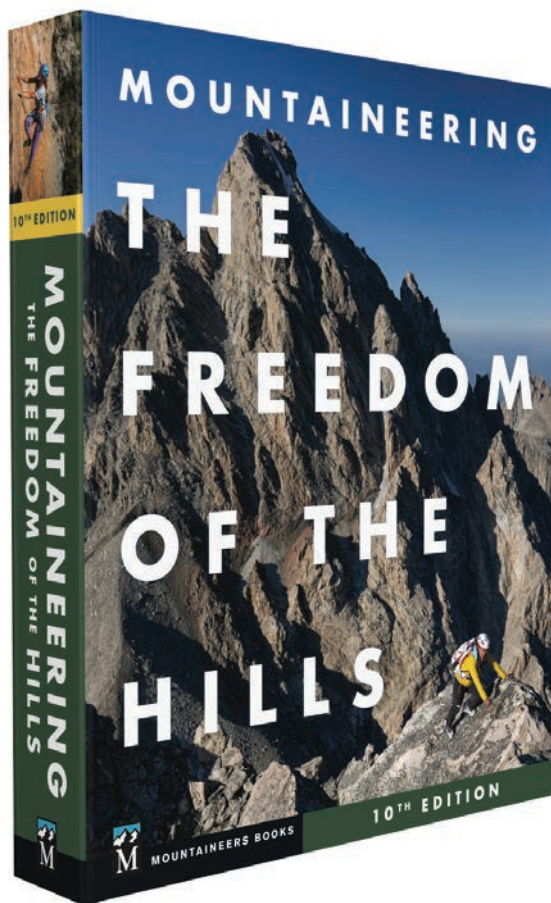
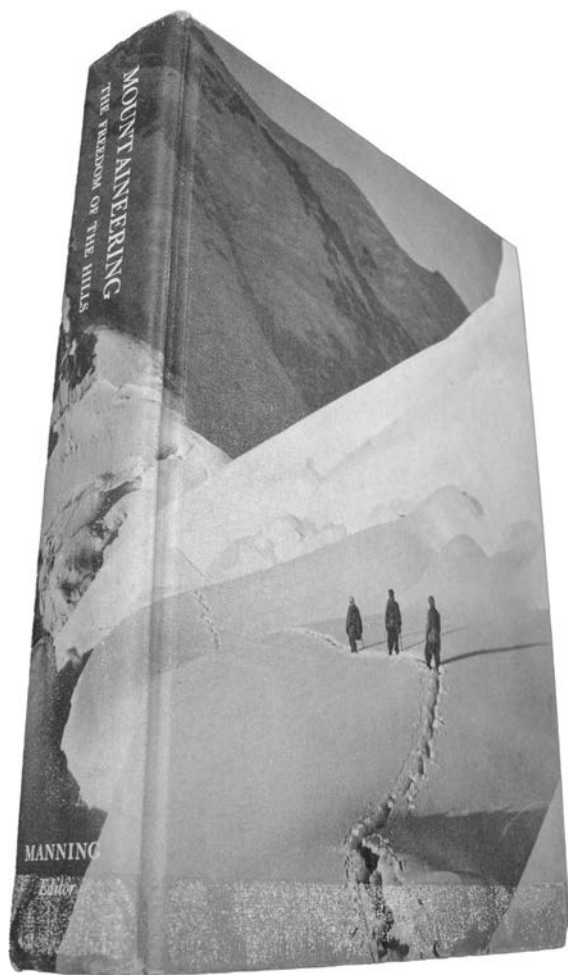
Sunset or sunrise? Sunset

What's your 11th Essential? The smiles of hikers I see along the trail

What's your happy place? Mailbox Peak

Post-adventure meal of choice? Any warm Indian vegetarian food

If you could be a rockstar at any outdoor activity overnight, what would it be? Stargazing



Origins of *Freedom*

By Eric Linxweiler

Excerpted from the preface to Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills, 10th Edition (Mountaineers Books, September 2024).

A synopsis of this how-to guide's evolution encompasses a capsule history of The Mountaineers itself. From its beginnings, *Freedom of the Hills* has been the product of the concerted effort of a team of volunteer leaders. For each edition, contributors have sprung forth from across the organization's membership, representing the best it has to offer, along with climbers and educators from the broader climbing and mountaineering community. It has always been an honor to work on this project.

When The Mountaineers was founded in 1906, one of its major purposes was to explore and study the mountains, forests, and waterways of the Pacific Northwest. The direction and emphasis of *Freedom of the Hills* originated from the nature of climbing in this region, with its wild and complex mountains and abundance of snow and glaciers. Access was inherently difficult – there were few roads, crossing often rugged terrain, and initial explorations of them were essentially expeditions,

often requiring the assistance of Indigenous guides. As interest in mountaineering grew in the region, so did a tradition of, and commitment to, education. Increasingly, experienced climbers took novices under their wings to pass on their knowledge and skills. The Mountaineers formalized that exchange, starting in 1935, by developing a series of climbing courses.

For the first several decades, The Mountaineers climbing courses used a number of European textbooks, particularly Geoffrey Winthrop Young's classic *Mountain Craft*. These books, however, did not cover the various subjects unique and important to mountaineering in the Pacific Northwest. To fill the gaps, course lecturers prepared and distributed outlines to students. First compiled as the *Notebook*, these outlines were subsequently published as the *Mountaineers Handbook*. By 1955, the tools and techniques had changed so drastically, and the climbing courses had become so much more complex, that a new, comprehensive textbook was needed.

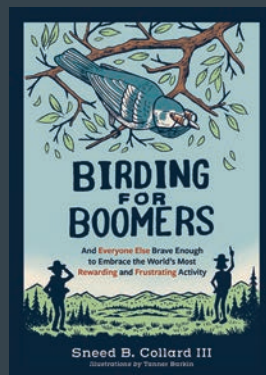
Over the next five years, an eight-person editorial committee coordinated the efforts of more than seventy-five contributors in the publication of the first edition of



Illustration by John McMullen.

Freedom of the Hills in 1960. Chief editor and committee chair Harvey Manning was the primary individual responsible for establishing the scope of the book. It was his idea to add the distinctive subtitle. Manning was joined on the committee by John R. Hazle, Carl Henrikson, Nancy Bickford Miller, Thomas Miller, Franz Mohling, Rowland Tabor, and Lesley Stark Tabor. A substantial portion of the then relatively small Puget Sound climbing community – including such mountaineering icons as Dee Molenaar, Jim Whittaker, Lou Whittaker, and Wolf Bauer – researched and wrote the chapters, while at least one hundred additional volunteers acted as reviewers, planners, illustrators, typists, proofreaders, financiers, promoters, retailers, warehouse workers, and shipping clerks. Most Mountaineers climbers at the time were involved somehow with this guide. Members who donated their time and effort were rewarded by how well that first edition was received, and members who donated money were repaid by the book's success, which has contributed for more than six decades to the success and stature of The Mountaineers. *Freedom of the Hills* was the first title released by award-winning nonprofit publisher Mountaineers Books. ▲

Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills, 10th Edition is available for purchase at our Seattle Program Center Bookstore, online at mountaineersbooks.org, and everywhere books are sold. Join us for a celebration at REI Seattle on Sep 23, 2024, and a deep dive at the Seattle Program Center on Sep 26, 2024.



Birding for Boomers

By Sneed B. Collard III

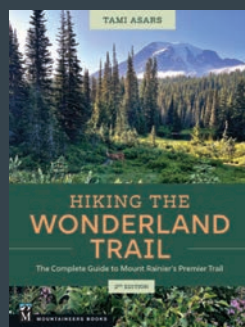
A laugh-out-loud funny yet informative introduction to this popular pastime, *Birding for Boomers* takes novice birders of all ages by the hand and leads them on a journey to discover the joys of birdwatching. Author Sneed B. Collard III covers all the questions a beginner may have, including bird behavior and identification, selecting the right equipment, finding places to birdwatch, and more. Collard's guide is for anyone interested in getting started with birdwatching. Inspired by his own experiences, he spotlights personal insights and tips for overcoming aging-related challenges such as mobility issues, poor hearing, or failing eyesight. Appealing and light-hearted, *Birding for Boomers* will engage a wide range of readers to watch, understand, and conserve our feathered friends.



River Songs

By Steve Duda

From rotten teeth to good dogs and everything in between, *River Songs* is a collection of essays that capture the awe, fear, frustration, and joy found in a life of fly fishing. Steve Duda's first full-length book, *River Songs* is rich with bracing, authentic, and generous stories that revel in language and spirit. Readers will ride along with Duda in battered pickup trucks, fish "between jobs," and look longingly at unfished famous rivers while touring with a country-punk band. *River Songs* encourages us to experience beauty, heartbreak, and the wonder of nature within the expanse of Northwest landscapes while learning what it is about "ridiculous hobbies" like fly fishing that connect us to this planet, make us human, and give us hope.



Hiking the Wonderland Trail, 2nd Edition

By Tami Asars

Hiking the Wonderland Trail is the authoritative guide to planning and enjoying the world-class trail that circumnavigates Mount Rainier. Hikers who tackle this 93-mile route endure a strenuous 22,000 feet of elevation gain and loss. Fully revised and refreshed, this new second edition offers the best, most up-to-date, and thorough information available for thru-hikers, section hikers, or those exploring the adjacent Northern or Eastside Loop Trails. Author Tami Asars also highlights the best locations to spend an extra night or two on the trail, as well as a few nearby, short day hikes to enjoy. The only comprehensive guide to the Wonderland Trail, this book is a must-have for anyone planning a trip.

It Takes a Village

The Seattle Youth Outreach Committee

By Alvaro Juarez, Seattle Clubs Manager, and Christine Kler, Camps & Partner Programs Manager



MAC students hiking at Poo Poo Point. Photo by Mountaineers staff.

One of The Mountaineers core values is to empower our community to safely enjoy the transformative power of the outdoors. Creating the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts starts with our youth, and we've recently been reimagining how we engage with our youngest members at our Seattle Branch.

At the center of this transformation is the Seattle Youth Outreach Committee (SYOC), a dynamic group of parents, volunteers, and staff who are redefining youth outdoor education programming. This transformation is not just about adjusting trip planning or outdoor curriculum, but building a community of outdoor enthusiasts and environmental stewards who take ownership of their adventures.

What is the Seattle Youth Outreach Committee?

The Seattle Youth Outreach Committee initially began as a website function that enabled youth leaders to build activities and trips. The SYOC was not member-driven like most other committees and lacked a centralized sense of community engagement.

In the spring of 2023, Seattle Youth Clubs manager, Alvaro Juarez, mobilized parents, volunteers, and staff to harness the potential of the committee, shifting SYOC from a website support function to an in-person, collaborative community. The first committee meeting attempted to identify how to create an active SYOC and brainstorm program successes and

areas of opportunity to maintain and improve high-quality programming for students.

This first Seattle Youth Outreach Committee meeting was full of passionate staff, parents, and volunteers. Much like a parent-teacher conference, this meeting was an opportunity to facilitate communication between staff and parents about their students' progress, skills, and overall well-being adventuring with The Mountaineers. In other words, how are students doing in their programs? And are there unidentified areas of opportunity?

Seattle Youth Outreach Committee meetings now happen bi-annually and have proven to provide visibility into the inner workings of youth programs, foster a collaborative space to share feedback, and explore additional ways to get involved. During these meetings, parents and volunteers are encouraged to share highlights, ideas, and goals for future programming. Staff also share organizational and programming updates, and together, the group identifies pinch points and collaborates on areas of improvement.

Amplifying impact through breadth of member expertise

The intention of the Seattle Youth Outreach Committee today is to pull from the vast and varied experiences of our members and provide them with a platform to help shape the future of youth programming. You don't have to be a trip leader to have an impact on the way our programs engage youth in



Top: SYOC members, Ken and David, chatting about trad gear placement during a Youth Club parents climbing trip. Photo by Jeff Kisch. Right: MAC students backpacking in Squamish. Photo by Mountaineers staff.



the outdoors. Many parents who don't participate in trip planning or instruction enjoy SYOC meetings because they find joy in supporting efforts to improve the excellence of our programs. This type of support - problem solving how to enhance youth experiences in the outdoors - is crucial to the success of Mountaineers Youth Programs.

Drawing upon a community of volunteers with myriad experiences and expertise allows us to holistically meet the diverse needs of our youngest members. This collaboration encourages innovation and effective problem solving, and strengthens our network's capacity to empower young individuals to thrive. The Seattle Youth Outreach Committee has already made great strides in creating a more robust curriculum by incorporating the input of members, adults, and youth alike. In the most recent SYOC meeting, the Clubs team shared ideas to enhance the current structure of Clubs and proposed new ways to improve the Youth Club experience for everyone. We also discussed opportunities for partnership with Club parents and the Seattle Sea Kayaking Committee that would enable us to develop a youth-specific sea kayaking curriculum.

Thanks to the Seattle Youth Outreach Committee, our Mountaineers Adventure Club (MAC) has been able to update their youth leadership and voting process to encourage more youth engagement, parents have been able to voice their interest in adult skill nights, and leaders with medical experience have been able to start teaching Wilderness First Aid to other adult volunteers (which our youth have expressed interest in learning as well!). One major development of the SYOC has been implementing a process to award MAC



Junior MAC students hiking at Navaho Peak. Photo by Mountaineers staff.

students with the Basic Alpine Climbing course badge upon graduation. This update acknowledges students' skills learned over years of Clubs involvement and enables youth to more easily join adult programming.

How to get involved

Staff, parents, volunteers, and youth themselves are all an integral part of our programming. Thanks to generous help from volunteers and members, our programs continue to expand.

For example, youth who volunteer with our summer day camp - either belaying at program centers or assisting instructors as Counselors in Training - enable us to grow the number of campers we serve. In addition, we recently overhauled our climbing curriculum to make it easier for volunteers to support our programs, an effort that was spearheaded by a volunteer. This is the goal of the Seattle Youth Outreach Committee: to provide a space where families and members can learn and lean into opportunities to make youth programs a better experience for everyone.

