

Mountaineer

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

in this issue:

New Beginnings

A place to be yourself

Snow Camping 101

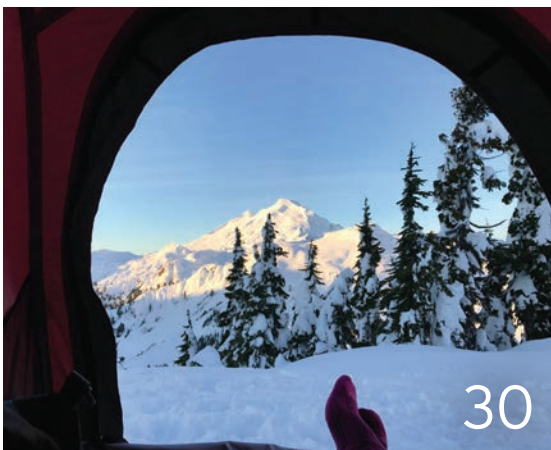
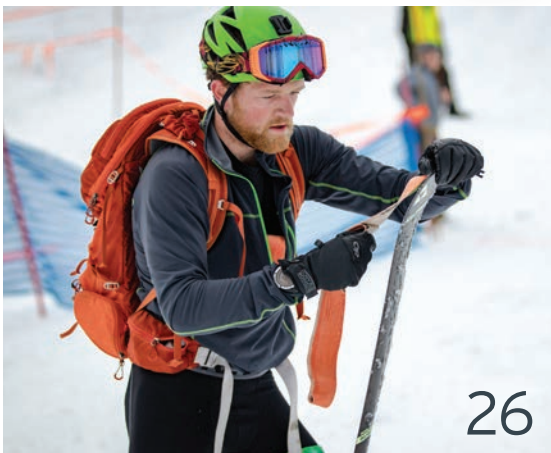
An ode to the cold

Dawn Patrol

5am is the best adventure time



Winter 2020 » Volume 114 » Number 1
The Mountaineers enriches lives and communities by helping people explore, conserve, learn about, and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond.



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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.

On the cover: Luis Campos enjoying a winter trip to Artist Point.
Photo by Luis Campos.



I write this message on a beautiful, crisp fall day as I pause to reflect on my two years as President of The Mountaineers Board of Directors. This time has brought me new friends, new skills, and above all a much greater appreciation of all that we offer to our members and community. Like you, I volunteer with The Mountaineers to return a small part of what The Mountaineers has given to me.

What I've come to appreciate most as President is how our focus has continued to center on our core mission: delivering excellence in volunteer-led outdoor education

and experiences. I've enjoyed many opportunities to interact with our volunteers to see this first hand, most recently when attending branch banquets. Those gatherings have been a real pleasure for me because they provide a time to share and honor the exceptional contributions of our volunteers.

We continue to successfully deliver on our mission by providing support for our volunteers. Our strategic plan, Vision 2022, outlines several priorities integral to that support. For example, the Board approved several investments to grow the capabilities of our volunteer leaders. We launched the Alpine Ambassadors program for our top climb leaders, providing greater opportunities for those who spend so much time mentoring students to push their own climbing abilities. And we offer the Leadership Development Series, which provides high-quality seminars on topics ranging from decision-making to creating equitable, inclusive learning environments for participants.

I look back happily on significant progress by The Mountaineers on other priorities of Vision 2022 as well. We recognize that our mission will not be fully embraced if we fail to make our organization available in a meaningful way to our community at large. In this past year the Board chartered an Equity & Inclusion Committee to take an honest look at our programs and help us become a place of belonging for individuals of all backgrounds and abilities.

We have grown to 13,800 members over the last two years - an increase of 12.3% - due primarily to the popular programs run by branches. The Foothills Branch, for example, has grown 32%, and has launched a number of committees and pilot programs to engage new outdoor enthusiasts along the I-90/I-405 corridor.

Partnerships is another area of tremendous growth. We're a founding member of the Mountain Education Alliance, a group working to develop a set of national climbing standards and certification programs which will improve the quality and consistency of volunteer-based climbing education and benefit recreational climbers throughout the U.S. We are an active member of Outdoor Alliance, a Washington D.C.-based conservation advocacy organization that provides policy expertise and technology to engage members easily through Action Alerts. And, most recently, we entered into a distribution agreement with Green Trails Maps, furthering our mission to connect people to the power of place.

Partnerships are essential to the extraordinary products of Mountaineers Books as well. Mountaineers Books introduces thousands to the outdoors and advocates for treasured public lands through our conservation imprint, Braided River. We partner with authors, supporters, and public officials to amplify stories about the wonders of our world and the work needed to protect it.

And we have partnered to expand the number of gifts, large and small, received by The Mountaineers, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. These partnerships are critical to our success because our income from programs and facilities rentals does not cover all that we wish to do to support our volunteers. Nor does it support everything we need to do to ensure that the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest are preserved and available to us now, and for the next 100 years.

There is much to celebrate about The Mountaineers, and we are, as always, invigorated by the challenges before us. I am genuinely proud to be a member alongside you, and am looking forward to seeing the impact we can make together in the next two years, and beyond.

Lorna Corrigan
Mountaineers Board President



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

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Photo by Ida Vincent.



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Photo by Mitch Pittman.

As a long-time staff member with The Mountaineers, I've had lots of occasions to visit Meany Lodge, and I've marveled at the rope tow riders on every winter trip. It's incredible to watch them clip onto the tow so effortlessly and ride with ease to the top. Somehow, I've managed to get out of riding the tow on each trip. I could lie and say it's because "there was always a time constraint" or "I didn't have the right gear," but the truth is... I was terrified.

This March, after skinning to Meany Lodge with friends to watch the Patrol Race, the fresh powder called and I finally got up the gumption to try. With instructions from the incomparable Patti Polinsky, who personally fitted me with leather over-gloves and a belt that's tethered to a special camming device to grip the rope, I was ready.

I felt confident approaching the swiftly-moving braid of nylon. Concentrating, I positioned the metal locker at a 45-degree angle and, with a deep breath, lunged toward the rope. I made it five feet before coming loose.

I lined up again, this time behind a gaggle of giggling youngsters. They zipped up one by one, and I noted their lack of perceivable effort with mild irritation. When it was my turn, I lunged again and managed to hang on a bit longer. Then, my poor technique failed me once more.

Like a pumped-out climber I shook my hands as I skied back down, riding right up the tow and clipping on before I had a chance to think. Gripping with all my might, I zipped past fail point #1, then fail point #2, feeling a familiar stomach-flipping sensation when the slope steepened midway. I kept holding, sure my hands would give out at any moment. This time, my skis kissed the top.

With true disbelief, I looked toward my friends who had been waiting patiently. (They, too, were first-timers, but apparently possessed superior tow-riding DNA). I smiled wide, embracing the relief and happiness you can only feel after a moment of terror. I was triumphant.

Then someone told me the rope tow had only been in second gear. Of course.

When we were putting together this edition of the magazine, we wanted to explore the idea of "Hidden Gems." Places that are not so well known or are just off the beaten path, like our Mountaineers Meany Lodge, where the beating heart of its exceptional community is a 17 mph rope tow known affectionately as 'Mach'. We had a number of stories come in exactly on theme, like our citizen-science project around the elusive White-Tailed Ptarmigan or the quickly exploding sport of skimo, but the deeper we got into the articles in this issue the more we realized that hidden gems are more personal than place. These gems are hiding inside each of us.

As you dive into this edition, you'll find that many of our stories explore the hidden gems within ourselves - stories of resilience and self-discovery. If snow camping is something you've always wanted to try, we have a piece by volunteer leader Teresa Haggerty to give you the 101s of sleeping outside in winter. Or perhaps skiing is new to you, but you are afraid of failure. Hailey Oppelt walks you through how to embrace being a wobbly beginner at any age. Craig Romano shares an experience in the Pyrenees where his latent first aid skills revealed themselves in an important moment. And we share in the life of Luis Campos, the hidden gem behind the Meany rope tow, whose unique journey to The Mountaineers demonstrates the importance of embracing what you keep hidden, even from yourself.