There are many ways to get involved in youth programming. Join us at our Seattle Youth Outreach Committee meetings or reach out to a member of our Youth Team to learn more about volunteer opportunities. We are often looking for volunteers to belay or teach outdoor skills. If you would like to attend our next Seattle Youth Outreach Committee meeting on October 30, 2024, please register at mountaineers.org/SYOC1030. ▲▲

Caught Between Two Fires

A Native Perspective on Outdoor Leadership and Education

By Dr. Dennis Eller, 5-year member and Super Volunteer

I can introduce myself in many ways: a member and volunteer of The Mountaineers, a guide, a rescue specialist, and a Doctor of Education. Beyond these roles, and more importantly, I am a Native American who is a proud member of the Cherokee Nation. As my grandfather would say, "I find myself caught between two fires," advocating for the rights of Native Americans and the rights of outdoor enthusiasts. Sometimes, these two do not align. There is a lack of representation of Native Americans and other peoples of color in the outdoors. However, one area in which they do align - and can have the most significant impact - is outdoor leadership and education.

I am incredibly lucky to live in the Pacific Northwest. Being able to climb mountains like Rainier, Adams, St. Helens, Baker, and others is a privilege. I'm also fortunate to participate in organizations that make the outdoors safer and more accessible. As a member of the Tacoma Mountain Rescue Unit, I help people who get into trouble in our exceptional outdoor environments and teach classes on outdoor skills to keep recreationists safe. And as a volunteer for the Liz Rocks Foundation, I support efforts to bring the outdoors to audiences and ethnicities who might otherwise not have the opportunity to enjoy our natural world.

Through these experiences, I've come to understand the importance of outdoor leadership and education, and how they can be used to transform not only our outdoor trips but also our lives. The experiences shared in the outdoors, the bonds forged through adversity, and the interconnectedness of the natural world all contribute to developing compassionate and empathetic leaders who pave the way for a more sustainable and just future.

The transformative power of outdoor leadership and education

Outdoor leadership and education have a power that extends far beyond the boundaries of individuals, rippling through communities to foster a sense of belonging, connection, and collective responsibility. The outdoor opportunities provided through outdoor education bring people together from diverse backgrounds and experiences, breaking down barriers and creating spaces for mutual learning and understanding. Through shared outdoor experiences, ideas and cultural insights are exchanged between peoples, and individuals who might not have otherwise interacted elsewhere discover a sense of community as they come together on a course or trip.

The role of Native Americans as outdoor education leaders holds significant importance in fostering a deeper connection between individuals and the natural world. Tribes hold vast cultural knowledge about the lands and where they live, and this cultural connection translates to a wealth of knowledge about flora, fauna, weather patterns, and survival techniques. Beyond just textbook information, intergenerational expertise about the land embraces both scientific and cultural dimensions, encompassing a holistic understanding of specific plants, animals, and landscapes' spiritual, historical, and cultural significance. As Mountaineers, we know sharing stories, engaging in practical activities, and immersing learners in the environment creates memorable and impactful learning experiences. Native American tribal cultures' teaching methods are often experiential, story-based, and hands-on which align with effective outdoor education practices.

The nature connection

An important aspect of outdoor leadership and education is the ability to foster personal growth and connection with nature. Immersion in the natural world provides a space for self-reflection, introspection, and self-discovery, challenging individuals to face adversity and develop psychological and physical resilience. Rugged landscapes, unpredictable weather, and physical demands of outdoor activities are the fertile ground for essential life skills to grow.

As individuals engage with awe-inspiring vistas, the tranquility of a forest, or the power of a rushing river during their outdoor education experiences, a sense of wonder is evoked that instills a desire to protect and preserve the natural world. These immersive experiences foster an evolving understanding of and appreciation for the intricate web of life and the importance of environmental conservation and advocacy.

Connection with nature fostered through outdoor leadership and education also deepens our awareness of place and history. In the outdoor community, we find ourselves at a crossroads regarding Native languages and the place names of the spaces where we recreate. We have grown up calling mountains by their colonized names created in conquest during the 18th and 19th centuries. By acknowledging and using the Native



Top left: Dennis belay instructing a new climber. Top Right: Dennis taking a break during a hike near Piclochery, Scotland.

American names, we are helping to correct those actions. Many Native American languages are endangered, and outdoor education provides a context where these languages can be preserved and revitalized. Incorporating Indigenous languages in outdoor education preserves linguistic heritage and strengthens the connection between language, culture, and the environment.

Empowering future leaders

Outdoor leadership and education cultivate competent, compassionate, and mindful leaders who understand the value of serving others and the planet. Native Americans play a pivotal role in this work. By sharing our perspectives, stories, and practices, we cultivate respect and appreciation for diverse cultures, facilitate cross-cultural dialogue and understanding, and promote unity and cooperation among communities. Additionally, the presence of Native American leaders in outdoor education serves as an inspiration for Indigenous youth to pursue careers in environmental science, education, conservation, and related fields, and take pride in their cultural heritage while engaging with contemporary issues.

Shaping the lives we lead

Native American outdoor education leaders bridge traditional wisdom and modern environmental education. Their cultural heritage, connection to the land, teaching methods, and commitment to stewardship bring a unique and valuable perspective to outdoor education, enriching the learning experience and fostering greater respect for nature and diverse cultures.

As we reflect on the transformative power of outdoor leadership and education, we are reminded of their immense potential for shaping the future. I encourage you all to embrace outdoor leadership and education, and to foster personal growth, environmental stewardship, and the development of resilient and compassionate leaders. Let us venture into the wilderness, explore the unknown, and allow the transformative power of outdoor experiences to shape our lives and the lives of those we lead, creating a ripple effect that positively impacts individuals, communities, and the world. ▲▲

To learn more about The Mountaineers commitment to honoring and upholding tribal rights and cultural lifeways, visit mountaineers.org/honoring-native-lands-and-peoples.



Dennis teaching crevasse rescue at Mt. Rainier National Park.



What is a Culture of Philanthropy? The Five T's of Giving Back

By Bri Vanderlinden, Director of Community Engagement

Admiring the flora at Cowlitz Divide. Photo by Dave Morgan.

While The Mountaineers has proudly championed outdoor education, mindful recreation, conservation, and environmental advocacy for nearly 120 years, I often have to remind myself that we only became a 501(c)(3) 13 years ago. This was a pivotal moment because it provided a new opportunity to build partnerships with financial donors and safeguard the future of our organization. While our tax status may have changed, community remains at the heart of everything we do.

Our ability to accept donations directly contributed to our growth, guiding us from an operating budget of \$5.8 million in fiscal year 2011 to \$11.8 million of mission impact today. In that time, we've increased membership from under 10,000 to over 16,000 and grown our volunteers from 1,000 to over 3,200. Giving back is intrinsic to our community. The readiness of Mountaineers to pay it forward plays a key role in our success as a fundraising organization. Resources received through philanthropy allow us to introduce people to the outdoors, improve accessibility through scholarships, grow our youth programs, bolster volunteer leadership development, invest in infrastructure to improve programming, increase conservation and advocacy education, allow sustainable choices for books production, and so much more.

I'm often asked what it takes to build a successful giving program. I could spend days describing the "how-to" and "where-to" of giving adventures, but ultimately, the answer lies in cultivating a strong culture of philanthropy.

What is a culture of philanthropy?

An organization with a strong philanthropy culture is one where everyone understands the value of the mission and the importance of philanthropic giving, and knows how to get involved. Our members, volunteers, staff, Board leadership, and community partners all have a role to play in amplifying our impact. And while fundraising is one major puzzle piece of a thriving organization, there are many impactful ways we can each support our organization's resilience and growth.

A fun way to think about the various opportunities to help us achieve our mission is the five T's of giving back: time, talent, treasure, testimony, and ties. We've been able to grow because we benefit from a unique culture of philanthropy that speaks to peoples' interests and passions. Having various ways to plug in helps members feel more connected to our mission because they can choose to engage in a way that's personally meaningful.

Time

Giving back through the gift of *time* is where it all started for The Mountaineers, and today "volunteerism" is codified as one of our five core values. Volunteers are the cornerstone of our community and their ability to mobilize behind a passion or a cause is one of our greatest strengths. This past year, our community recorded a whopping 169,012 volunteer hours!

There are many ways to contribute to The Mountaineers as a volunteer, such as getting involved in course planning



Navigation instruction at Wildcatter Coast. Photo by David Bradley.

and committees. To signal what kind of volunteering you're interested in, update your volunteer profile on our website so we can attempt to match your talents with opportunities for engagement.

Talent

Many individuals take volunteering to the next level, like serving as a contributing author to *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*, helping us apply for permits for a lodge renovation, sitting on a panel to support climate change initiatives, or leading a workshop to teach crevasse rescue. Offering your unique skills and abilities to help our organization achieve a goal is considered a donation of *talent*.

Our community relies heavily on the expertise of volunteers, and there are numerous opportunities for you to engage your talents to support The Mountaineers mission. You can take a course and return as an instructor, meet new people by volunteering at community events, flex your cooking and hospitality skills at one of our lodges, or serve on a leadership committee. Have an idea for how you want to get involved? Reach out to info@mountaineers.org to get connected.

Treasure

Financial contributions, often referred to as *treasure*, are usually the first thing that come to mind when thinking about giving. Earned revenue funds most of our budget, and donations take our mission impact to the next level, driving progress in conservation, advocacy, and outdoor access, as well as supporting innovative volunteer leadership development, youth programs, publishing, and outdoor facility improvements. Your generosity as a donor provides resources to achieve a greater impact in these critical areas.

Donations are gifts made freely without anything received in exchange. Examples include: financial gifts made through our seasonal appeals, donor advised funds, bequests, appreciated securities, in-kind goods and services, and employer matching of donations and volunteer hours. If you have questions about making a gift, contact development@mountaineers.org.

Testimony

Testimony - sharing stories or experiences - is a powerful way of giving back. When you share your personal experiences with our greater community, you inspire and engage our community in ways that data alone cannot. Your testimony can highlight the impact of our programs, attract new members, drive awareness and support for conservation,



Stewarding the Seattle Program Center. Photo by McKenzie Campbell Davies.

advocacy, and outdoor access, and bolster the development and improvement of our programs and facilities. Because of your voice, we are able to connect on a deeper level and achieve a greater impact.

If you'd like to lend your voice to champion the work of The Mountaineers, consider participating as a Mountaineer of the Week on our blog or writing a story for the magazine. If you're interested in sharing your story with our community, reach out to magazine@mountaineers.org.

Ties

There is a common saying "if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." This guiding principle keeps us rooted in the value of partnerships. When you help connect us to other individuals or organizations in the community, this type of giving is referred to as building *ties*. One of our strongest examples of partnership work includes our leadership with Outdoor Alliance Washington, a coalition that empowers and engages over 75,000 recreationists to protect Washington's outdoor spaces and tackle the climate crisis.

Great partnerships come in various forms, each bringing unique value to a nonprofit like The Mountaineers. Collaborations with companies can provide essential equipment for programs and events while supporting joint conservation and sustainability initiatives. Partnering with schools for youth programs can extend outdoor education opportunities to students, providing experiential learning that aligns with educational goals. If you have an idea for a new and innovative partnership, I hope you'll connect with me at briv@mountaineers.org.

Choose your own giving adventure

Some say that the most effective community supporters use all five T's throughout their giving journey. We each have unique gifts to offer, and the beauty is you can choose how you give back based on the giving adventure you prefer. The most meaningful type of gift is the one that is most meaningful to you. We are so grateful for the thousands of Mountaineers who pay it forward every year. The culture of philanthropy you cultivate enables more people to find joy in giving back and benefit from a thriving community united by a shared love of the outdoors. ▲



The Mountaineers and Outdoor Alliance

How Partnerships Power Advocacy for Conservation, Recreation, and Climate Action

By Conor Marshall, Advocacy & Engagement Manager

Outdoor Alliance lobbying in D.C., 2023. Photo courtesy of Outdoor Alliance.

When I look back on my first three years working to grow a culture of conservation throughout The Mountaineers, one phrase remains top of mind: "conservation powered by outdoor recreation." I can't take credit for this catchy moniker; it's a mantra of our partners at Outdoor Alliance (OA) - a national coalition of human-powered outdoor recreation organizations working to conserve America's public lands and waters. As a member of OA, The Mountaineers harnesses our shared passion for the outdoors to help conserve the places we love, leading to a compelling and impactful flavor of advocacy.

The Mountaineers advocacy to protect public lands and the outdoor experience transcends the places where we recreate and the courses and activities we lead in the Pacific Northwest. This important work doesn't happen alone; partnerships lie at the heart of our story. By uniting the voices of mountaineers, climbers, paddlers, mountain bikers, and backcountry skiers, OA has been able to organize and strengthen collective efforts to protect special places and promote conservation policies.

Conservation powered by outdoor recreation

Ten years ago, Outdoor Alliance began as an informal convening of recreation groups who realized that shared policy goals can lead to fruitful collaboration. Through the years, the coalition has witnessed how impact is amplified when lawmakers and land managers hear from a dynamic and diverse group of human-powered outdoor recreation voices.

Today, OA's national coalition includes the Access Fund, the American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), Winter Wildlands Alliance, The Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, the Colorado Mountain Club, and the Surfrider Foundation.

Did you visit Mount Rainier National Park this summer and enjoy the reopened and improved Stevens Canyon Road? These pivotal enhancements to the user experience at Washington's most popular national park were made possible by the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), one of Outdoor Alliance's major policy wins. The GAOA is a five-year infusion of resources for land managers to tackle critical deferred maintenance projects on federal public lands. The Act exemplifies what's possible when the recreation community advocates together with compelling narratives about the critical need for greater investment in our public lands.

Why The Mountaineers is a member of OA

About eight years ago, The Mountaineers joined Outdoor Alliance. In the last several years, we have deepened our involvement because our community can be a unique catalyst for conservation and advocacy work in the Pacific Northwest and on a national scale. According to Outdoor Alliance CEO Adam Cramer, "The Mountaineers has an outsized ability to effect change to protect public lands compared to similar organizations in other areas of the country."