As always we have wonderful pieces in our regular columns too. Find inner alignment in Peak Performance, take a walk down memory lane in Retro Rewind and Did You Know?, and read an important update about The Mountaineers Foundation in Impact Giving. We also introduce the new Mountain LEAD program in Outside Insight, and encourage you to share The Mountaineers with others during this holiday season in Membership Matters.

I encourage you to pay particular attention to our Conservation Currents piece, which outlines how we're working to protect the outdoor experience, why it matters, and what's at stake if we don't step up our efforts.

In the spirit of the changing season, and a new year (and decade!) just around the corner, I hope you'll take one of our stories as a launching point to do something you wouldn't have done before. Try a new activity. Visit a new place. Discover a feeling you haven't experienced before. My goal: ride Mach in third gear. Bonus points for getting it on the first try.

Kristina Ciari

We shared the scrappy origins of **Lightly on the Land**, a Mountaineers Books title that's been used across the world to help inspire and construct well-built trails.



"Love this book. When the Everett Branch puts on trail maintenance classes we give this book to the students."

-Louis Coglas, 32-year member

In **Drawn To High Places**, we interviewed local artist Nikki Frumkin on what inspires her, and how she creates her remarkable, giant watercolor paintings on backcountry trips.



"Nikki Frumkin is one of the kindest, and most talented people that I have met. She's humble, easy-going and highly creative. She is encouraging as an artist and an outdoor enthusiast. If you ever get the chance take one of her classes... you should... even if you 'can't paint.' Nikki will make you believe there is an artist within you and if you dig deep you just might discover that she's right."

-Allison DeTuerk Tapert, Facebook comment

"Love Nikki's art! And my students [do] too!"

-Cami Lle, Facebook comment



In **Thirst to Belong**, Annette Diggs shared with us what it's like to be a woman of color in the outdoors, and her journey to becoming a mountaineer.

"This resonates with me. Both as a mixed woman (and seeing how differently exposed to nature the two sides of my family are), but as a poor person who lived in the same area as people with such different opportunities and

experiences. The library and geographic photo books and such gave me such a hunger for the world, too. Love this. Well done."

-Veda Taylor, Facebook comment

"Wonderful and inspiring, thanks!"

-Stevie Russell, 30-year member

"Be the inspiration you seek from others.' You, Annette most certainly are. Phenomenal achievement."

-MC Reinhardt, Facebook comment

We've been sharing a lot of things about the **Public Lands Heist**, and one member had this impassioned response:

"It is very important to be involved in maintaining the quality of our public lands. Under the idea of ensuring they are available for generations to come we need to share our appreciation for public lands. That includes keeping our voice heard in congress. As we use our vote to elect representatives that will respect public lands and their needs we will see this protection maintained. As legislation is in place to regulate use and funds we should protect and update it as needed. Support of public lands can look different in various capacities. However when our representatives are not making our voice heard it is our responsibility to make that known and change something. The government was created to give the everyday citizen a voice. We the people are the government and those in congress should simply be an organized way of listening to and acting upon our voice."

-Elizabeth Anderson, guest member

Thank you for sharing the love! As we shine the spotlight on members and volunteers, folks express encouragement, affection, and admiration for their fellow Mountaineers:



"Loved this! Especially the advice to not be just a follower. You never know what will occur that will put you in charge (either of yourself or a group). No matter what your experience, do your own preparation, be your own leader, follow the Climb Code."

-Tina Fox, 3-year member, responding to "Leader Spotlight: Atsuko Yamaguchi"

"Sara is a great leader in the making. I had the opportunity to climb Sloan peak with her. One interesting fact about Sara is she has never climbed Baker via CD or Easton but only the North ridge :)"

-Amrit Panda, 2-year member, responding to "10 Essential Questions: Sara Ludeman"

"Tom is one of the main reasons that I am a Mountaineer!!! Cheers, Tom!!!"

-Wes Neal, 6-year member, responding to "Appreciate Every Minute"

"Well deserved! An amazing artist! Congratulations."

-Teresa Wizinsky, Facebook comment, responding to "10 Essential Questions: Heidi Walker"

Name Michael Lai

Hometown Born in Taipei, Taiwan;
grew up in Findlay, OH

Member Since November 2016

Occupation Nurse practitioner (ARNP)

Favorite Activities Rock climbing,
mountaineering, and skiing. I'm also
a retired ballet dancer, social justice
advocate, dog dad, and sometimes
pretend I have a fake cooking show
when I make food at home.



Photo courtesy of Michael Lai.

How did you get involved with The Mountaineers?

After working on the east coast for over a decade, I packed up my car, began driving cross-country from Washington D.C., and along the way decided to move to the PNW. I had heard of these things called mountains and volcanoes - stuff of legend. While in graduate school in Seattle I dated a woman who introduced me to climbing. I was... not so great at this. While my attempt to impress her unsurprisingly failed, I found myself excited to learn how to safely travel and enjoy the mountains with which I was falling in love. I had friends suggest The Mountaineers to me, but frankly, my own anxiety, imposter syndrome, self-doubt, and fear kept me from initially joining. It wasn't until a very kind, chance encounter with Becca Polglase leading a group of MAC youth cragging that I realized this was where I wanted to be.

What motivates you to get outside with us?

It's been said by others, to which I echo - the people. I continue to return each year to instruct at Intense Basic; it's like the 9-day outdoors adult summer camp version of the "Real World," but way cooler. Not only have I found folks with common interests and goals, I've found a sense of community and a home. In this community, it doesn't matter how much money you make, your color/sex, or how hard you send, bruh. What matters is the shared desire to learn how to send safely, the genuine care and support we all have for one another, and our shared passion for the outdoors.

What's your favorite Mountaineers memory?

Surprising a student on her Basic graduation climb with a graduation ceremony at the summit of the glacier - helium balloons, banner, diploma, card, cap and gown, confetti cake, ice cream, pomp and circumstance. It was so delightful. (Pro tip: you must deflate the helium balloons slightly prior to the climb!)

What does adventure mean to you?

There was a time when I thought adventure meant pursuing the next gnarly objective, but when I realized there would always be something harder to climb, it made this approach seem self-defeating. More importantly, it became obvious for me that having the most fun on an adventure had everything to do with spending time with the people I love, and accepting myself for who I am. There's a quote I love, which says, "These mountains that you are carrying, you were only supposed to climb." Adventure to me are my fears, uncertainty, and doubt, tempered with stoke, bravery, and bonus points for style. It's often failure, and always trying hard. At the end of the day, it's getting back home, beat-up, tired, and celebrating whatever progress I've made that day towards my goals, as well as recognizing how much more I have to learn.

Lightning round

Sunrise or sunset? Sunset, since the sun sets over the ocean on this coast.

Smile or game face? Smile, but sometimes you gotta put the game face on and be brave.

What's your 11th Essential? I've been known to lug up summit watermelons, helium balloons, and an entire camp stove to make pancakes.

Post-adventure meal of choice? I never turn down a good taco.

If you could be a rockstar at any outdoor activity overnight, what would it be? I'd love to master something like watercolor or photography to capture my time in the outdoors.