As you might suspect, the Evergreen State is one of the most important states in the country for outdoor advocacy first and foremost because of Washington's amazing public lands and waters. I'm a little biased, but I'd put Washington's national forests, state parks, and county-managed natural areas up there with any across the country. These places foster a strong connection to nature for the more than 90% of Washingtonians who recreate and create a culture of speaking up to protect our lands and waters.

In addition, our state's congressional delegation is a powerful force for conservation and recreation in part because of the recreationists who take action for the lands and waters we love. Some of the congressional districts with the highest number of outdoor advocates are located here in Washington. The state's 7th congressional district - which includes most of Seattle and several nearby municipalities - has more than 8,000 Outdoor Alliance advocates, the largest OA constituency nationally.

Within Washington's robust outdoor community, The Mountaineers brings recreationists together across a diverse array of activities to teach, learn, and adventure with purpose. Our shared connection to the Northwest's public lands, our diversity of perspective, and the stories we can tell about the importance of investing in conservation and recreation is a true asset to outdoor advocacy.

Outdoor Alliance Washington three years strong

In 2021, we announced that The Mountaineers will lead Outdoor Alliance Washington - a state-based coalition of groups representing more than 75,000 members of Washington's human-powered outdoor recreation community - to dig deeper on shared advocacy for recreation and conservation priorities. OA Washington includes regional chapters of national OA member organizations, as well as Washington Trails Association and Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance.

Over the last three years, we've engaged lawmakers and land managers on three OA Washington policy priorities: investing in the outdoors through increased land manager funding, protecting our special outdoor places through landscape protection campaigns, and ensuring a sustainable future for outdoor recreation by shaping recreation planning and management in Washington.

Advancing The Mountaineers advocacy agenda

The Mountaineers involvement in Outdoor Alliance doesn't just strengthen national advocacy work. The partnership provides a national platform for our priorities and increases our ability to advance our advocacy agenda of landscape conservation, public lands funding, outdoor access, and climate action - a set of priorities that is exquisitely aligned with Outdoor Alliance.

Our collective advocacy with OA has been especially successful in our strengthened ability to lobby for increased funding for

federal land managers like the Forest Service. With half the staff and twice the responsibility since the 1990s, national forests have suffered maintenance issues, increased litter, illegal parking, and more. These issues largely result from chronic underinvestment in the Forest Service by Congress.

In 2021, we co-published a report with OA illustrating the need for deeper investment in the Forest Service. We are continuing to build relationships with Forest Service staff across Washington and Oregon to better understand their management challenges, needs, and opportunities. We also team up with OA partners in our nation's capital to effectively advocate for increased agency appropriations. As we inspire more champions for Forest Service funding, we're more likely to secure increased resources for Washington's eight national forests.

In the advocacy arena, there's no replacement for lawmakers hearing from their constituents. Outdoor Alliance recently launched the Grasstops Collective, a new leadership and advocacy development program that trains grasstops advocates - community leaders well-positioned for deeper advocacy impact - to build relationships with policymakers and advocate for conservation priorities. We're excited that longtime Mountaineer Danielle Graham was selected as part of the Collective's first cohort. Danielle's passion for deepening her engagement in policy and advocacy work is just another way The Mountaineers is helping write OA's next chapter and creating win-wins for our organizational advocacy agenda. We look forward to continued partnership through OA Washington, future cohorts of the Grasstops Collective, and discrete campaigns to fund the Forest Service and reauthorize GAOA. ▲▲

JOIN OUR OUTDOOR ADVOCACY

What makes "conservation powered by outdoor recreation" so effective is the people and stories behind our advocacy. One of my favorite aspects of my role is empowering more Mountaineers to become advocates. As we continue to advance The Mountaineers conservation priorities and build a deep bench of Washington outdoor advocates, we need more members to leverage their connection to our region's landscapes to help achieve policy wins for the outdoors. You can start your advocacy journey by:

Taking our Advocacy 101 eLearning course:
mountaineers.org/advocacy101course

Signing up for Washington-focused updates from Outdoor Alliance:
outdooralliance.org/washington-about

Considering deeper involvement through training opportunities like OA's new Grasstops Collective:
outdooralliance.org/grasstops-collective

SAFE TO SAY I'M SCARED

Walking and Talking in Balance on Consequential Terrain

By Glory Dole, Seattle Branch Chair



Ascending Old Baldy. All photos by Ashwin Mayya.

I am an Alpine Scrambling graduate and course instructor, and I still feel fear every time I sign up for a scramble. This morning is no exception. At 4am, my alarm blares a jolting reminder that it's time to get up for a snowshoe with The Mountaineers, but all I want to do is stay in bed and forget about the mountains. The last time I was on snowshoes, they tried to kill me, and I haven't let go of my grudge.

A near miss as an early recreationist

In January 2022, before we joined The Mountaineers, my wife Olivia and I went on a winter outing at Paradise on the south slope of Mt. Rainier. Recent transplants to Washington, we had very little experience in the mountains or on snow. Our packs lacked The Ten Essentials - we didn't know what those were. Without a plan, we showed up to Paradise with our snowshoes and followed other people up a steep slope, hardly noticing that the people we were following also had crampons, helmets, and ice axes.

Suddenly, my snowshoe slipped and I fell more than 100 feet, hit a boulder, flew another 20 feet, and landed face down. What was only seconds of falling felt like an eternity. I remember thinking, "This is how I die." A few moments after

the fall, I assessed my condition. I was alive, but couldn't tell if I was injured. I saw blood on the snow, but didn't know what was bleeding. I did a quick head-to-toe assessment. No head or neck pain; I could move my arms, hands, legs, and feet. I took out my phone and put it in selfie mode: nothing broken or busted, just scrapes on my face. I managed to remove my snowshoes, put on microspikes, and traverse to an area that was less steep. My wife safely descended from the spot where I fell and embraced me. I wept in relief. We had almost lost each other.

For a long time after that incident, whenever I closed my eyes, I felt like I was free falling. I found it hard to sleep. I told Olivia I didn't want to go to the mountains anymore, but Olivia suggested that before giving up on mountains altogether, we take some classes. Days later, we joined The Mountaineers.

Today's trip will be my first snowshoe back on steep terrain since my fall. I thought about canceling yesterday, but instead I packed my gear. I thought about canceling before going to bed, but instead I set the alarm. I think about canceling when the alarm goes off, but instead I get up and put on the tea kettle. I fix breakfast, pack my lunch, double check my Ten Essentials, and head out the door.



How to feel safe when you're scared

Our scramble to Old Baldy Mountain begins smoothly. As we progress up snow-covered terrain, the slope's steepness and ice intensifies, so I put on microspikes, pull out my ice-axe, and don my helmet. At this point, I am comfortable walking with this gear. I've learned and practiced how to walk in balance and feel secure putting this skill to use.

As we advance, the snow deepens and we switch to snowshoes. My confidence disintegrates. I don't trust my snowshoes, and my inner dialogue spirals: I'm not capable. I don't know any of these people. I'm the only one who is scared.

Despite my fear, I follow the walking in balance protocol: move the ice-axe, move my downhill foot, move my uphill foot, repeat to the summit. I stay in motion, trusting the process and taking the next best step.

We finally summit Old Baldy. I am relieved, but still need to go back down, which scares me most. Instead of being alone in my fear and allowing it to turn to anger and isolation, I decide to take a risk. I speak up using a tool I call "Talking in Balance."

Step 1: Observe the facts. Instead of overwhelming myself with negative thoughts like "I'm not good enough" or "No one cares if I'm scared," I focus my attention on observing my surroundings. In this case, I notice the mountain is steep, I don't know anyone very well, and I'm not confident in snowshoes on steep terrain.



Left: Walking in balance while descending Old Baldy.
Above: Summit smiles at the top of Old Baldy.

Step 2: Ask myself what I'm feeling. After observing the facts about my situation, I can make a clearer assessment about how I am responding to the conditions of my environment. In this instance, I feel scared and isolated.

Step 3: Ask myself what I need. It is difficult to understand our needs if we don't yet understand how we're feeling and why. Once I recognize I'm feeling scared because of the terrain and gear, I understand that I need a buddy to descend with me down the steep areas.

Step 4: Make a request. The Mountaineers prioritize teamwork in backcountry travel. It's up to me to understand what I need and ask for it, so my teammates can support me. On this steep snowshoe, I want someone to be my buddy, but first I need the courage to ask.

I sit next to the trip leader and tell them, "That steep part on the way up made me nervous. I was really scared and thought about turning around. I'd really like someone to be with me when we descend. Will you go with me?"

I'm met with immediate support, making me feel seen, heard, and part of the team. No longer afraid of being alone, I confidently face the steep descent with my buddy and feel supported the entire way down. I still get moderately nervous descending, but my fear is manageable because I know I am not alone. My Mountaineers team has my back.

Communicating what I feel and asking for what I need has helped me become more secure on my outdoor adventures. It has also given me the confidence to pursue leadership roles that allow me to support others who are new to the outdoors. As I continue pushing myself to summit challenging peaks, walking and talking in balance remain essential to my safety. I still have moments of fear, but every time I face them I climb higher and come home stronger. ▲▲



FROM PEAKS TO PEACE

Embracing a Beginner's Mindset

C.W. Schurman, 32-year member

Anette Lake. All photos by Courtenay Schurman.

After 40 years of hiking, I'm still learning new things about what recreation looks like for myself and others. As an experienced health and wellness coach, part of my job is to help individuals reach their outdoor goals safely. I adjust my mentoring style based on each individual because the process to achieve a desired objective varies depending on who is learning.

I've recently acquired two new hiking partners: my 20-year-old daughter who is relatively new to hiking and adores visiting alpine lakes, and a senior novice hiker, former triathlon racer, and two-time survivor of lung cancer. While mentoring my daughter and senior friend, I've witnessed the value in embracing a beginner's mindset. Whether starting from scratch or starting from setback, we're all starting somewhere. How we choose to start will define the journey toward our goals.

What's it like to start from scratch?

When trying something brand new, it's important to set reasonable expectations for your body. Proper warm up, pacing, nutrition intake, and progress look different for everyone. As you begin your recreation journey, pay attention to your body's needs. Listening to your body is essential for staying safe.

One example of setting reasonable expectations is setting an appropriate pace, and appropriate pacing varies depending on activity. When climbing Mt. Rainier, you must be able to carry

a heavy pack to Camp Muir in under six hours if you want to reach the summit. But such a "do or die" approach on casual hikes is likely to backfire, especially with a beginner.

On my daughter's first hikes, she would power ahead at a quick pace, only to drop back when fatigue set in. Rather than correct her speed, I let her learn from her own experiences. A summer later, she now understands that a steady pace - aka "Mom's way" - results in sustained energy. On our first hike to Annette Lake in early June, she handled pacing like a pro. She just needed to give herself permission to start slowly.

There is beauty in being a beginner - take advantage of it! Nothing compares to the excitement of trying something for the first time. Just remember to be patient with yourself, and don't forget that your number two goal (after being safe) is to have fun.

What's it like to start from a setback?

Returning to recreation after a long pause can be challenging. As our bodies grow and change, what we need to achieve recreational objectives can change as well. My friend Cathy assumed from her triathlon days that activity only counted if you pushed yourself. Hard. But hard is not sustainable, especially when starting again. And needless to say, recreation looks a little different when you've survived lung cancer twice. Activities are not races, and it's okay - actually, encouraged - to start slowly until your muscles, joints, and lungs warm up.

Then, you can vary your pace as you feel comfortable, always aiming to stay conversational to avoid wearing yourself out.

I'll never forget the first hike Cathy and I did together. We attempted Tradition Lake Loop on Tiger Mountain. She was so excited and nervous, she hardly slept the night before. After a comfortably paced hike, we returned to the parking lot and Cathy was exuberant: she had completed the hike without any lung issues. Being kind to our bodies goes a long way.

Another component of understanding our bodies' needs as beginners is proper hydration and fueling. During her hiking progression, Cathy experienced a migraine on one hike, thirst on another, and intestinal issues on a third before eventually realizing that she wasn't consuming enough water and food. It's natural to make these mistakes when first starting out, and it's up to us to listen to our bodies, learn from these mistakes, and adjust appropriately. Learning when and how to fuel will build your recreation autonomy and confidence.

Now Cathy arrives at the trailhead with a day pack containing snacks, migraine medicine, coconut water, and a protein shake. When she returns to the car smiling after a seven-mile hike with 1,600 feet of elevation gain, I know she now has the tools to achieve harder goals like reaching alpine lakes. Hearing her refer to the mountains as her "happy place" is especially satisfying. Everyone, regardless of age, physical capability, or skill level, deserves to feel at home in the mountains.

Identifying your *why*

Purpose is fluid. As we age, our bodies' capabilities change; as we explore new activities, our appreciation of the natural world shifts; as we take on life's challenges, our passions and expectations adjust. The *why* behind what we do is in continuous flux.

I've coached climbers in the past whose goals were to achieve peak physical condition so they could reach the summit. Their *why* involved enjoying the climb without slowing anyone down. This has historically been my *why* too. But in recent years, my *why* has expanded to embrace other things. Rather than racing up peaks, I pay attention to birdsong and raging rivers. I



Cathy hiking the May Valley Loop.



Courtenay and her daughter Brooke at Rachel Lake.

pick berries and take time to identify flowers. I pause to shoot photos of my dog, the landscape, the foliage, or anything unique, such as pack-carrying goats on a hike to Annette Lake. I developed an acronym for my new *why*; BLING: a search for beauty, love, inspiration, novelty, and growth.

Recently, I've enjoyed searching for BLING with my daughter as we visit alpine lakes. Having her as a hiking partner expands my trail possibilities, enhances my sense of purpose, and provides us both with memories that will last a lifetime. Searching for BLING has become more important to me than carrying a targeted amount of weight for a certain length and elevation gain in a desired time. Instead of athletic metrics, I now consider who will be accompanying me and what unique features they might enjoy: running water for my dog, lakes for my daughter, gentle grades for Cathy. Hiking with people of various experiences and capabilities challenges me to grow and expand in ways I never experienced when my number one priority was reaching the summit.

Embracing change and continual growth

As we make our way through life, our perspectives, priorities, and *whys* change. Cathy used to run to push herself hard; now she hikes to manage stress, overcome fears, and prove to herself that she can get outside just as she used to when she was younger. My daughter used to geocache and play in the creek; now she's swimming in every alpine lake we visit. For me, hiking has become a welcome reprieve from work and life challenges, an opportunity to look for beauty, wonderment, and novelty.

Shifting priorities as you try something new or navigate change through different life stages is perfectly okay. Above all else, remember to find joy in your activities and stay safe outdoors. ▲

Courtenay Schurman, MS, CSCS, PN-2 Master Health Coach, helps people navigate the confusion and frustration of change. Visit her free weekly blog at CourtSchurmanGo.com. If you are looking for a collaborative partner on your journey to thriving, visit her website at ThriveClues.com. For alpine conditioning suggestions, visit BodyResults.com.

50 YEARS OF THE TEN ESSENTIALS

By Bayley Stejer, Communications Coordinator
Illustrations by Shelby Olson, Member Services Associate

In 1974, the third edition of *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills* was released and with it, a safety and packing system named The Ten Essentials. This year, we're happily celebrating 50 years of The Ten Essentials minimizing risks outdoors.

Carrying The Ten Essentials ensures you can respond to unexpected emergencies in the backcountry. Essential gear includes navigation, a headlamp, sun protection, first aid, a knife, fire, shelter, extra food, extra water, and extra clothes.

Eventually, every outdoor goer is confronted with a scenario that requires The Ten Essentials. Whether we are prepared or not is up to us. Learn from stories of fellow Mountaineers about when The Ten Essentials have prevented remote emergencies, or how not carrying Essentials has sowed the seeds of high-risk recreation.



The mighty emergency blanket, by Buffy Sawyer

In the final Washington section of the Pacific Crest Trail, I entered the remote wilderness of Glacier Peak. The temperature dropped precipitously and clouds let loose. Bodies shaking, the group began to experience symptoms of hypothermia. We bailed into our tents by 2pm. The day was too cold and wet to go on. In my tent, I immediately pulled out my emergency blanket to warm up, and kept the blanket close throughout the night. The next day, I used the blanket as a "shirt-shaped" barrier to my soaked rain jacket and stayed surprisingly toasty all day. Later that evening, I used the emergency blanket as a liner between my sleeping pad and the wet tent bottom. Turns out, in an emergency there

are more uses for a blanket than I originally expected. By day two, the emergency blanket gave its life to save mine.



A hard lesson in hydration, by Ralph Radford

On a hot July day at Mount Rainier National Park, a friend and I set off to capture photos of wildflowers. Looking at the park map, we decided the trail to the wildflower meadow was short, and it would be best to leave extra weight behind. Grabbing our cameras and a small water bottle, we were off, leaving our extra water in the car. We made it to our destination fairly easily, though we weren't yet satisfied with the wildflower images. Our small water bottle ran out, but we didn't feel thirsty and in search of more wildflowers, we kept moving. As the day progressed and the air got hotter, we quickly became dehydrated. When we made the decision to turn back to the car, we were much further than we realized. Stumbling along the trail, our mouths became increasingly parched. Finally in the car, we drank all the water we could get our hands on... Our second mistake. Our dehydrated bodies couldn't tolerate the large quantity of water, and we became sick. Too sick to drive for multiple hours. Luckily, the nausea eventually subsided and we made it home safely. No matter how small the hike may seem, always carry too much water. I promise, the extra weight pales in comparison.

Team thumbholes, by Jenn Bostrom

Of all The Ten Essentials, sun protection hasn't always been top of mind. Though, a four-day backpacking trip in the High Sierra quickly changed my tune. I packed my Ten Essentials, including my bottle of trusty SPF 30, threw my sun hoodie in the bottom of my pack, wore my cute tank, and topped it all off with a trucker hat. I made it a mile before it felt like my skin was being seared off. I was sweaty and greasy, which only made me feel hotter. The sun's glare through the sides of my glasses gave me a headache. Misery doesn't begin to describe how I was feeling. Luckily, my guide took notice. Tanya patiently got me rehydrated, then took stock of my sun protection setup. She insisted I wear my sun hoodie, showed me how to anchor the front of the hood to my trucker hat, and even shared her chewable electrolytes and zinc and titanium super SPF. I took



it one step further and insisted on using my thumbholes. The exposure and elevation of this trip tested me in ways I didn't expect. Now I never leave for an adventure without proper sun protection for myself or my kids. Sun protection is not a just-in-case but an always Essential.

The bivy left behind, by Jerry Stein

In 2020, Sue Shih, Drew Elliott, Rochelle Garcia, and I set off on a scramble of Kimtah and Cosho Peaks via Easy Pass in the North Cascades. The plan was to ascend a gully to Ragged Ridge, traverse east to Kimtah, come back and traverse to Cosho, and descend. In case we didn't return to camp before dark, we each packed a sleeping bag and overnight gear for a possible bivy. We reached a notch 900 vertical feet below the ridge crest between Cosho and Kimtah. Thinking we'd surely get back this far before dark, most of us stashed our overnight gear. The scramble to the ridge and traverse to Kimtah took longer than expected. After summiting, we moved quickly toward Cosho, making it back to the saddle as it became dark. Our overnight gear was 900 feet of loose rock and scree below. We felt it would be better to sleep at the saddle than



to descend by headlamp. I found a depression near the breezy ridge crest, emptied my pack, and put on all my layers. My torso was passably comfortable, with a down puffy over a vest and a shirt. For my legs, I only had rain pants over hiking pants over boxers. For additional warmth, I put my legs in my pack. But my thighs were still exposed, proving too cold for sleep. I tied a bandana around one thigh, and a triangular bandage from my first aid kit around the other. I slept fitfully in 40-degree temps and woke to beautiful views of Mt. Logan across the valley. We made it back to our gear, and Sue and I scrambled up another gully to tag Cosho... But that's a story for another day.



When in doubt, double check, by Phillip Haggith

A few years ago, I had the entertaining opportunity to take friends - Ben and Holly - on a canoe camping excursion. We loaded up the canoes with gear and plopped them into the still waters of Baker Lake. Then, began our paddle north. After some time gliding through the still water, the wind picked up and clouds rolled in. Rain was upon us. It continued to rain for the remainder of the excursion. After six miles, we arrived cold and wet, excited to set up camp and be in the dry. Unpacking our gear, it didn't take long for Ben and Holly to realize they forgot a quintessential camping component: their tent. The only viable substitute was two hammocks and a spare tent footprint. We strung the hammocks one above the other and used the footprint as a makeshift rain fly. After some back and forth on who would take top bunk, Ben and Holly settled in for the night. They didn't sleep solo for long. The cold was so intense, Holly crawled into her partner's hammock in the middle of the night, desperate for warmth. In the morning, Ben and Holly silently began packing up their makeshift shelter, eager to return home. I started loading the canoe, and was taken by surprise when I saw a small bag tucked into the corner of the bow. As I got closer, I realized this wasn't just *any* bag. This was Ben and Holly's seemingly forgotten tent. I hid it amongst our other gear, loaded up the rest of our belongings, and we were off. To this day, Ben and Holly have no idea their painfully chilled night was in vain. ▲▲

WHEN SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES

How to Hike Safely During Fire Season

By Charles Bookman, 24-year member



Charles's son masked up in heavy smoke, 2020. All photos courtesy of Charles Bookman unless otherwise noted.

It was the hike that almost never was. Out of the woods, with ash-encrusted nasal passages, I wished it was the hike that wasn't. My friends and I had planned a four-day, 48-mile backpacking loop along the remote eastern boundary of Yosemite National Park. Fires flamed all over the west from a surge of hot, dry, windy weather, but where we headed the skies were clear. A reconnaissance hike the day before revealed a moderate air quality index. There was some haze, but no taste or smell of ash. We decided to go for it.

Following a long day of hiking and a starry evening at our lakeside campsite, the wind shifted direction. Soon, we were seeing and breathing smoke. Large ash flakes rained down on our tents. Without up-to-date information, we didn't realize how close the fires had moved.

We studied our paper map for escape routes beneath ash-covered skies. The nearest trailhead was over a day away. Without a workable alternative, we stuck to our original plan and continued our trek toward the trailhead where our car waited. We gritted our teeth (literally), and toiled along the trail, using bandanas and neck gaiters for masks. What had been planned as a flowery, midsummer lark became an unhealthy slog through an otherworldly sepia landscape.

Wildfire risks are increasing

Wildfires have always been present in western U.S. forests and provide numerous ecological benefits. Though, in recent decades, fires have become more frequent and severe. Wildfire season now starts sooner and ends later, as a changing climate has created susceptible ecosystems. There is less water storage in mountain glaciers, the mountains are "drier" during the hottest months, and as fire season has grown, so too has what land managers call the "wildland-urban interface," meaning homes have been built where trees once grew, putting more infrastructure at risk when a fire occurs.

There is never a year without fire or smoke. Moreover, fires are occurring more frequently on the west side of the Cascades where they were once rare, such as the Norse Peak Fire that incinerated trees on the popular peak near Crystal Mountain ski area in 2017. That same year, the Jolly Fire burned hiking areas in the Wenatchee National Forest, and in 2022, the Bolt Creek Fire scorched hiking trails around Skykomish. In 2023, I enjoyed an idyllic climb under cerulean skies of Desolation Peak above Lake Ross. Two weeks later, the area closed when the Sourdough Fire burned the slopes near Lake Diablo.



Top: The Sourdough Fire above Lake Diablo, 2023. Right: Hiking above Ross Lake, where the Sourdough Fire would soon burn in the distance.

Wildfire is a fact of life that coincides with prime hiking season. Just as we plan around avalanche risk in winter, we need to plan around fire's inevitable occurrence in order to continue hiking, backpacking, and climbing safely.

Planning your trip

While we cannot predict nor control wildfires, we can plan for and around them. I like to think of the following as the Four Wildfire Essentials:

Plan with wildfire in mind. Part of planning with wildfire in mind means knowing how to minimize your impact on wildfire risk as a recreationist. Be aware of any fire restrictions in place, ensure campfires are completely out before leaving, learn how to safely operate your outdoor equipment, and practice Low Impact Recreation principles.

Be mindful of where wildfires have occurred, are occurring, and are likely to occur. Helpful planning tools include trip reports and maps from the National Interagency Fire Center (nifc.gov/fire-information). Forest fire information is updated daily on their InciWeb incident data system, including detailed maps. For those who use Gaia Mapping, the pro-version includes a "Current Wildfires" data layer, which is derived from National Interagency Fire Center information. CalTopo has a similar fire history map layer.




Another helpful resource is the Environmental Protection Administration's AirNow website (airnow.gov, also an app), which provides current information and forecasts on air quality. The website has a link to current fire information from the Inciweb system.

Remember, these planning tools are available online; they won't help you once you are in the mountains and off the grid. Always remember to carry a paper map.

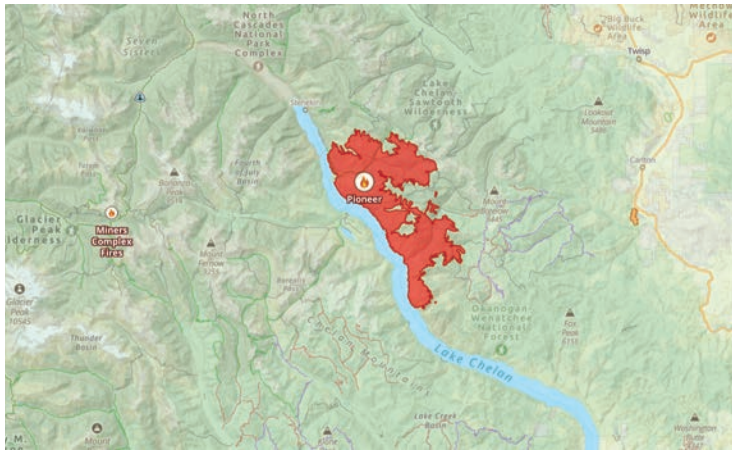
Note your escape routes. Make note of nearby trailheads along your intended route so if conditions change, you can bail or seek help as needed. Another useful practice is to plan



A full-page photograph of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a steep, rocky mountain slope is covered in a dense forest of evergreen trees. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds of smoke and ash, with a bright orange glow from a fire visible on the left side of the frame. The overall scene is dramatic and captures a moment of natural disaster.

"I go to [the mountains] intending to survive...
A new route or the summit is a bonus."

-Mark Twight



a back-up hiking itinerary in the event your preferred route is disrupted. Our smoky hike in the Sierras was in fact our back-up plan – we moved our hike south to avoid northern fires. Not every plan works out, so it's crucial to have a backup plan and escape routes.

Leave a detailed itinerary with a trusted friend or partner.

Your friend or partner can let authorities know you are in the backcountry as conditions warrant. Consider checking in with the Wilderness Information Center or National Forest Ranger District office a day or two before your hike to make sure you're up-to-date on local conditions and so land managers know your plans.

Prepare for hiking in smoke. As an 11th Essential, add an N-95 mask to your first aid kit. This mask weighs nearly nothing and will protect your lungs should you need to exert yourself in smoky conditions. If you don't have an N-95, neck gaiters and bandannas can be used as masks.

Even light smoke is an irritant, so consider increasing your water intake and carrying eye drops. These simple measures will ease common symptoms from smoke, such as itchy throat and eyes. Don't forget electrolyte replacements, which are especially useful in hot, humid conditions. If you have a satellite communication system like InReach, the friend with whom you leave your itinerary can send you daily text updates on nearby wildfires and forecasted conditions.