90-90 Heel Digs with Pelvic Tilt

By Courtenay W. Schurman, MS, CSCS, PN2

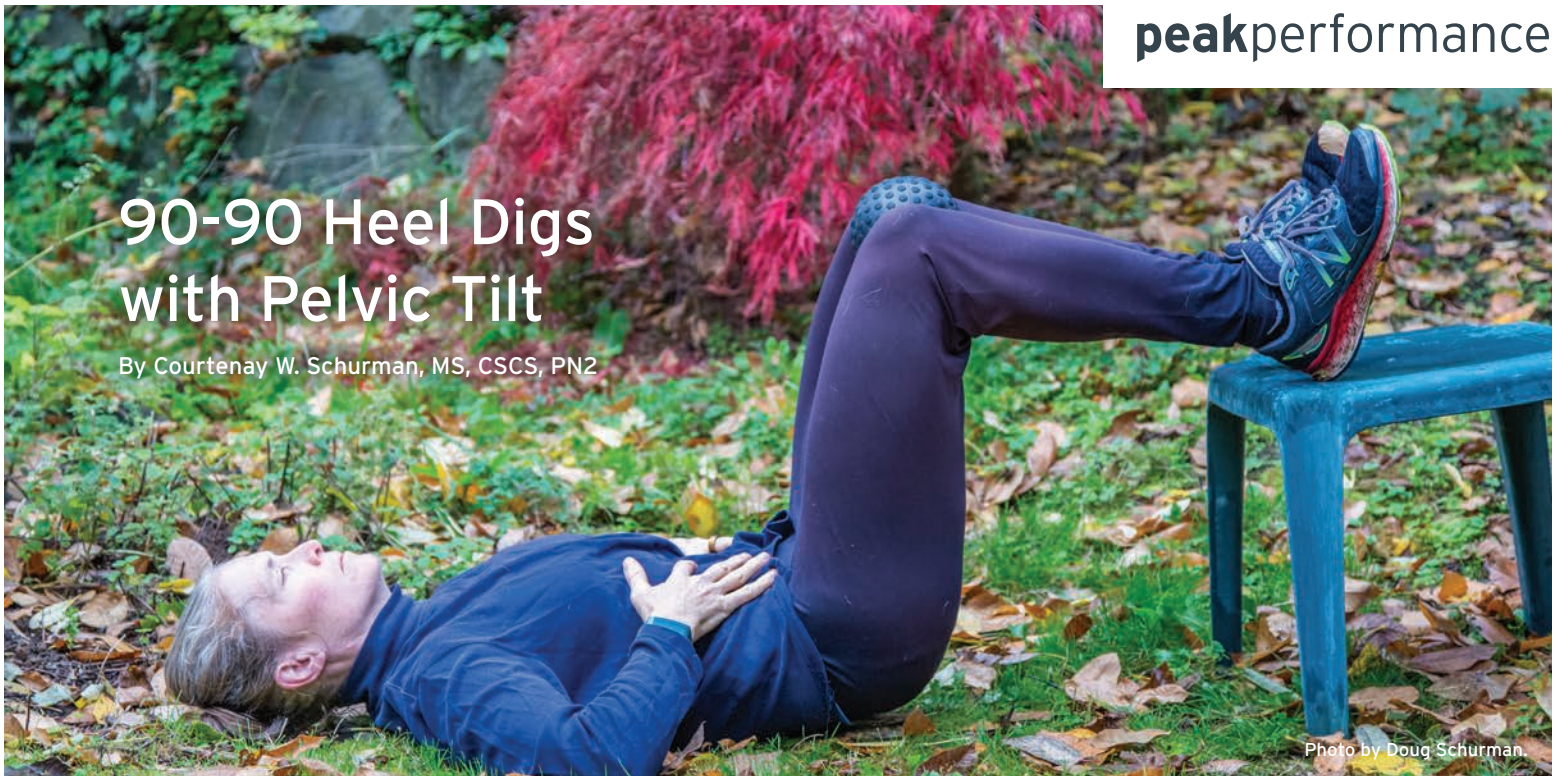


Photo by Doug Schurman.

Though it's easy to become focused on major muscle groups, it's important to remind ourselves to take a look at those parts of our bodies that sometimes go unnoticed. Pelvic alignment is one of these oft-forgotten areas, but it's key to our overall health and wellbeing. The pelvis is the foundation of many of our most-used and powerful muscles, and poor alignment can result in pain and discomfort. One exercise I use when a sacroiliac (SI) joint is stuck or flared up is a 90-90 heel dig with pelvic tilt, as it will help to realign my pelvis. While this movement may not be for everyone, if you have discomfort in either of your SI joints and are looking for something to relieve it, try adding this to your warm-up for a few weeks and see if it helps.

Get in position

Lie face up on a mat with your heels resting on a chair or bench and your hips, knees, and ankles at right angles. Place a 4-5 inch diameter ball between your knees and a small rolled-up towel underneath your neck.

Engage

Rest your hands on the bottom of the rib cage and exhale fully through your mouth, focusing on completely emptying your lungs. Inhale through your nose, focusing on filling your upper lungs only (your rib cage should not move). On your next exhale, dig your heels into the bench and raise your tailbone an inch off the floor. Press your lower back - i.e. the edge of the rib cage - flat to the floor, almost as though you're trying to round the lower back, rather than arching it. Squeeze your inner thighs into the ball and focus on engaging the left hamstring and inner thigh. To engage the left obliques, imagine the left hip coming ever so slightly up toward the left ribs. You can palpate that area with your left hand to make sure the targeted muscle groups are firing. Because of

asymmetries in the body as it relates to organ placement, the left side historically has more issues than the right. Focusing on getting left abductors, hamstrings and obliques stronger, this exercise repositions the pelvis for most people.

Repeat

Relax the hips back to the floor as you inhale, keeping the rib cage held in and down, with your lower abdominals soft. Repeat 10-20 times, exhaling as you lift, testing engagement, and inhaling as you release. Include this exercise in your warm-up and cool down two to four times a week, with two sets of 10-20 repetitions.

Key tips

- Do not raise your hips into a bridge. That is a completely different exercise and might lead to increased pain.
- If you have any pain in your lower back or knees when you do this exercise, shorten your range of motion or discontinue the exercise entirely.
- Avoid overusing the abdominals. Palpate to make sure they're relaxed and focus on your hamstrings.
- While this exercise may not be for everyone, it's certainly a good place to start. Resetting the pelvis might help you reduce lower back discomfort by activating the gluteals, hamstrings, and obliques, and supporting core muscles. If you feel less pain after a single set, keep doing it as part of your warm-up. If you don't feel any relief after including it in a few workouts, it may not be right for you. ▲▲

Courtenay Schurman is an NSCA-CSCS certified personal trainer, Precision Nutrition Level 2 Certified Nutrition Supercoach, and co-owner of Body Results. She specializes in training outdoor athletes. For more how-to exercises or health and wellness tips, visit her website at bodyresults.com or send a question to court@bodyresults.com.

Excerpt from *Rising: Becoming the First North American Woman on Everest*

By Sharon Wood

Team members are on their way down the West Ridge and nearing Camp Four at 7,300 metres. Photo by Jim Elzinga.

In 1986, Canadian Sharon Wood became the first North American woman to summit Mt. Everest and is still one of the very few who have accomplished the summit via the West Ridge. In her memoir *Rising: Becoming the First North American Woman on Everest*, Wood reflects on the seventy days she spent on the mountain, and on the pivotal experiences and influences that brought her to that staggeringly beautiful and austere corner of the world. Beyond the physical hardships, she faced personal challenges as an outlier in the male bastion of Himalayan climbing. The following is excerpted from her new book published by Mountaineers Books. It has been edited for length.

Chapter 1: The Promise

MARCH 17, 1986

WITH MOVEMENT COMES COMFORT. In the dark, between Laurie and Jim, mentor and leader, I doze as my head jounces and lolls between their shoulders. We are nestled in the cab of a five-ton diesel truck climbing more than a thousand metres via sixty or more switchbacks to reach Pang La, a 5,200-metre-high pass on the Tibetan Plateau.

While the rest of our entourage overnights in Shigatse, we are getting a head start with the slower-moving trucks carrying our cargo. The truck heaves and sways over potholes and then races toward the next straightaway, pressing our spines into our seat backs. At first we braced ourselves, our hands on the dashboard

or the roof, careful to not touch one another in the jostle. But now we've surrendered to the movement and relax into each other. Rather than try to talk over the truck's throaty growls and sighs, I stare through the sandblasted windshield. It feels like no one else is awake in the world.

A scent – part feral, part mothballs – fills the cab. Rawhide and thongs wrap the driver's ankles, replacing the missing eyelets and laces in his boots. Bailing wire binds the rest of the boot to the sole. He wears a khaki-green cap with turned-up fur-lined earflaps and a parka and pants with a time-worn sheen at the elbows and knees. I guess his clothing is Chinese People's Liberation Army cast-offs, and he, Tibetan. His face is all sharp angles. There is some fire in his eyes—a hint of hope that it's not over yet for his beleaguered country the Chinese now occupy. He has offered no name, nor answers to our questions, and I wonder if it's because he doesn't understand or if he's been ordered to remain silent. Soon, my eyes close and I feel myself being rocked and cradled as we rise.

I wake with a start when Jim slaps his palm on the dash. "Stop here!" he says. He raises his arm and slices the air. "Cut!" The driver pumps the brake and wrenches the emergency lever up, and the truck comes to a stop. Then Jim points at us, the roof and the back of the truck. "We ride up on back."

Laurie yanks the door lever up and pushes his shoulder into the door. It creaks open and he steps down, then offers me his hand.



We reach the summit at 9pm, Everest Light Time. Photo by Dwayne Congdon.

In the dim of the predawn light, the three of us stumble around to the back. We climb over our cargo and wedge ourselves so we can look out over the cab. Jim slams his hand on the roof and yells, "Okay, go!"

With the drawstrings of our hoods cinched tight around our faces, we huddle close to fend off a cold wind that bites through our clothing. Laurie pulls me into his side as he shouts over the din of the truck and the rush of the wind, "Any minute now!"

Jim reaches across my back and grips my shoulder. He points. "Here it comes, Woody!"

As we crest the top of the pass at sunrise, Laurie sweeps his arm over an ocean of brown hills crowned by the white wall of the Himalayas in the distance, and says, "Sharon Wood, welcome to Mount Everest!"

The driver pulls over to stop amidst rows of rock cairns festooned with string upon string of prayer flags streaming in the wind. Far off, the mountain that I've been planning for, thinking about, dreaming about, reigns above all else on the horizon, with a plume of snow tearing off its top. But what hits me harder than this first sight of Everest is how grateful I am to be sharing

this experience with these men who have been so instrumental in bringing me to this magical moment. There's no one in the world I'd rather have beside me, and I sense I'll feel this way every day for the next two and a half months of my life. ▲▲

Sharon Wood is an internationally-certified alpine guide, and the recipient of the 1986 "Tenzing Norgay Award" and "Professional Mountaineer of the Year" award from the American Alpine Club. She will be a BeWild guest speaker at our Seattle Program Center on January 9, 2020.

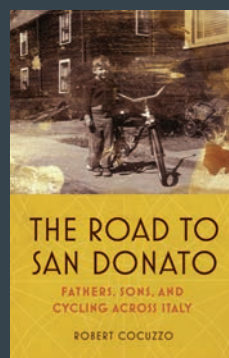
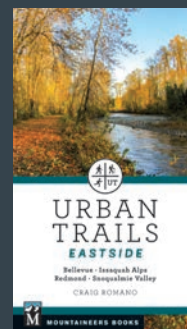


Urban Trails Series: Tacoma and Eastside

By Craig Romano

Get out with a refreshing run, a peaceful hike, or a stroll with the kids using trails close to home. That's what's offered in these two pocket-sized urban guidebooks. With an emphasis on easy access to the outdoors and fitness,

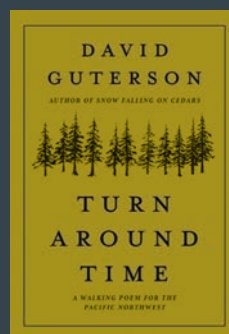
Urban Trails Tacoma and *Urban Trails Eastside* are the latest additions to the "Urban Trails" guidebook series. Authored by local favorite Craig Romano, these guides introduce locals and visitors alike to the walking paths and hidden wilderness in their own backyards. Each book is full color and includes 40+ hikes with maps, trail distance, elevation gain, amenities, and more.



The Road To San Donato: Fathers, Sons, and Cycling Across Italy

By Robert Cocuzzo

The Road to San Donato is an adventurous and nostalgic bicycling memoir of an American father and son tracing their Italian heritage. Riding rental bikes and carrying the bare-minimum supplies, Rob Cocuzzo and his 64-year-old father, Stephen, embark on a nearly 500-mile ride from Florence to San Donato Val di Comino, an ancient village in the mountains outside of Rome from which their family emigrated a hundred years earlier.



Turn Around Time: A Walking Poem for the Pacific Northwest

By David Guterson, Illustrations by Justin Gibbens

Most outdoor enthusiasts understand that the phrase "turn around time" is the point in any adventure when you must return to home or camp, regardless of where you are in your trip. For award-winning novelist David Guterson, it is also a metaphor for where we find ourselves in the middle of our lives, and his new narrative poem explores this idea through a lyrical journey along a trail.

Discover the Magic of Winter with Olympia Youth Programs

By Becky Nielsen, Olympia Youth Program Manager

As a child, do you remember anything more exciting than a snow day? The magic of waking up to a blanket of crisp white snow, the world outside your door transformed into something new and seemingly boundless, was unlike anything else. You'd grab your coat, tug on boots, and run outside to dive headfirst into winter, making snowballs, swooshing your arms into a snow angels, and grinning ear-to-ear at the snow-capped trees. On snow days, the cold didn't seem quite as bitter and your cheeks didn't feel quite as red. The world was a whole new place to be explored.

Although we don't often see snowy mornings in the lowland Northwest, the magic and excitement they spark is something to celebrate and emulate whenever you have the chance. That's why we're proud that we have the ability to offer kids in our Olympia Youth Programs winters full of adventure. Our Explorers Youth Clubs have gone snowshoeing around Paradise, cross-country skiing through the forest of Crystal Springs, and igloo building at Mt. Rainier. Parents are directly involved on our trips, and the benefits are two-fold: not only do they share a precious snow day with their kids, they often learn a trick or two that will help them get outside with their families on their own.

Through our youth and family programming, we seek to break down barriers to getting outside, especially when it comes to adverse conditions or accessing remote places. We review clothing needs to make sure our snow frolickers stay warm and dry, facilitate the daunting process of permits and passes, provide equipment, and pick out beautiful spots to enjoy. We even have alternatives ready, just in case our ever-inconsistent weather sabotages Plan A.

However, we recognize that not all families are looking for time in the snow. Fortunately we know about activities that



Connie Chen on the Explorers Rainforest Hike at Falls Creek Loop.
Photo by Becky Nielsen.

are simply better in the cold, dark, wet days of fall and winter. Certain animals make their appearance this time of year, including salmon. We are blessed to have multiple creeks with salmon runs in November, and short hikes to Kennedy Creek or the McLane Nature Trail provide a great spot to see them. This doubles as a learning opportunity for volunteer leaders to teach youth about the lifecycles of salmon and their importance in our ecosystem. Elk also come down to the lowlands in fall as rutting season begins! A family forest hike in the Olympics or Cascades offers the chance to see or hear the captivating Roosevelt Elk. Each year our volunteers lead a family hike into these areas, hoping to admire the elk and catch a glimpse of the fat, slippery salmon that swim through our rivers.

As we transition into winter, one of my favorite activities is finding birds. Many species come to our wetlands only in winter, making this time of year exciting for aspiring birders. The Nisqually Wildlife Refuge is a wonderful place to spend a winter day. Their long boardwalk protects you from wetland mud and makes the adventure easy for smaller children. Pintails and scoters and shovelers all make appearances - be sure to bring a pair of binoculars and a bird guide or two! In February owls nest high in the trees, and the bare branches



Hand-made forest gnomes.
Photo by Jaq Morrill

make it easy to see them if you know where to look. Our youth have become better birders every year, peering into the trees with their binoculars.

If birding isn't your cup of tea, wonderful waterfalls can always be found. As winter progresses our foliage recedes and rainfall increases, offering great views of flowing creeks and waterfalls. For families, we offer short hikes to big waterfalls and lovely creek hikes that have some rain protection, lush vegetation, and are not too long or grueling.

And with that abundant rain our mosses and lichens, adorning the trees and the trail, return in full force! These amazing plants rehydrate in fall and winter to give us fairy-tale forests, fit for a woodland elf. Find a trail with a giant moss-covered tree and give it a hug - you can even look for mushrooms along the way. A few of our favorite trails are near the Skokomish River and Quinault. To make the trip even more exciting, grab a simple guidebook and magnifying glasses to open up the world of miniature plants. Fungi and mosses will fascinate your kids (and you!) when admired up close. We will be offering a children's naturalist hike this winter, and are excited to help our youth explore the magical world of the forest.