Crossing burn areas and when the worst happens

Hazardous conditions exist not only during wildfires, but after. For several years following a wildfire, burned trees will fall or shed limbs and burned roots and overturned trees will loosen mountain soils, leading to unanticipated soil movements and elevated risk of rockfall. Risk is highest in burned forests on windy days and when traversing steep, off-trail burned slopes. I once counted over 90 newly-downed trees within a five-mile walk in the Methow Valley five years after a destructive forest fire and months after summer crews had logged out and reopened the trail. Strong winds had uprooted the additional dead timber. While nature may regenerate quickly, the cautious hiker will anticipate the elevated risk encountered on burned slopes, especially on a windy day.



Left: Gaia's "Current Wildfire" data layer depicting a fire at Lake Chelan, 2024. Above: Backpackers on their way to Napeequa valley. Photo by Cheryl Talbert.

What should you do if the worst happens and you find yourself in imminent danger from a forest fire? Stay calm. Alert authorities if you have InReach or a cell signal. Consider whether you are upwind or downwind from the fire – you want to escape upwind and away from the fire. Try to keep a ridge, a pond, or other terrain features between you and the fire. Check your map for an escape route, a nearby lake, or a nearby safe zone like a large, open rocky area. If a fire is approaching faster than the pace you can move, look for an inflammable terrain feature like a large rock or rock overhang. Lie next to it face down so you are breathing as close as possible to the ground.

When the world goes up in flames around you

As I flew home from my smoky backpack in the Sierras, traveling at 500mph up the eastern flank of the Cascades, I saw my wilderness world on fire. Watching the smoke, I reflected on our recent trip and the precautions we had taken. Even though we shifted our route and checked air quality and fire websites before leaving, we still encountered fire risk. When smoke reached us, we had to continue onward. We masked up and tried to stay healthy. When the world goes up in flames around you, you do your best. Your best should hopefully be good enough if you have planned well. ▲▲



RECLAIMING SAFETY AFTER TRAUMATIC EVENTS

By Katja Hurt, Leadership Development Series presenter

Remembering good times with lost friends on an evening hike up Mt. Si.
Photo by Katja Hurt.

One of the greatest gifts The Mountaineers gives is the ability to be safe while recreating outdoors. From urban adventures to technical climbs, we champion safety through interactions, hard-skills, and quality standards. Yet when we have that dreaded “worst day” in the mountains, our sense of safety can shatter, and there are often deeper internal wounds that take longer to heal.

Since the death of my best friend in a climbing accident six years ago, I've had the privilege of empowering others to be safer through Breaking the Halo presentations (as part of the Leadership Development Series) and subsequent discussions with survivors of traumatic events and loss. Over the years, I've noticed shared experiences of how our sense of safety shifts following a traumatic event:

We may never feel safe again. And that is alright. Experiencing trauma can make us want to avoid places that hold memories, good and bad. Our relationship with the outdoors may change; we may avoid certain seasons or environments, and our interests may change. Respecting these changes is important. Never force someone back into a place or activity that may be re-traumatizing.

We may try to reclaim our sense of safety. Rather than avoiding painful memories, we may wish to intentionally go to the place or return to the activity that caused the trauma. There is no expected process or timeline for doing this, but it generally happens after the initial shock and grief have settled. If you see dangerous or risky behavior in a friend processing trauma, speak up and try to support them in their journey.

Our risk tolerance may show extremes. At one end, our risk tolerance may drop to where a short hike causes anxiety. We

might overprepare for worst case scenarios, underestimate our abilities, or cancel last minute. At the other end, there may be a new sense of confidence bordering on invincibility. We might take on more challenging objectives, want to set personal records, and have a darker sense of humor about possible consequences.

We are navigating a new relationship with safety, risk tolerance, and boundaries. This can be a rocky process. Group dynamics may change, partnerships may develop or dissolve, and new friction points can appear. These adjustments can be challenging for everyone, but talking through these differences respectfully can help determine next steps. Try to address concerns around behaviors and avoid making things personal while navigating these changes.

We will never forget, but we will adapt. Even if we stop talking about what happened and don't show signs or symptoms of trauma, the scars will always exist. How each person chooses to interact with the memories will be unique and may change based on the people we're around, the places we go, the time of the year, etc. Being in control of the conversations can help us feel safer. Sometimes we want to talk, as it helps to share the story. We know it can be a lot - ask us to change the topic if you are not in a place to listen. Other times, we'd rather talk about anything else. Feel free to ask your questions, but respect if we don't want to engage.

Safety requires us all to see something, say something, and know how to stand up for ourselves. This is as true for our inner sense of safety as it is for external factors. I hope these insights help you better navigate safety - in yourself and with those around you - following a traumatic event. ▲▲



OPEN WATER SWIMMING 101

By Lauren Allen, 8-year member

A curious harbor seal at Edmonds Underwater Park. Photo by Mary Sue Balazic.

Walking into the Salish Sea, you pee when the water hits your waist. A reflex to the cold. You take your time cleaning your goggles with spit and salt water. Stalling. Your buddies dive in, and you follow. As your head dips below the water, you hyperventilate. Another reflex; don't panic. Your breathing quickly normalizes. You start swimming. The cold feels like little knives all over your skin. After thirty strokes, your skin is the same temperature as the water.

The pain is gone, replaced by a deep calm.

A flounder's eyes protrude from its sand burrow. Dungeness crabs scuttle. A lion's mane jellyfish bobs with the current. You swim a wide arc around the long tentacles. Your turnaround is the marina wall, tiled with barnacles and crawling with kelp crabs. The water is thick with fish seeking haven in its shadows. On the way back, you swim with the current and it feels like flying.

Stepping out of the water, it's windy, so you move fast. It's important to get into dry clothes before you get too cold. You change under a towel. Then it hits - full body shivering, teeth chattering as the sea-cold blood from your extremities circulates through your core.

It will only last a few minutes. Then... a deeper calm.

What is open water swimming?

Open water swimming is swimming in any body of water outside of lifeguarded areas. Washington offers several great places to

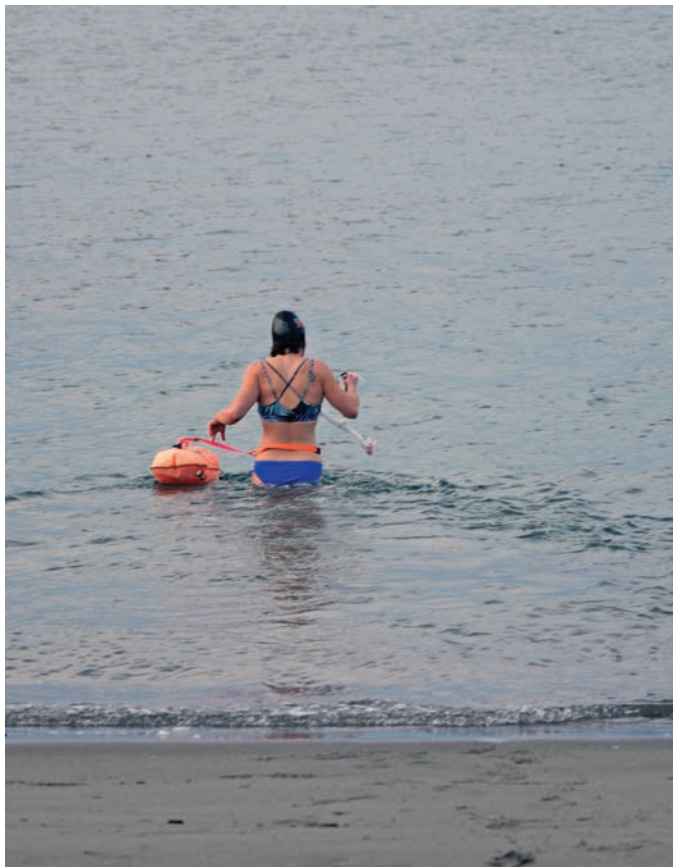
open water swim, including the Salish Sea (also known as Puget Sound), Lake Washington, Green Lake, Lake Ballinger, and more.

The benefits of open water swimming are numerous. For one, swimming is great exercise and gentle on the body. Alternating swimming with mountaineering can reduce wear and tear, especially on the knees. Additionally, you can modify your stroke to accommodate various conditions. For example, when I tore my elbow cartilage, I rested my arms and only kicked. When I tore my ACL, I used a pull buoy to rest my legs and only paddled with my arms.

I originally started swimming as exercise when I broke my foot. I began in a pool. Lap swimming was convenient, but it wasn't exciting, and swimming back and forth felt akin to being locked in a cage. I didn't enjoy the crowds, the occasional kick to the stomach, the fear of foot fungus, nor the reek of chlorine. Sea swimming is much more invigorating, and if you're already injured - like I was - cold water offers pleasant pain relief.

Cold water scares many people away from open water swimming but should be one of the biggest draws. Aside from pain relief, cold water elicits what's called "the mammalian dive reflex," a slowing of the heart rate which helps the body conserve oxygen. A mere twenty minutes of swimming in cold water offers equivalent endorphins to a runner's high, without the high impact.

Once I embraced the cold, I found a warm and welcoming open water swimming community. Open water swimmers look out for each other and enjoy one another's company,



Clockwise, from left: Lauren with swim buoy and snorkel. Photo by Gabriel Esparza-Romero. Top right: Mary Sue demonstrates the harmless beauty of moon jellyfish. Photo by Mary Sue Balazic. Bottom right: Egg yolk jellyfish pack an unpleasant sting. Photo by Mary Sue Balazic.

often going out for coffee after swims. There's a shared, celebratory feeling when we move together in nature - similar to Mountaineers climbs.

How to swim safely in the open water

Like any outdoor pursuit, there are serious risks to open water swimming, such as drowning, boat collisions, and hyperthermia. Be prepared, so that you can navigate the sea mindfully and stay safe.

Consider lessons

You want to be a strong pool swimmer before you brave the open water. Once you know the basics, lessons can improve your technique, speed, and help avoid injuries. You don't have to be a beginner to take lessons and advance your skills.

Find a group

Never swim alone. Find Mountaineers friends to accompany you on your swims by swimming with you, kayaking beside you, or watching you from the shore. Facebook and meetup.com are also great places to find open water swim groups such as Seattle Open Water Swimmers and North Sound Swimmers.

Start slow

Cold water requires an adjustment period. Start by simply standing in the Sound. When you are ready to try swimming, spend time acclimating to the water. Walk out and stand for a couple minutes. Then dunk your head. Hyperventilation is

a common reflex to full submersion in cold water. Wait until your breathing normalizes before you start swimming. Swim for short periods of time and slowly add more minutes. Be sure to get out of the water before you feel like you need to.

Respect wildlife

The same rules of Leave No Trace apply underwater. Keep fifty yards away from marine mammals. Curious seals or sea lions may swim up to you. Don't touch them. White and clear jellyfish (such as moon and crystal jellies) are harmless to humans. Avoid all colored jellyfish. Egg yolk and lion's mane jellies pack painful stings. These jellies are usually yellow, orange, or red. If you get stung, rinse the affected area with vinegar at the beach, then take a hot bath at home. Many folks prefer to wear wetsuits in the summer for protection against jellyfish.

Do your research

Bacteria occasionally makes beaches unsafe. Monitor current water quality for lakes and beaches by looking up bacteria levels on King County and Department of Ecology webpages. Check the weather and don't swim if there is forecasted lightning or high wind. NOAA has regular tide and current predictions on their website. If you are not sure how to interpret tide charts, swim with an experienced buddy who can teach you. As for location, it's best to swim at a shallow beach like Alki or Golden Gardens where you can get out of the water easily in case of an emergency.



Equipment

In addition to a towel and bathing suit, you'll need the following:

A brightly colored swim buoy. The bright color will increase your visibility for boats. If you buy a buoy with a pocket, you can swim with your car keys, wallet, and phone. Some buoys have compartments for hydration or a snack. While buoys are not life-saving devices, you can take a break from swimming by floating on your buoy.

A whistle. Essential in case of emergency, whistles are built into many swim buoys, or you can buy them separately.

A watch. Watches are useful in helping you turn around before you get too cold.

Goggles or a mask. Wildlife spotting is a big part of why I open water swim, so I like to use a snorkel and mask. I often spot wildlife that goggle-wearing swimmers miss. Whichever you choose, make sure the lenses come with UV protection.

A brightly colored swim cap. Like the buoy, the bright color will make you more visible. The cap will keep you warmer and keep hair off your face.

Earplugs. Repeated exposure to cold water can cause hearing loss, a condition known as "surfer's ear." Earplugs help prevent this and reduce risk of ear infections. If water does get into your ear canal, dry it up with products such as Swim-Ear.

Optional gear

Wetsuit. In addition to warmth and jellyfish protection, wetsuits increase your buoyancy, which makes swimming easier. Make sure to buy a wetsuit designed for swimming, as surfing and kayaking wetsuits restrict movement. Use Body Glide or petroleum jelly to prevent chaffing.



Top: Warm layers and hot drinks are essential post-swim, especially in the winter. Photo by Gabriel Esparza-Romero. Bottom: Moon snails are often larger than footballs. Photo by Mary Sue Balazic.

Neoprene gloves, booties, and hood. Along with added warmth, wearing gloves while putting on your wetsuit will prevent accidental tears in the neoprene. Booties help protect your feet from rocks and other sharp objects.

A changing garment. Getting out of your suit and into dry clothes right away will minimize hypothermia. Often this means changing in public. Lots of folks will change under a towel, but I find my coordination isn't great after a cold swim. I pull a long skirt up to my armpits and change under it. There are also changing robes on the market for this purpose.

A warm drink. Enjoying a warm beverage - like a thermos of hot cocoa - after swimming will warm your body quicker and give you something to look forward to in the cold. ▲▲

Upcoming Global Adventures

Winter 2025 and Beyond

By Cindy Hoover, Global Adventures leader, and Jessica Hirst, Global Adventures participant

Photo by Deborah Anderson.