Winter is also an excellent time to help out with stewardship. Tree plantings often happen during this time, and we partner with local stewardship groups on restoration activities. Last year our Explorers youth club built tree swallow nests to replace our local land trusts' old, decaying ones. This year we hope to visit the nests and clean them out. We will also build new boxes where our local bat populations can seek shelter.

Though we love new and exciting events, our Olympia branch holds a few family-friendly traditions near and dear to our hearts. Our annual Gnome Tea Party in early December is a way for us to thank the little stewards of the woods and enjoy a family gathering of both humans and gnomes in a covered outdoor setting. After a fun gnome-making party, we hide our creations in the forest for a game of hike-and-seek. We then

enjoy a short hike to gather the gnomes for a party, where we enjoy forest delicacies, including Douglas fir tea and natural gnome treats served on tiny wooden plates.

We also love to take advantage of the wet weather and minimal fire danger in winter. On a dark and cold day, a nice hot fire is enough to coax you outside. We have two great activities each year, our annual bonfire and Cooking with Fire. Our bonfire is a great opportunity to teach youth fire safety skills in a fun, social setting. Our Cooking with Fire event is exciting as well, allowing kids to learn how to start and maintain a fire before cooking over it! More complex than roasting a marshmallow on a stick, we love to sneak a little education and creativity into our activities.

Although summer gets all the press, winter is a truly unique time in the Northwest that offers opportunities for our kids to learn, explore, and grow. Whether you've spent your life outdoors or are just beginning, we'd love to have you and your children on one of our activities or in our year-round youth clubs. We offer opportunities for youth aged 6 to 18, and all are welcome. Get outside with us and discover a new bird, cozy up to a crackling fire, or enjoy the pink-cheeked thrill of a new snowfall. We promise to get your kids grinning ear-to-ear. ▲▲

The Mountaineers offers youth programs for kids and teens at our Seattle, Tacoma, Kitsap, and Olympia branches. From outreach programs to day camps to year-long clubs, youth across the Puget Sound are invited to join us outside to enjoy the incredible lands and waters of the Northwest. For more information, please visit mountaineers.org/youth.

51 Years of The Mountaineers Foundation™

By Tom Vogl, CEO

It is a sad moment in the history of The Mountaineers. With a heavy heart, we learned that the foundation we created more than 50 years ago has filed a lawsuit against The Mountaineers. We want to explain the events that led to this and share how we plan to defend our beloved organization and the wishes of our donors.

In May 1968, our board of directors recognized a challenge with our fundraising. Under IRS rules, The Mountaineers could accept donations but those contributions were not tax-deductible. This restriction presented a barrier to attracting larger donations and bequests as part of wills.

To remedy this, our board voted to establish an independent 501(c)(3) organization, which could accept tax-deductible gifts and make those funds available to The Mountaineers. In creating this independent organization, The Mountaineers board provided the new entity with a license to use The Mountaineers name, and The Mountaineers Foundation came into existence.

Over time, The Mountaineers Foundation broadened its original focus to include not just support for The Mountaineers but also grants to other organizations whose work aligned with some portion of our mission. Differing perspectives – about how much support The Mountaineers Foundation should provide to The Mountaineers versus other organizations – led The Mountaineers to become a 501(c)(3) in 2011 to directly accept tax-deductible contributions.

We continued to work collaboratively with and to receive grants from The Mountaineers Foundation in the years after 2011. However, in 2018 the Foundation changed its public operating name to Keta Legacy Foundation without releasing the registered corporate name of The Mountaineers Foundation. At the same time, Keta Legacy Foundation wholly revised and restated its mission, which now reads: “To promote actions and foster understanding to inspire conservation from the Rhododendron Preserve to the Salish Sea region.”



In the time since The Mountaineers Foundation revised its operating name to Keta Legacy Foundation, we learned about repeated instances of donor confusion. That confusion arose because Keta Legacy Foundation continued using “The Mountaineers Foundation” as its registered corporate name. This resulted in gifts and bequests that were intended for The Mountaineers being misdirected to Keta Legacy Foundation. When The Mountaineers learned of this, we asked Keta Legacy Foundation to stop using our name, and to work with us in an open and collaborative fashion to ensure that both organizations respected the wishes and intent of donors.

We hoped to find a common-sense solution that respected our shared history and honored donors. Instead, on November 8, 2019, the Keta Legacy Foundation filed a lawsuit against The Mountaineers, seeking to continue using our name. The Foundation also asked the court to order that we stop using The Mountaineers – our name since 1906 – for charitable fundraising services. We are surprised and saddened by this action.

A historic partnership

Prior to these recent events, The Mountaineers and The Mountaineers Foundation enjoyed 50 years of shared vision and mission. The Mountaineers Foundation raised funds and awarded grants to The Mountaineers and other organizations that supported our common mission of protecting the environment, conservation, outdoor education and recreation, and natural history. To this day, members of the Keta Legacy Foundation Board of Directors are Mountaineers.

In *The Mountaineers: A History*, published by Mountaineers

Books in 1998, we recognized The Mountaineers Foundation for helping fund efforts such as rehabilitation of the Schurman Rock climbing facility at Camp Long and creating a new map of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. In more recent years, The Mountaineers Foundation provided funding to grow The Mountaineers education programs, host a public lands internship, and support conservation events for members.

One of the single largest grants ever made by The Mountaineers Foundation was from a bequest by Brunhilde (Bruni) Wislicenus. Her generous bequest provided the funds that made it possible to renovate The Mountaineers Tacoma Program Center in 2012. And in 2016, a grant from The Mountaineers Foundation helped fund the Low Impact Recreation eLearning course that teaches responsible backcountry recreation skills.

Diverging missions

Keta Legacy Foundation has long benefitted from association with The Mountaineers and their use of our name. For many years, The Mountaineers provided services such as accounting and fundraising mailings for Keta Legacy Foundation, free of charge. Over most of its history, Keta Legacy Foundation's primary source of donations was Mountaineers members, and especially bequests from members upon their deaths. While The Mountaineers and The Mountaineers Foundation worked well together for many years, changes in mission and vision within the Foundation have strained the relationship.

The scope and name change of The Mountaineers Foundation to Keta Legacy Foundation created confusion and discord among donors who believed that contributions to The Mountaineers Foundation would be used to support The Mountaineers. Confusion even led professionals who regularly work with nonprofit organizations to make errors that have resulted in misdirected gifts. For example, we recently learned that after a former board president of The Mountaineers passed away, the bequest which he intended to benefit The Mountaineers was incorrectly directed to Keta Legacy Foundation's tax identification number. Fortunately, the family recognized the error and was able to redirect the gift to The Mountaineers. In another example, a Mountaineers member made a generous pledge at our annual gala to support The Mountaineers. When the member's financial planner issued the check, he, too, accidentally misdirected the funds to Keta Legacy Foundation because it was still listed in the state corporate records as "The Mountaineers Foundation".

The road ahead

It's important that Mountaineers members and supporters understand that gifts and bequests intended to benefit The Mountaineers should be directed to The Mountaineers at our Seattle address: 7700 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115. Those wishing to support the Rhododendron Preserve or the new mission of Keta Legacy Foundation should direct gifts or bequests to its address in Bremerton. Any questions about making a donation to The Mountaineers should be directed to

development@mountaineers.org.

We believe it is of paramount importance we respect the wishes of our generous donors. The Mountaineers will do everything in its power to ensure gifts and bequests by donors are not misdirected. If you have concerns or questions about a gift you have made, please contact The Mountaineers CEO, Tom Vogl at tomv@mountaineers.org.

While this is a sad moment in our history, we sincerely wish Keta Legacy Foundation success in its effort to improve the health of the Salish Sea and local salmon habitat. The Mountaineers desires to honor its long relationship with Keta Legacy Foundation through continued partnership in the stewardship of the Rhododendron Preserve and our deep commitment to conservation advocacy. ▲▲

The Mountaineers Foundation™ is a philanthropic arm and trademark of The Mountaineers®, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, tax ID: 27-3009280, 7700 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115.