Are you interested in making new friends, collecting inspiring memories, and discovering new parts of our world? Sign up for Mountaineers Global Adventures! The rewards are great, the experiences are unparalleled, and the adventure is abundant.

What are Global Adventures?

Global Adventures are extended trips to places outside of the Pacific Northwest. Participants pay in advance for a package that typically includes accommodation (which might be anything from a rural campsite to a historical country inn to a contemporary urban hotel), ground transportation, food, and logistical planning. We build on the vast talent of Mountaineers members to offer unique, active adventures that commercial groups often cannot, and at great value.

Trip offerings cover a range of activities that are supported by a Mountaineers activity committee, such as trekking, skiing, canyoning, and more. Trips can be domestic or international, range from remote backcountry to accessible frontcountry destinations, and vary in pace and difficulty. Previous Global Adventures trips have explored Nepal, Bhutan, Patagonia, Peru, the British Isles, Switzerland, Italy, Portugal, Turkey, New Zealand, Australia, Alaska, and the Rockies.

Upcoming trips

If you have a sweet spot for snow, we have two upcoming winter Global Adventures that you don't want to miss. Sign up quickly, as enrollment for our four other winter offerings has already filled!

Cross-country skiing in Norway: Day ski out of trail-front mountain lodges in four locations on the extensive Peer Gynt and Trollhaugen groomed trail systems. We'll start and end in Oslo, easing into the trip with sightseeing before we train and taxi to the ski areas. We'll even get to ski part of the Birkebeiner

trail one day. Led by Global Adventures leaders Cindy Hoover and Cheri Solien, this trip will last 12 days and take place in February 2025. The price for participation is \$4,300. Learn more at mountaineers.org/GANorway2025.

Country-country skiing in Quebec: Day ski in a handful of beautifully groomed areas near Quebec, while enjoying the comfort of quaint Airbnbs. During this Global Adventure, you'll be treated to some of the best cross-country skiing in Canada. The trip starts and ends in Quebec and includes sightseeing in old Quebec along with possible in-city skiing. Led by Global Adventures leaders David Overton and Valerie Sparks, this trip will last eight days and take place in February 2025. Please check our webpage for pricing information.

Summer 2025

Already dreaming up your summer adventures? We've got some exciting Global Adventures in the works, such as trekking in coastal Greenland and Switzerland, as well as day hiking on Greek Islands, the Lofoten Islands, the Dolomites, and the west coast of Newfoundland. These trips are currently in the planning and review stage. Stay tuned for more updates, and consider adjusting your online Mountaineers profile to notify you when new Global Adventures are added to the website.

Become a Global Adventures leader

As most Global Adventures fill quickly, we're always looking for new leaders to help meet demand and expand our trip offerings. Proposals are carefully reviewed by the Global Adventures Committee, with a focus on risk assessment and management, as well as careful logistics and budget planning. Planning generally starts a year (or more) in advance of each trip. If you're interested in becoming a Global Adventures leader, contact Cheryl Talbert at cascadehiker12@gmail.com or Cindy Hoover at cyn@zipcon.com. ▲



Nancy's injured lip after a fall taken while hiking in Oregon.
Photo by Peter Hendrickson.

In the summer of 2023, hikes, urban walks, and family celebrations had me digging out the first aid kit nearly weekly. My wife Nancy and I keep our Wilderness First Aid badges current, and the seven kids and eleven grandkids provide abundant practice around our Redmond farm with stinging nettle, bites, stings, sprains, breaks, bruises, gashes, cuts, and the occasional bump on the head.

I can thank my 30 years of off-and-on Boy Scout leader experience for my first aid familiarity, as well as extensive experience leading outdoor trips for public schools, volunteering with The Mountaineers, and refereeing soccer games with their various medical emergencies. I even worked as a surgical orderly and ER tech in a small California hospital, and currently research traumatic brain injuries with neurosurgeons and trauma doctors in the U.S. and Latin America. So why was I fumbling to dig out my first aid kit atop Little Si last year when Nancy drew blood on her leg and arm?

Two weeks earlier, I had dived into the generously sized first aid box in the pantry that contained 40+ years of accumulated

HOW ACCESSIBLE IS YOUR FIRST AID KIT?

By Peter Hendrickson, Key Leader and Super Volunteer

bandages, splints, and pins. My kit was newly refreshed. But when Nancy stumbled and fell, two nearby women found her and dressed her wounds before I could finish digging out my kit. 40+ years of first aid supplies were unhelpful crammed at the bottom of my bag.

Thinking beyond supplies

My wife and I hike and urban walk frequently - three to five times a week - and occasionally backpack. We maintain a small farm with cattle, chickens, fruit trees, berries, and vegetables. And we're both on the other side of 75, so our balance, speed, and strength are past their prime. All this to say, there is generous opportunity for outdoor injury.

Nancy has a life-long "visual field cut," meaning her peripheral vision is nil in all directions. After a few years of very few slips, trips, and falls, her tumbles frequency spiked last summer. It seemed like every week there was a curb, stone, depression, limb, or lip that caused a fall. While the contents of a first aid kit are quintessential, Nancy's Little Si wound made me think beyond "What should I carry for first aid?" to "Where should I carry it?"

Over the past 45 years, Mountaineers Wilderness First Aid courses have provided course supplies for instructional, one-time use. Although guidance is offered on first aid kit contents, we rarely practice how to access first aid kits with our own backpack or daypack. Many helpful resources exist on how to create a first aid kit, but instructions frequently lack information on accessibility.

Post Little Si, I learned the value of packing first aid supplies in areas I can quickly reach. I carry three kits: two for immediate retrieval to stop the bleed or calm the itch, and another dry bag tucked away with The Ten Essentials. Before going out, I think about what I need "right now," like when I'm returning from the pasture with a bloody arm (skin is thinner in your 80s) or tending to Nancy after a scrape.



My pack's top pocket carries a double sandwich bag of alcohol wipes, assorted Band-Aids, Tegaderm Film, nine non-stick 3x4 pads, and two non-stick 2x3 pads.

The inside pocket has other essentials sealed inside a waterproof pouch (I prefer Adventure Medical Kit's .9 bag): a 10ml syringe (to rinse the injury); 1oz triple antibiotic ointment; two bags of Benzoin tincture swabsticks; six or more alcohol swabs; a medical bag of single tablets such as ibuprofen, aspirin, acetaminophen, diphenhydramine, and Sting Relief; a Steri-Strip suture; 5cmx3.75m roller gauze; and a rescue inhaler (I have asthma).

Note that my urgent meds are in the top, zipped pockets of my pack. Nancy keeps her epi-pen handy at the top of her pack. We both inform fellow hikers where our urgent aids are stowed. The non-urgent kit with my Ten Essentials is in the dry bag packed away.

"Learning by a thousand small cuts"

This July, Nancy and I were returning from leading a Conditioning Hiking Series trip to Island and Rainbow Lakes when, even with poles deployed, Nancy tripped on a small rock, landing on her right arm, leg, and face. I was the co-leader and first aid officer, so I provided immediate assistance. All injuries appeared minor, but the small scratches on her nose and cheek required attention. This time, alcohol wipes came easily to hand from my pack's top pocket. A fellow hiker offered his new, mirrored compass to provide Nancy a look at her minor damage. No Band-Aids required. This is "learning by a thousand small cuts."



Top: Peter cleans Nancy's abrasions on their return from a Conditioning Hiking Series (CHS) hike. Photo by Ming Rutar. Bottom: Nancy leading a CHS trip to Island and Rainbow Lakes, July 2024. Photo by Peter Hendrickson.

Keeping first aid supplies accessible doesn't just apply to backcountry adventures, but frontcountry and at-home mishaps as well. Accidents can happen anywhere. At the farm, Nancy keeps her skills primed by dressing my frequent cuts and scrapes. A box of alcohol wipes sits left of the sink on the bathroom counter beside a box of Band-Aids. Backpack pocket or bathroom sink, always keep first aid materials stocked and accessible. ▲▲

Reframing Risk Management in *Freedom of the Hills*

By Eric Linxweiler, *Freedom of the Hills* contributor

Illustrations by John McMullen



Traversing a ridgeline in the Alps. Photo by janiecbros, istock.

When I joined The Mountaineers nearly two and a half decades ago, I was motivated - in no small way - by the biggest criticism I had heard about the organization: "They are too safety conscious." I became a Mountaineers member shortly after a guided climb up Rainier, involving many unfamiliar skills and techniques. In my first Mountaineers course, safety was the opening topic. If you can't be safe, you can't have fun. That's the heritage of The Mountaineers.

The evolution of safety and risk management

The Mountaineers early climbing programs are best captured in the initial *Climber's Notebook*. These notes, transcribed by Wolf Bauer, served as the original blueprint for our climbing curriculum, eventually codified into *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*. Covering topics such as gear, belays, anchors, and snow travel, the *Climber's Notebook* focused intently on tools and techniques. However, there was no dedicated chapter on safety nor guidance on outdoor hazards and risk management. In a quick scan of my own copy, I don't even see the word "safe." Safety was certainly part of the training,

but it wasn't emphasized as central to learning these skills.

In the ninth edition of *Freedom of the Hills*, "safe" or "safety" appear nearly seven hundred times, including a chapter dedicated to safety. While drafting the tenth edition, my fellow contributors and I made a deliberate choice to use these terms less. Our intent was not to eliminate the concept of safety, but to reframe safety, emphasizing personal responsibility and judgment. There is inherent risk in any activity. An individual shouldn't assume they are free from harm because they are in a situation labeled as "safe." Each climber must evaluate and be responsible for their own decisions.

Rather than label anything "safe," we use phrases like "safer than some other choice," "best practice," and "poses less risk." This reframing - made in tandem with an increased focus on decision making in the outdoors - recognizes that if individuals have the necessary information, they can make informed decisions to minimize risk. The very first section of *Freedom of the Hills*, led by venerable outdoor leader and navigation educator Peter Hendrickson, covers foundational topics for decision making.

TABLE 23-1. REPORTED CAUSES OF MOUNTAINEERING ACCIDENTS

MOST FREQUENT IMMEDIATE CAUSES

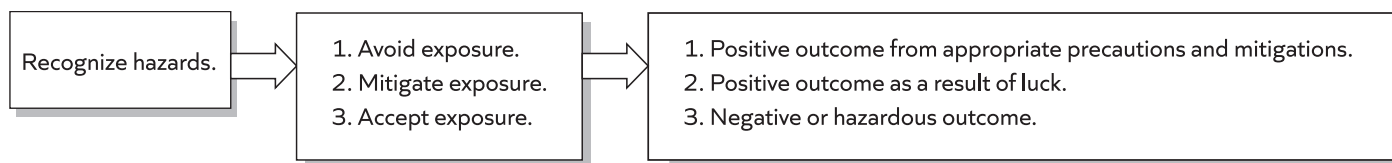
- Falling on rock
- Falling on ice
- Falling rock, ice, or objects
- Stranded or lost
- Illness
- Rappel failure and/or error

MOST FREQUENT CONTRIBUTING CAUSES

- Climbing unroped
- Inexperience
- Placing no or inadequate protection
- Using inadequate equipment or wearing inadequate clothing
- Weather
- Climbing alone
- Not wearing a helmet
- Inadequate belay

Source: ANAC 2023 (see Resources).

From first steps through the basics of equipment, clothing, conditioning, and navigation, readers are presented options and guidance for making decisions related to each of these essential concepts.



Individual and group risk management

For the tenth edition of *Freedom of the Hills*, we replaced the chapter on safety with a new chapter on risk management. Bill Ashby, our organization's longtime Safety Committee Chair and member of our Risk Management Committee, has done an excellent job presenting a framework for hazard analysis and mitigation strategies. This framework directs focus back to the responsibility of the individual, ensuring all members of a group share in risk management and are prepared when situations change or accidents happen. Along with risk management, readers will learn about skills associated with leadership, first aid, and self-rescue, led by former Kitsap Branch Chair and Olympic Mountain Rescue member Jerry Logan.

The concept of managing your own and your group's risk is covered not only in one chapter or section, but woven throughout the entire tenth edition: avalanches, big wall climbing, sport climbing, snow travel, and more. For each of these activities, you must prepare and plan thoroughly, asking a series of questions. What hazards do you face? How can you evaluate them? How can you reduce your risk and improve your chances of a successful and enjoyable

outing? Keeping these questions front of mind is the responsibility of each individual to ensure adequate preparation for the group as a whole.

Evolution in climbing safety

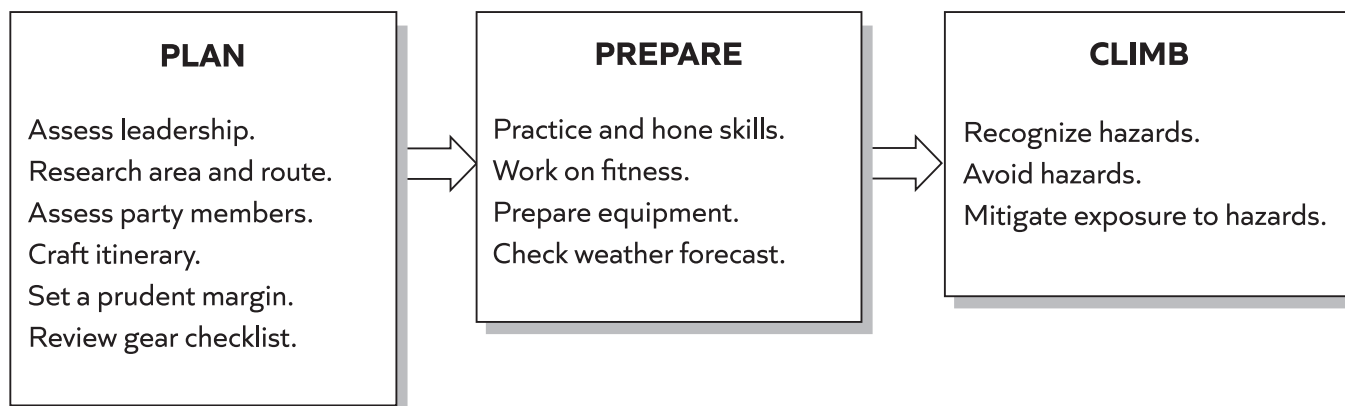
Freedom of the Hills is an instructional guide for novice and experienced outdoor enthusiasts alike. In the tenth edition of *Freedom*, contributors recognized the need to adjust instructional guidance, acknowledging how climbing has changed over the years. Led by Nick Hunt (former RMI guide and SIG leader for our Basic Alpine course) and Ian Nicholson (IFMGA-certified guide), with extensive input from Steve Swenson (longtime expert climber and two-time Piolet d'Or winner), the rock climbing sections were reorganized and heavily revised to better reflect how modern climbers progress in the twenty-first century, often starting in climbing gyms, transitioning to sport climbing, learning how to place trad gear, then tackling multipitch climbs as well as alpine climbs and snow travel.

In Steve's remarkable contributions to the chapters about snow, ice, alpine, and expedition climbing, he not only clarifies climbing concepts but highlights specific risks associated with advanced topics. These contributions are particularly

evident in the chapter on expedition climbing, which covers everything from initial planning stages to ensuring all team members return home unharmed. Before embarking on an expedition, groups should always discuss and agree upon a set of values to adhere to during their climb. Steve quotes renowned British alpinist Roger Baxter-Jones: "Come back alive, come back as friends, get to the top – and in that order."

This is the mission of each edition of *Freedom*, the tenth edition being no different: to help you experience a lifetime of freedom in the hills. ▲▲

Eric Linxweiler learned about The Mountaineers when he bought Freedom 5 in Columbus, Ohio. After moving to Seattle in 2001, he joined The Mountaineers and enrolled in their climbing programs, teaching field trips, and mentor groups. He served as Board President when the organization moved to Magnuson and hired our new executive director. He also served as Vice President of Publishing and Branches. After expertly guiding two editions of Freedom through editing and production over the past eight years, he looks forward to recruiting the next volunteer editor for the eleventh edition. Contact him at freedomofthehills1@gmail.com.



POST-TRAIL BLUES

What They Are and How to Cope

By Jessica Hirst, 17-year member



A training hike to Marmot Pass and Buckhorn Mountain. Photo by Jessica Hirst.

Craggy, striated spires glowed pink in the evening light as I gazed up from the bottom of the Grand Canyon. I was on a four-day backpacking trip that had been on my wish list for years. After being cooped up for most of 2020 due to the pandemic, I found myself staring in surprise at the expanse around me, so much vaster in person than on flimsy postcards.

I'd spent almost every weekend that summer training for my backpacking trip, relieved to once again feel the freedom of miles unfurling beneath my lightweight hikers. My legs took me on steep, snow-covered conditioning hikes in the spring, then sunny, wildflower-dotted ridgelines and brushy-meadowed ambles as the weather warmed. I lugged a 30-pound pack up Poo Poo Point, then Mt. Si the following month, and finally Mailbox Peak. After each hike, I'd return home with pine needles in my shoes, dirt under my fingernails, and the deep satisfaction of reaching a goal that was part of a larger plan.

Reaching the bottom of the Grand Canyon was as magical as I'd hoped. Cloud shadows drifted across sagebrush flats while the scarred walls of the canyon rose up around us, echoing the ancient presence of time, wind, and water. After several days learning about the cultural and geological history of the canyon, exploring cool slot canyons, and sleeping under a full moon beside the rushing Colorado River, we climbed back out the steep, rocky trail onto a flat, paved road.

And then... the trip was over. I returned home to the flow of daily life without the larger goals that had inspired me that summer. As the days turned colder and shorter, I hiked less frequently. I could feel myself losing the training edge I'd worked so hard for. Feeling disappointed, disoriented, and sad at times, I fumbled around online trying to figure out my next adventure.

I had a case of the post-trail blues.

What are the post-trail blues?

The term "post-trail blues" is often used by long-distance and thru-hikers to describe the state of mind experienced after completing a momentous trip like the Pacific Crest Trail or Appalachian Trail, but post-trail blues can be experienced by anyone who has completed an adventure that feels significant.

After spending long hours gaining the tops of ridgelines, feeling the endorphin rush of physical effort, breathing fresh air, and sleeping under the stars every night, readjusting to normal life can be hard. Hikers experiencing post-trail blues might feel a combination of fatigue, listlessness, nostalgia, sadness, anxiety, or even depression due to the following factors:

End of a routine. Multi-day hikes create a daily routine and a clear sense of purpose. Finishing the trail can leave hikers feeling aimless, without the structure they had during their adventure.

Loss of community. Many long-distance hikers and adventurers form strong bonds with others, especially if a trip occurs over weeks or months. Completing the trail might mean leaving behind a close-knit community, which can lead to feelings of isolation.

Shift in environment. Transitioning from the natural, often peaceful environment of the trail to the busy, sometimes stressful environment of everyday life can be jarring.

Achievement letdown. Accomplishing the significant goal of a challenging adventure can leave hikers wondering what's next.

Physical and mental adjustment. The body and mind might take time to adjust from the physical exertion and mental focus required on the trail to the different and comparatively sedentary demands of daily life.



On the Hermit Loop Trail, Grand Canyon National Park. Photo by Jessica Hirst.

How to cope with the transition

If you're experiencing a rough return after the end of an adventure, here are tips from my own experience on how to manage the blues.

Find new goals, but don't go too crazy

Setting new goals can help maintain a sense of purpose, as long as the goals fit realistically into your lifestyle. Having something to look forward to can help redirect your focus and energy. That said, I don't recommend overscheduling yourself by signing up for too many outdoors-oriented workshops and courses. I learned this the hard way. My initial excitement about having structured goals again after the Grand Canyon quickly turned to panic in November as the busy holiday season set in.

What ultimately helped my transition the most was leaning into daily life with its joys, pleasures, accomplishments, and comforts. Unless I make a radical lifestyle change and become a full-time adventurer, venturing out and returning home will always be a rhythm in my life, even if the transition is sometimes rocky.

I eventually dropped some of the workshops I had signed up for and settled into a weekend routine of snowy training hikes, reading on the couch as rain spattered the windows, and planning my spring garden. I also signed up for the Backpacking Building Blocks course, which gave me something to look forward to that I knew I'd have time for.

Maintain connections

Staying in touch with your trail community can also help. If you've formed important connections with others during your adventure, continue reaching out, even if life feels busy. Consider joining in-person or virtual Mountaineers

groups focused on the type of adventure you've completed. These groups can be spaces to share experiences and trail memories with people who understand the unique challenges and triumphs of your trip. In my experience, family members are only so interested in hearing about that time your boot sole came loose and had to be secured with duct tape, whereas swapping trail stories with other adventurers can be entertaining for much longer.

Stay active, even in a smaller capacity

Even if smaller physical goals don't feel as compelling after a big adventure, staying active is important. Maintaining your fitness by sticking to a regular routine can improve your mood and keep you in shape for the next big adventure that might be just around the corner.

The winter after my epic Grand Canyon trekking summer, I kept hiking (even though it was at a slower rate and wasn't as fun without a bucket-list goal to work toward). But continuing to hike kept me in good enough shape to enjoy the Backpacking Building Blocks course, which then led to new adventures in places like the Olympics and the Enchantments.

The way I see it now, adventures might end, but they shape you in ways that remain. Next time you experience a case of post-trail blues, remember: your trip left you with insights and resilience for the next endeavor. My Grand Canyon trekking summer may be long over, but the impact it had on my character remains, perhaps not unlike the way water and weather continue to leave their mark on the sandstone and shale of the Grand Canyon. ▲▲



Jessica on the way to the base of the Grand Canyon. Photo courtesy of Jessica Hirst.

Confronting Fear and Building Confidence in Climbing

By Mercedes Pollmeier, MS, CSCS



Mercedes bouldering in Leavenworth. Photo by Brooke Jackson.

As a climber, I am no stranger to fear. I used to highball boulder – meaning I would climb tall boulders where the risk of falling meant serious injury – and without fail, I'd feel fear every time, whether or not I made it all the way up. One day, I was outdoor bouldering with friends fairly new to the sport. Halfway up the boulder, I reached a tricky section. Assessing the situation against my current skill levels, I realized if I went for the next move and missed, I wouldn't just endanger myself, but my spotters, too. The move wasn't worth the risk. I decided to descend.

Being honest about my fears was an even greater feat than finishing the boulder.

Fear isn't talked about enough, especially in climbing. We usually consider fear a weakness – something to push past that makes us lesser than others. But in truth, the presence of fear is good. Fear lets us know when something isn't right or our body isn't prepared for what is being asked. We need fear to survive.

So, what do we do with our fear? Avoid it? Let it hold us back? First, we need to practice feeling fear, so we can understand where it's coming from and make decisions rooted in confidence.

Confidence as the antidote to fear

In the dictionary, confidence is an antonym of fear. I believe confidence is the antidote to fear. To build confidence, we must acknowledge our fears and what they tell us about our skillset. When we understand our fears, we have the tools to make informed decisions. Sometimes that decision is to stop and bail. The point is, listen to yourself.

To address fear, we first need to expose ourselves to it. Exposure is essential to understanding how to improve, but it doesn't mean you have to overextend your comfort zone. Instead of forcing yourself to ignore your fears, here are a few tools for accepting climbing-related fears and training appropriately.

Fall practice

If you're attempting a challenging climb, do some practice falls before sending. Talk to your partner about how you will take your falls. Talk about catches, too. Make sure you're comfortable with the height of the fall, and check in with your partner about how each catch went. Soon, you'll both feel good about falls and catches, and you'll be more aware of your limits.

Mock leading

Here's a secret about highball bouldering: we do it on top rope first. The best way to figure out if a highball is safe is to dial in the moves while roped, then do it without a rope. But many rope climbers don't give themselves the grace to ease into leading. Instead, they take uncontrolled falls to "overcome" their fears.

Rather than throwing yourself into leading, practice the skill in a controlled environment. Attach a short rope to your belay loop and practice clipping in, alternating which hand you clip with, using different clipping techniques, and exhaling breaths while clipping. Practice clipping stances as well that allow you to feel balanced and rested (such as heel hooks, drop knees, or hips in). Do all this while on top rope, and leave some slack on your rope so you feel what it's like to clip with no assist.

Bolt by bolt

Lead climbing bolt by bolt is a wonderful way to climb harder grades and projects. Take at each bolt (meaning let your climbing partner pull in the slack), then rest at each bolt as you scan the next sequence. It's okay to rest and it's okay to take, just communicate with your belay partner so there's no pressure to hurry. Once you figure out the climb, you can connect bolts together. Before you know it, you're building capacity and confidence in your movements.

Things to keep in mind

Managing fear and building confidence is like strength training: you start with a light weight, then slowly increase the weight as your training progresses. Do the same with climbing. Over time, small steps lead to great strides.

Remember, fear and grades do not correlate. Fear can have a louder voice on some days, and it can show up where it wasn't present before. There are many external factors - weather, group dynamics, nutrition, fatigue, and more - that make each day and each attempt different. The body shows up differently each day, too, based on stress and recovery levels. We can't expect to perform at the same level every day.

When you experience fear, acknowledge it. Your fear could help you grow, and it could save your life. ▲▲

Mercedes Pollmeier is an NSCA-certified strength and conditioning specialist based in Seattle, with degrees in exercise science and human movement, and is a Precision Nutrition L2 Master Coach. Currently, she owns her own climbing coaching company, Modus Athletica, training climbers in person and online. Visit her online at modusathletica.com and on Instagram @modusathletica.



10TH EDITION LAUNCH EVENTS

REI Kickoff Party

Monday, Sep 23, 2024

Seattle REI Flagship store

Deep Dive

Thursday, Sep 26, 2024

The Seattle Program Center

Celebrating 125 Years of Mount Rainier National Park

By Nathaniel Rees, Associate Manager of Policy and Planning

Photo by Nate Brown.

On July 29, 1909, during The Mountaineers' first organized climb of Mt. Rainier, members crafted an incredible feat of mountain engineering: a 62-person bed. Huddled on a ridgeline between the Inter and Emmons Glaciers, 62 climbers built a headboard with large rocks, then dragged and compacted soil and volcanic ash to form a mattress. If that wasn't lavish enough, many members even had a sleeping bag.

The following day, all 62 climbers successfully summited Mt. Rainier - a huge achievement for an organization only in its third year of existence. What sticks out most, though, is founding member and climb leader Asahel Curtis' reflection after the trip: The Mountaineers must "assist in every way possible in the work of protecting the beautiful places of our state. A great part of this must be in educating those who go each year into the mountains." Explore, learn, and conserve - values that still guide our organization today.

Not much has changed since that first trip up Mt. Rainier (although today's ideal human-to-sleeping bag ratio is 1:1). Our community still revels in Type 2 fun. We still sleep - and find comfort - in unconventional places. And Mt. Rainier National Park is still the epicenter of our community's mission, work, and play. As we celebrate the park's 125 anniversary this year, let's look back at over a century of Mountaineers exploring, learning, and conserving in America's fifth national park.

Explore: Daring ascents and history-making at 14,000 feet

From early outings circumnavigating the mountain to daring first documented ascents, Mt. Rainier - known as Tahoma by local tribes who have maintained cultural connections to the mountain since time immemorial - has captured the hearts and minds of Mountaineers for generations. Ome Daiber probably felt this inspiration when he approached fellow Mountaineer Will Borrow Jr. about climbing Liberty Ridge in 1935. The route had never been climbed, requiring the navigation of several broken glaciers on seriously steep terrain. Falling would be fatal.

Naturally, Borrow thought his friend was joking, and expressed his desire to keep living a healthy life on flat ground. But the allure of the unclimbed route was irresistible and within a week, Daiber, Borrow, and a third climber named Arnold Campbell set out on their adventure.