The Rhododendron Preserve

For more than 30 years, The Mountaineers and The Mountaineers Foundation have closely partnered to support the Kitsap Rhododendron Preserve. The Preserve dates back to 1915 when The Mountaineers acquired 74 acres of old-growth forest adjacent to Hidden Valley Ranch, owned by Edward Paschall.

A group of 66 Mountaineers made the acquaintance of Paschall and his family on a 1909 outing near their family ranch. The Mountaineers and the Paschalls became fast friends, which led to the 1915 acquisition of land to help protect this unique and valuable ecosystem. Over time and with the help and generosity of the Paschalls and Mountaineers donors, The Mountaineers was able to add to the Preserve by purchasing adjoining property. In 1985, The Mountaineers transferred ownership of the Preserve to The Mountaineers Foundation which could, as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity, hold and protect the property without paying costly property taxes.

Since that time, the Preserve has grown to more than 468 acres with purchases of additional land made possible through donations from generous Mountaineers members. The Mountaineers continues to help steward the Preserve's combined acreage by providing an onsite caretaker, access to meeting and education space, parking, and a trailhead on its adjacent property - free of charge to Keta Legacy Foundation. The Mountaineers continues to own and maintain the 20 adjacent acres, home to the Kitsap Forest Theatre, one of the oldest outdoor theatres in the US.

Mountain Education Alliance

A national partnership of mountain clubs

By Becca Polglase, Programs & Operations Director

As we well know at The Mountaineers, teamwork and a shared passion for the outdoors can produce some incredible things. Over the past few years, volunteers and staff at The Mountaineers have enjoyed deepening our relationships with our partners at the American Alpine Club, Colorado Mountain Club, and the Mazamas as we work together to develop national climbing education standards for volunteer clubs. Through this work, relationships and friendships have formed, new climbing partners were found, and we all quickly realized how much we have in common. Today, The Mountaineers is proud to be a part of the newly-named Mountain Education Alliance (MEA) - a formalized partnership between our organizations, and we're excited to be a part of a new program to recognize volunteer educators, both in the United States and worldwide.

Shared practices

For the past decade, staff across these organizations have met informally to share trends, best practices, and new ideas. We shared challenges and learned from one another as we embarked on new websites. We shared ideas on access and conservation. Today, all four organizations are members of Outdoor Alliance, a national alliance of human-powered recreation organizations that provides a professional, collective voice for conservation and access. Our youth programs also emerged around the same time, and those teams have met over the years to share ideas. Most recently, staff and volunteers from our clubs have had the opportunity to visit each other's Leadership Conferences - another great way to share ideas and make connections.

National climbing education standards

In 2016, we began coming together more formally around a truly exciting project: developing national standards for volunteer-led climbing education that meet UIAA international standards. This is different from other climbing education standards (like an AMGA certification) in that it is designed for volunteers who are helping new climbers become self-sufficient. It creates a certification that is more accessible than guide certifications and more appropriate for a recreational setting.

Over the course of the past three years, five cohorts of staff and volunteers from all four MEA member organizations (plus some



CMC Leader John Martersteck offers tips to Mountaineers Leader Sean Albert during a Ouray Ice Climbing trip. Photo by Val Hawks (@valhawks).



Building new friendships. Photo by Val Hawks (@valhawks).



LEAD Standards development in Golden, CO. Photo by Tess Wendel.

key guests from the Appalachian Mountain Club, NOLS, Outward Bound, and the American Mountain Guides Association) met to examine the UIAA standards and carefully adapt them to meet the needs of mountain clubs in the United States. These teams of volunteers and staff then worked remotely to refine the standards, and each organization is on the verge of granting our first certifications to our volunteer leaders.

The certifications, known as Mountain LEAD (Leadership Education and Development) certificates, are designed to recognize highly-skilled volunteers in many disciplines of mountain sports, including rock climbing, mountaineering, ice climbing, skiing, and more. These certificates and programs will be vetted and approved through a rigorous audit process by the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA). With these certificates, the United States will have a benchmark for training and education in mountain sports, and its recipients will be recognized as certified educators not only in the United States, but across the globe.

Soon, The Mountain Education Alliance will accept applicants to become the first to receive certifications in one of three disciplines: Top-Rope Climbing, Single Pitch Sport Climbing, and Single Pitch Traditional Climbing. More certifications will be released in the future. Look for application instructions on mountaineers.org.

Joint trips

Although the national climbing education standards will undoubtedly serve as an important unifying force in American climbing, a very important benefit of their development was the relationships built between our organizations. Volunteers from each of our clubs met in five cohorts to develop these standards. The meetings took place over a weekend, rotating host states. Some met in Seattle, some in Portland, and others in Colorado. At each meeting we had opportunities to climb together, discuss teaching methods, and share challenges and successes. Understanding our shared experiences, values, and goals created a mutual respect that carried into the project and beyond.

Having friends in partner clubs is as rewarding as you would imagine – we share ideas, resources, education, and, of course, beta on favorite climbing destinations. This winter, The Mountaineers Alpine Ambassadors met up with the Colorado Mountain Club's (CMC) Alpine Ambassadors in Ouray, CO, for a joint ice climbing trip. We had the pleasure of getting to climb with the locals, and the new friendships formed made for a rich and meaningful trip (and the climbing was great too!). Mountaineers volunteers hope to host the CMC in the future for a glacier climb on one of our Northwest peaks, and all of the MEA partners look forward to future adventures together.

Looking ahead

We're incredibly excited about the Mountain Education Alliance, and grateful for the hard work and partnership from each of our partner organizations, as well as from our own volunteers. We are looking forward to realizing all of the opportunities this opens up for our members and volunteers. Our shared partnership is rooted in climbing, but this alliance is about much more. Together, we can expand our impact through our shared community of outdoor recreationists, leaders, and advocates. As we continue to develop our relationships and deepen these ties, we hope to see the benefits impact many more of our activities beyond climbing. ▲▲



Mountain LEAD certificates are built on the following values:

- **Community:** Build trust and camaraderie among mountain recreationists nationwide, and reduce barriers to integrate with other organizations through quality training, expanding the community for all.
- **Consistency:** Consistent and reliable training results in well informed leaders who teach common best practices. Every holder of a LEAD Certificate has been trained and evaluated as an educator who can deliver information in a way that is relevant, engaging, and helpful to their community.
- **Quality:** Quality education and leadership is paramount when participating in high-risk, high-consequence activities. LEAD educators deliver quality education to their students and help to increase the number of responsible and prepared climbers. Oversight from the UIAA and the Mountain Education Alliance ensures that these certificates will continue to meet rigorous standards as the LEAD program evolves over time.
- **Volunteerism:** The LEAD Program provides a certification track and support system that provides stability and quality to volunteer mountain education.

Conservation and Advocacy, Together

By Katherine Hollis, Conservation & Advocacy Director

In the six years I've served as The Mountaineers Conservation and Advocacy Director, I've watched our community come together time and again to speak up for the places we hold dear. Together, we've enjoyed a number of successes, and suffered a few setbacks. Threats to our public lands, including the climate crisis, are mounting, and as someone whose life has been formed by adventuring in nature, I am concerned about what our planet will be like for future generations.

At The Mountaineers, our advocacy is, and has always been, where conservation and recreation overlap. Our work focuses on protecting public lands and the experiences they provide. And that's because the core of our mission is the idea that connecting people to each other and the outdoors enriches the greater community as a whole.

To help ensure the future of recreation, we've looked at how we're sharing information with you under the guise of "it doesn't have to be bad to be better". We recently revamped the conservation pages on mountaineers.org to put a finer point on what we're trying to achieve, and why. We are sharing that information here as well to invite you to join the conversation. Whether you're a policy expert or coming off of your first-ever stewardship activity, it's important that you understand the power of your voice and influence you have in protecting the outdoor experience. Your participation in our advocacy efforts matters, and we could not do this work without you.

What we do

We fiercely advocate for outdoor spaces. Our conservation advocacy focuses on protecting public lands, encouraging responsible recreation access, bringing vast landscapes to life, and engaging future generations. In short: we protect the outdoor experience.

To do this, we seek to inspire and empower you to use your voice to support the places you care about. We provide educational opportunities to help you gain a solid understanding of conservation and public lands policies. We publish books that bring landscapes alive to show you what we have - and what is at stake. We offer and share stewardship opportunities for you to take care of the places you love. We collaborate with land managers to improve land planning processes and decisions. And we work with legislators to shape conservation and recreation policy to assure the future of recreational opportunities for you.

To make an even broader impact, we partner with other



Mountaineers discussing the terrain on a snowshoe trip at Cowlitz Gap.
Photo by David Bradley.

organizations who are experts with complimentary missions. We work with national conservation and recreation organizations like Outdoor Alliance and the Wilderness Society, state-based organizations like Washington Trails Association and Washington Wild, and public lands recreation partners like the Access Fund and Washington Climber's Coalition to build support for important issues. Helping bring this larger community together creates a longer-lasting and more meaningful impact.

How we seek to empower you

One of our biggest priorities is offering opportunities for you to understand and meaningfully engage on outdoor issues. We use our blogs and monthly e-newsletters to translate sometimes convoluted policy issues into digestible information you can take action on. We also share opportunities (like our Action Alerts) for you to contact your legislators and land managers on urgent matters, creating a united voice for our public lands. We create legislative trail maps to guide you through the conservation and recreation bills in congress right now. And we represent our outdoor community at events and meetings to share your voices and experiences with officials and legislators.

Put another way, we:

- Engage in land planning processes and comment periods.
- Shape legislation to protect public lands and outdoor recreation.
- Advocate for public lands funding in national and Washington State budget processes.
- Engage on state issues, specifically with State Parks and WA

Department of Natural Resources

- Provide conservation education and engagement opportunities to outdoor enthusiasts.

What we've accomplished together

We have protected outdoor spaces together for over a hundred years. Conservation is, and always has been, one of our deepest-held values. In 1938 we played a key role in the formation of the Olympic National Park; in 1968 we helped to create the North Cascades National Park; in 1976 we successfully advocated for the designation the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. Our history in public lands conservation inspires us for the future.

This past year, with over 5,000 of your individual actions, The Mountaineers helped to protect the Methow Valley from industrial-scale mining, designate the Mountains to Sound Greenway a National Heritage Area, and permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund. These bills were a part of the public lands conservation package that passed this Congress and was signed into law by the President. In a time where there is so little common ground and understanding in Congress, our public lands can - and should - be a uniting force. Your voices make this possible.

But the work is not done. We have issues at hand threatening access, responsible management, environmental protection, and even the 'public' in our public lands. So, we'll continue to ask you to join us as we work to protect the places we love. Without these lands, we will not only lose important recreational access, but how we experience the natural world, escape our day-to-day lives, and form meaningful communities.

What's coming up next

You - Mountaineers members and our greater outdoor community - have made it clear that you want to be informed, take action, and be empowered to do more. To accomplish this, The Mountaineers will be expanding our conservation team in 2020. With this growth, we plan to increase our conservation and advocacy work in three key areas:

- Engaging in national and state public lands planning processes and legislation, especially in comment periods and public meetings. This will help us provide more information and take-action opportunities for you, and allow us further influence public lands management for conservation and recreation.
- Accelerating our focus and impact in addressing the climate crisis. Our Mountaineers community is actively experiencing the impacts of the global climate crisis. From melting glaciers to intensifying wildfires, the places we hold most dear are changing, resulting in more perilous access, loss of biodiversity, and degradation of wilderness. We will work to find where our community can have an impact in addressing these issues.
- Strengthening our voice for threatened western North American landscapes in the Pacific Northwest and beyond, such as those highlighted by Braided River, Mountaineers Books' conservation imprint. Our books help bring these landscapes alive and we hope to better connect some of the issues our publications spotlight to ways you can take action.

Why it matters

The collective memory of our 14,000-member community is long, and our voices are powerful. Our conservation work is integral to all aspects of our organization, because without this work the places where our programs and activities take place, and that our books illustrate, are at risk. We must continue to come together as a community on these issues.

We each have a different and personal reason why the outdoors is important to us, and our individual experiences in the outdoors are a unifying force. These are the moments that teach us about the power of people and places. Regardless of your reason, thank you for joining hands with us in the past, and we look forward to creating a brighter future together with you. ▲▲

How to get engaged

You can become an advocate today by participating in one (or all) of these steps:

Step 1: Stay up-to-date

Sign up for our Conservation Currents newsletter (on the "preferences" tab of your My Profile page). We use it to send Action Alerts - updates that offer you breaking news and an opportunity to contact your legislators and land managers on urgent matters. And be sure to visit our advocacy page to get the latest conservation and advocacy news.

Step 2: Take the Protecting Public Lands eLearning Course

This free 2-hour online course breaks down the basics of our national public lands system and explains how you can best advocate for our wild places.

Step 3: Give a day of stewardship

Check out one of our many upcoming stewardship opportunities and sign up for a stewardship day. Make a big difference in just a day by getting your hands dirty and enjoying some fresh air.

Step 4: Visit our Legislative Trail Map

We work with legislators and partners to shape conservation policy. Our Legislative Trail Map serves to guide you through some of the legislation we're working on and supporting in the current session of congress.

Step 5: Earn your Low Impact Recreation Badge

Take a look at our video series based around Leave No Trace Principles to learn more about your impact on the wild places you play. After you've watched, take our quiz to earn the badge for your profile.

All this and more at mountaineers.org/conservation



WOBBLE YOUR WAY THROUGH SKI SEASON

Finding fun as a first-time skier

By Hailey Oppelt, Communications Associate

So you want to shred some gnar. Welcome. And congratulations on your willingness to look silly as a grown-up in the pursuit of a new skill. Many of your friends have likely been skiing since they were kids, and have no idea what it's like to learn as an adult. They forget that white-knuckling your way down a ski slope with a waistband full of snow isn't always stoke-inducing. So here's a guide from another new skier based on my first season - tools I found useful, things I wish I'd known, and why you should accept and enjoy being an awful skier.

Learn how to fall and get back up

Falling and getting back up is going to be frequent, and is one of the ways you're most likely to become injured. Find out how to do it in a way that puts yourself and others at the least amount of risk. These skills will be more relevant to you than to experienced skiers - like taking a controlled fall when you're going too fast (and haven't mastered breaking yet), or getting skis back on your feet, in powder, after you somehow popped them off again. This toolkit will help prevent you from getting run over by someone else who also doesn't know what they're doing.

Adjusting how you think about falling is also helpful. I saw

eating it as an unavoidable component of the learning process, not an indication that I was doing things wrong or that I was bad at learning. This helped me to not only be willing to keep trying, but have a good time while doing it. Adopting a sense of humor about it will do wonders as well.

Abandon ego and allow yourself to crash

You won't look good on the ski slope. Reconcile yourself with this. You attached giant, slippery sticks to your feet - it's okay to look like the Three Stooges on skis. Trying to save face will only slow down your learning process and make it all a lot less fun, so you may as well give up on style and have a good time instead.

I once had someone tell me that they hadn't seen anyone crash as much as me - they were probably right. This was because it was my first day on skis and I was being thrown down a hill way beyond my skill level, but by the end I was able to limp through it. If I'd stayed on the bunny slope and hadn't allowed myself to fall, my progression would have been minimal and I probably would've gone home disheartened and bored. I wouldn't recommend trial by fire for everyone, but pushing your boundaries is important for meaningful progress.



Progression of a ski crash. Photos courtesy of Reid Pitman.

Grab used gear (and bibs!)

We all know that used gear is a great way to access a new sport, but remember to utilize Facebook groups, Mountaineers Gear Grabs, friends of friends, and Craigslist for ski equipment. If it's your first season, you probably don't need high-performance gear - just something that will keep you mostly dry. Second-hand gear is also great because it's an inexpensive way to try out different styles and layering systems.

If possible, get yourself a pair of bibs as well. Even if you tuck everything as securely as possible, your jacket will get pulled up and snow is going to cram itself into places that would rather stay dry. Your friends will likely have lighter-weight gear that breathes well, especially for spring skiing... this is not for you.

Learning how your gear works is also a good idea. Yes, those weird straps and bungee cords exist for a reason - find out why. My first time skiing I didn't ask for help with gear (because I was already asking for help with everything else) and when I crashed, I was immediately crammed full of snow. Five minutes of ego swallowing with friends will save you six hours of being soggy and cold.