The climbers navigated a steep labyrinth of crumbling, house-sized seracs, bivouacked twice (including in the summit crater rim under the Aurora Borealis), and ate sandwiches soaked with stove fuel even though the "flavor was rather powerful." Sixty-eight hours after starting their trek in Carbon River, they arrived at Paradise Inn, already reminiscing about the climb (but probably not the stove fuel sandwiches).

In 1992, the park continued to be a bedrock of Mountaineers



Beds at temporary camp during the 1909 summit of Mt. Rainier. Photo by Asahel Curtis.

first documented ascent of Ptarmigan Ridge on Mt. Rainier with a group of his students in 1935.

Thanks to the management of Mt. Rainier National Park, Bauer and The Mountaineers had access to the ideal teaching space to fulfill his vision. That relationship between the park and The Mountaineers carries on today - many of our most popular courses take place in Rainier - but Bauer's teaching environment, and

history when The Mountaineers put together an all-women's climb of Mt. Rainier. Nine women - mostly in their forties and fifties - successfully summited via the Disappointment Cleaver route, carrying t-shirts that read "Almost Over the Hill, But Not Peaked Out!" The team made waves in the local climbing world, and sports pages applauded the women for summiting at their "mature" age. "In retrospect, age and gender had little to do with our success," shared climb leader Judi Maxwell. "It was simply competence, perseverance, and the human spirit at its very best."

Learn: A new vision for climbing education

This year, I tried to gain a bit of the 1992 climbing team's competence by taking The Mountaineers Intermediate Glacier course. Many of the important glacier safety skills were taught in Mt. Rainier National Park, including how to build and sleep in a snow cave. Through that experience, I learned valuable lessons: snow caves take about six hours to make, and it's possible to experience the five stages of grief in a similar timeframe. I also learned - that night and throughout the course - how to safely access Washington's highest heights. My newfound mountain competence was a product of nearly a century of Mountaineers climbing courses.

While early trips to the park focused on exploration and stewardship, Mountaineers education kicked off in the 1930s. Recognizing that more folks were heading into the mountains without proper training, Mountaineers member Wolf Bauer pitched the idea of a fundamentals of mountaineering course to the Climbing Committee. Over the next two years, Bauer - ever the go-getter - developed and led all aspects of the climbing program.

At first, the courses were taught indoors. Quickly recognizing the importance of outdoor instruction, leaders adapted curriculum to teach skills like crevasse rescue and snow camping within the Park's boundaries. Students were even required to summit Mt. Rainier to graduate the course. Bauer was such an effective teacher - and the park's landscape such an effective conduit for his teachings - that he led the

the park at large, would not exist as it does today without over a century of Mountaineers work to protect it.

Conserve: How Mountaineers built and protected America's fifth oldest park

After Asahel Curtis and 61 Mountaineers summited Mt. Rainier, they returned home with an eye on their next adventure: a backpacking trip around the entire mountain. Today, that'd be a long yet straightforward trip on the Wonderland Trail. But in 1909, a round-the-mountain trail was no more than an idea.

Over the next five years, several small teams scouted the possibility of such a trail, bushwhacking through rugged terrain, mapping potential routes, and sharing suggestions for trail construction with Mt. Rainier National Park rangers who were already working on a loop. Fortunately, the Park Service decided to expedite trail work to meet The Mountaineers vision. And so, in 1915, 89 Mountaineers became the first hikers to walk the newly constructed Wonderland Trail. Now, the entirety of the park - massive glaciers, ancient forests, and soul-expanding views - was more accessible to the public.

Pieces of The Mountaineers conservation legacy can be found nearly anywhere in the park. We fought for expanded road access, blocked a plan to build a tramway from Paradise to Camp Muir, and successfully lobbied Congress to designate the park as wilderness. We've dedicated countless hours to stewarding the park, from early 1900s trail-building work parties to modern volunteer programs like Meadow Rovers. And we're still advocating for the park today to ensure this beloved landscape is conserved for another 125 years and beyond.

So, the next time you're cruising down from Camp Muir or wandering the alpine meadows of the Wonderland Trail, take a moment to think of those Mountaineers who shaped this iconic National Park into what it is today, and consider getting involved in efforts to keep the park an accessible, beautiful, and protected place for future generations to enjoy. ▲▲

For more information on how to volunteer with Mount Rainier National Park, visit nps.gov/mora/getinvolved/volunteer.htm.

Virtual Education Center and Calendar

Check out our 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

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

15+

Online Courses

200+

Educational Blogs

20+

Virtual Events & Activities

How to Sign Up for Activities

Step 1

Visit our website

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
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. 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 include 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 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 speaker series like BeWild, Walking the Wild, and the Adventure 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 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 ensure 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 send them an email. You can always email our Member Services team with questions at 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.



Introductory Course Overview

Updated May 2024

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:



Please visit www.mountaineers.org to see current course listings and to sign up.

Course selection varies by branch. Registration usually opens 1-3 months prior to the start of the course.

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, 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



Stevens Lodge



Meany Lodge

Baker Lodge

mountaineers.org/bakerlodge

Mt. Baker Lodge, above Picture Lake and near Artist's Point in the North Cascades, is a gorgeous place for a get-away. The lodge is located within walking distance of the Mt. Baker ski area as well as numerous hiking trails.

Stevens Lodge

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. The lodge is open Wednesday to Sunday during the winter when the ski area is open.

Meany Lodge

mountaineers.org/meanylodge

Meany Lodge is The Mountaineers oldest winter sports resort, located approximately 60 miles east from Seattle off I-90 near Stampede Pass and surrounded by the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. Meany Lodge provides a warm family environment for all - perfect for winter and summer adventures alike. During the ski season, the lodge operates a rope-tow on our ski hill for ski lessons, cross-country skiing, and snowshoe excursions. Join us in March for our annual Patrol Race.



Kitsap Forest Theater

foresttheater.com

We're thrilled to set the stage for another enchanting season in 2024! Prepare to be swept away by the boundless imagination and storytelling of two lively and funny musicals – Roald Dahl's *Matilda, the Musical* and *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella* (Broadway version). These mesmerizing, family-friendly shows promise to light up hearts of all ages, and what better way to experience them than under the verdant canopy of the Kitsap Forest Theater?

Don't miss a single note! Secure your spot today with our exclusive two-show package. This is not just another theater outing; it's a tradition, an enchanted experience that brings families and friends together year after year. Make sure you're part of the magic! Let's make this season a celebration of imagination and wonder like no other.

Volunteer opportunities: property upkeep, cooking, helping with sets, costumes, ushering/parking during shows. We offer an Adventure Camp for grades K-4 and a Theater Camp for grades 5-8.

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.



BELLINGHAM

Chair: Nathan Andrus, nathan.andrus@gmail.com
Website: mountaineers.org/bellingham; bellinghammountaineers.com

COURSES & ACTIVITIES: avalanche safety, navigation, climbing, first aid, hiking, scrambling, stewardship and conservation.

You'll find the Bellingham Branch tucked alongside the upper craggy expanse of the North Cascades. We enjoy easy access to the peaks that drain into the Nooksack and Skagit River basins. Our close-knit community offers climbing courses, hiking trips, and backcountry adventures in a diverse, inclusive, and supportive environment. 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: Nick Mayo, nicholas.e.mayo@gmail.com
Website: 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 several programs. As a smaller branch, we value companionship and are excited to meet new members at our in-person events including our Spring Happy Hour, Beer & Gear evening, 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 the Mt. Pilchuck Lookout and continues to maintain the historic Three Fingers Lookout.

Branch Council Meetings are held every other month to discuss new and ongoing initiatives and are open to all. We host a combination of hybrid and fully remote meetings depending on the month. As we ramp up our in-person events and programs, we are looking for talented and passionate volunteers to make an impact. Please reach out to Nick Mayo (email above) for details.

KITSAP

Chair: Melissa White, melissa.white@gmail.com
Website: 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 January, April, July, and October. Our annual branch celebration is in December, please join us!

SEATTLE

Chair: Craig Kartes, c.kartes@outlook.com
Website: mountaineers.org/seattle

COURSES & ACTIVITIES: avalanche safety, backcountry skiing, bikepacking, canyoning, climbing, first aid, folk dancing, hiking, backpacking, naturalist, navigation, night sky, packrafting, Retired Rovers, sailing, scrambling, sea kayaking, snowshoeing, and urban walking.

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 bookstore, indoor and outdoor climbing walls, friction slabs, event spaces, and more.

Branch Council meetings are held every other month to discuss new and ongoing initiatives. We're growing rapidly and actively seeking people to support our community. Visit our branch calendar for details and reach out to the branch chair if you are interested in volunteering.

FOOTHILLS (I-90/I-405 CORRIDORS)

Chair: Brad Peacock, bmpeacock@aol.com
Website: mountaineers.org/foothills

COURSES & ACTIVITIES: AIARE avalanche safety, backcountry and downhill skiing, climbing, conservation and stewardship, cross-country skiing, first aid, GoHike, hiking & backpacking, navigation, scrambling, snowshoeing, urban walking, and trail running.

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 film screenings, guest speakers, and stewardship events with the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, Shadow Lake Nature Preserve, WTA, and other

conservation-minded partners. 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
curtis@tacomamountaineers.org
Website: 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: Mandy Maycumber, manda_jo@live.com
Website: 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.

Our Adventure Speaker Series will return in November for another great season.

Branch Council Meetings are held at 6pm on the second Tuesday of the month, alternating in-person and Zoom, though Zoom is always available. Members are encouraged to attend. Contact Mandy Maycumber.

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.*

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Lodge access at our Baker, Meany, & Stevens lodges

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10-70% off gear & experiences from our partners

And more!

To learn more, visit mountaineers.org/membership/benefits



Hydration

By Bayley Stejer, Communications Coordinator

Photo by Skye Michel.

In the outdoors, many factors are out of our control. We're often at the whim of Mother Nature and to some extent, that's the thrill of being outside. While a certain level of risk will always exist, there are variables within our control too, and it's our job to identify and mitigate them. Hydration – the act of replenishing vital bodily fluids – is no exception.

The benefits of adequate hydration come as no surprise. A hydrated body regulates temperature, cushions our joints, experiences proper muscle function, absorbs oxygen, and more. We should all strive for that perfectly pale-yellow pee that assures we are indeed hydrated. Typically, we can achieve peak hydration through water and water-rich foods (like fruit). But what about when we're outside, in the heat of the day, sweating through our UPF 50 sun shirt? In short... we must adapt our intake.

The science of sweat

When we recreate outside, we sweat. We do this for many reasons, but mostly to regulate body temperature. Through sweat, we release unwanted bacteria, toxins, and chemicals from our body. On the flip side, we also release water and crucial electrolytes, such as potassium, calcium, magnesium, and – most critically – sodium. If our electrolytes fall out of balance, we risk fatigue, headaches, nausea, muscle cramps, confusion, irritability, changes in blood pressure, and more. Just like water, electrolytes are a key element in performance, injury prevention, and recovery, especially outside. To avoid dehydration and electrolyte imbalances, it's important to evaluate what we put in our water bottles and hydration bladders.

Determining our fluid-electrolyte balance

The amount of sweat lost in an activity will determine how we replenish our fluids and electrolytes. Considerations affecting sweat loss include: length and intensity of exercise, climate, altitude, current fitness, body size, and personal proneness to sweating (heavy sweaters should supplement more than light sweaters).

Generally, 4-6oz of liquid should be consumed every 15 minutes during activity. For prolonged activities over 90 minutes – or for short, intense periods of activity – the liquid we consume should be supplemented with electrolytes, particularly sodium. While sodium intake is largely dependent on the considerations shared above, the general recommendation is to supplement 500mg of sodium per hour for endurance activities (over 90 minutes).

By supplementing with proper fluid and electrolytes during periods of activity, we mitigate the risk of dehydration, ensuring we can optimally perform, recover, and enjoy our favorite activities.

Practical lessons in hydration

Pick your product. A variety of hydration products are available, ranging from sports drinks to electrolyte powders to gels and even gummies. Pick a product that aligns with your hydration goals and finances, so you are always prepared to supplement electrolytes.


Evaluate your strategy. When practicing your hydration method, pay attention to how your current intake or certain products make you feel, and adjust accordingly for future activities.

Before, during, and after. Hydration is not only important during activity. Peak hydration is achieved when adequate fluid and electrolytes are consumed before, during, and after periods of activity.

Stay salty. Fun fact: 1/4 teaspoon of table salt contains roughly 575mg of sodium!

DIY hydration. Make your own electrolyte drink at home by combining 3/4 cup of fresh citrus juice, 2 cups of water, 1/4 teaspoon of salt, and (optional) 2 tablespoons of maple syrup.

Pack your Ten Essentials. When packing for your trip, be sure to bring extra water and electrolytes. ▲▲



Take Our Emotional Safety in the Outdoors eLearning Course

Our Emotional Safety in the Outdoors eLearning course equips leaders with the resources to integrate more equitable and inclusive practices into their trips and courses. Safety is more than just physical. Feeling emotionally safe to ask questions, share concerns, and show up as your full self is a key component of physically safe outcomes.

Learn more about emotional safety and register for the course at mountaineers.org/emotional-safety-elearning-course.

This course builds on the principles established in our Foundations of Leadership and Instruction courses. We suggest starting with one of those two courses before taking this course.

Photo by Luke Hollister.

Board and Branch Elections September 1-22, 2024

Each year we host elections for our Board of Directors and participating branches. This year, we are voting on seven Board candidates. Candidates are selected by the Governance Committee from members who submit a self-nomination form, and then endorsed by our Board of Directors. Members of our Bellingham, Everett, Foothills, Olympia, Seattle, and Tacoma Branches can also vote for their branch leadership this year.



Voting is open September 1-22, 2024. Check your inbox on September 1 for your ballot. If you don't see an email from us, you can submit a paper ballot or vote online at mountaineers.org/board-branch-elections-2024.

Results will be announced October 1, 2024.

Join us virtually for The Mountaineers Annual Meeting on October 29 to learn more about our strategic plan. RSVP at mountaineers.org/AnnualMeeting2024.



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