Control your learning process

If you're out with friends that have been skiing for a long time, they'll probably offer suggestions on what can help you improve. Don't allow yourself to be flooded with suggestions; identify a couple friends who explain things in a way you understand, then have them offer one or two things to work on at a time. If you're attempting to introduce four or five new concepts at once, or have multiple people explaining things, you'll perform poorly and be frustrated.

And when you're learning those new skills, don't let someone continue to offer input while you're trying to perform a movement. If they keep telling you to lean forward while you're already trying to lean forward, you just suck at it, you're going to stop having fun. Identify what your learning style is, determine the best way to meet your needs, and become comfortable communicating that to your friends and ski partners.

I realized that my stoke-inducing ski partners, while meaning well, were not helpful in getting me down the mountain. Telling me I could do it did not, unfortunately, actually increase my

ability to do it. While encouragement works wonders for some people, I did best with friends who were analytical and explained movement in precise terms. Understanding what works best for my brain and utilizing those tools allowed me to progress much faster than I would've otherwise.

Take lessons and scope out your ski instructor

The idea that instructors only need to "teach to their level" is common at resorts, and it can result in an instructor that isn't able to analyze your movements or offer multiple ways of trying something. And even if they're skilled, not everyone is a natural teacher. A friend who was an excellent skier and had been an instructor to fund ski bum dreams turned out to be totally useless in helping me learn.

Look into who your potential instructor is, and chat with them about their experience skiing and motivation for instructing. Consider their teaching style and whether or not that works for you. Get recommendations from friends if you can. Taking lessons with someone who can look at how you move and offer targeted, insightful advice will make a difference. ▲▲

Mountaineers Resources

Member Benefits

Your member benefits are a great way to save while also investing in some quality goods. As a member, you're eligible to get 10% off hardgoods and 15% off apparel and accessories at both Skis.com and Snowboards.com. This is in addition to discounts from Outdoor Research, Sherpa Adventure Gear, and more.

Mountaineers Lodges

Our Baker, Stevens, and Meany lodges are excellent places to stay in the winter when you want to be close to the mountain. Meany Lodge also offers a snow sports school for skiing and snowboarding. If you want to learn how to ski in a beautiful location with quality instructors, this is the place to do it.

NEW BEGINNINGS

A place to be yourself

By Kristina Ciari, Membership & Communications Director



All photos courtesy of Luis Campos.

17 miles per hour. That's the speed of the rope tow at Meany Lodge when it's in third gear. Touted as the fastest, longest, legally operated tow west of the Mississippi, the Meany Tow whisks skiers 500ft up an east-facing glade deep in the heart of Stampede Pass. The angle is gradual at first, but then steepens midway, creating a small gap between the rope and the slope. Regulars will tell you they routinely see small children lift off the ground, carried for a dozen or so feet before touching back down on the high side. They love it.

The 17 mph rope tow isn't the only remarkable thing about Meany Lodge. Like everything in The Mountaineers, Meany was created by, and continues to be nurtured and run by, volunteers. The fantastic food you eat, the cozy beds you sleep on, and the warmth you feel when you visit are all thanks to a cohort of hard-working, adventure-sharing volunteers. All are welcome here, whether you're up for a 17 mph ride or not.

One of the volunteer gigs available at Meany Lodge is running the Meany Tow. With two different ropes ("Mach" and "Turtle") and three gears to choose from, the tow operator needs to be on the lookout for all kinds of calamity. Downed riders and impromptu snowball fights mean you need to be ready for anything from your safe perch inside a plywood and Plexiglas box. One of the folks you might find running the show is Luis Campos, a relatively new Mountaineers member who has participated in a remarkable number of courses and programs in his short tenure. And, with a cup of hot cocoa in hand (extra marshmallows please!), he's just the type of person you want at the helm.

El Salvador to Virginia

Like most people, Luis's road to The Mountaineers is a winding one. He grew up in El Salvador, and then moved to Virginia with his dad, step-mom, and two younger siblings when he was 19. Luis didn't speak a word of English. To learn, his family enrolled him in high school. He's probably the only person you'll ever meet to have graduated from high school twice.

"My first day, I will never forget that. I



A larch hike in the Enchantments.

started in October because I needed all my shots, and that took a long time. So, on the first day I went to school, I had English, ESL 1. The teacher kept asking me what my name was and why I started a month late and all that. And I had no clue what she was saying!"

Learning English wasn't the only adjustment. "The teacher couldn't pronounce my name correctly. I'm Latino, and some of us have four names, and my middle name is Roberto. She couldn't roll her R's, and she was like Roberto, Ro-Bert-O," he said, exaggerating the mispronunciation with a slight southern drawl. The other students stepped up to help him out, and Roberto asked them to tell the teacher to call him by his first name, Luis. "The first day of school, I not only had to learn English, but I had to go by a different name. I had to train my ears and my brain to respond to Luis."

Thankfully for Luis, he's not shy, and he jumped right into his strange new world. "I was like, whatever, people will understand me one way or another. I kept speaking Spanglish and then, little by little, I didn't need someone to translate for me going into the clinic or going in the consulate and stuff like that." After just seven months Luis mastered English, and he still reads and watches television in English only. Save for one book. "I do have my favorite book, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, in Spanish because I really love that it's more flavorful in Spanish than English."

Virginia to Seattle

Having successfully graduated from high school (again), Luis felt aimless. "Nothing really happens in Virginia," he said. "It's really flat. I mean, it does have Shenandoah National Park, but I needed a change. I was kind of codependent and I wanted to become an adult and not rely on my family as much. With Latinos, there's a sense that family is always there and sometimes not in a good way. It doesn't matter how old you are, your parents will still go

into your house and tell you what you're doing wrong. And it's like, uh, it's my own life. I pay my bills!"

At the seven-year mark, Luis hatched a plan. "I told [my dad and my job] that I was taking a month off. I didn't tell them I was moving. I was like, well if that doesn't work out, I'll come back and still work." Luis conscripted his brother to help him smuggle a big suitcase out of the house a few days in advance, then on the day of the flight waltzed out with only a carry-on.

"I thought, 'This is it. This is your new beginning!'"

He crashed with a friend of a friend, securing a job on his second day in Seattle and moving into his own studio eight days later. "I went to my new home and I thought, 'welcome to freedom!'" But sitting in an empty studio, with only his luggage and clothes, didn't feel great at first. "I was like, 'this is so depressing and lonely'. I was so used to having friends, a lot of friends, and I used to spend most of my time with my friends. But I wanted to grow up. I wanted to stay away from my family. And I thought, 'This is it. This is your new beginning!' So, I started working a second job and little by little started buying furniture and jumping into the city. It was all a work in progress." At the 30-day mark, Luis called his family and told them he wasn't coming back.

Discovering the real Luis

Luis left Virginia to forge his own path in more ways than one. "With the Latino community, they're family oriented, but they also have a different mentality. My family still has the Salvadorian mentality. They haven't changed to be more open minded, and I'm gay. Back home it was really hard for me to be myself."

Tired of constantly fighting a battle within, Luis embraced the part of himself he'd been suppressing his entire life. "I moved for



Luis and friends enjoying the environs around Meany Lodge.

a reason: to be happy, to be accepted, to have friends, and to be who I'm supposed to be. I took me a long time to finally accept myself and come to terms with the fact that I'm gay and I love myself and I shouldn't feel bad about it."

He made lots of friends quickly, mostly over drinks, spending many nights out on the town. Then one day, after one of many long nights, it got to be too much. He gave up drinking, and many of the friends he had made doing it, and decided he wanted to spend more time outside. Being outdoors was a way to feel connected to his mom, who he hasn't seen since leaving El Salvador.

"I moved for a reason: to be happy, to be accepted, to have friends, and to be who I'm supposed to be. I took me a long time to finally accept myself and come to terms with the fact that I'm gay and I love myself and I shouldn't feel bad about it."

"I get the outdoorsy part from my mom. She moved to Ecuador [after we moved away] and she's really adventurous. She's been to Machu Picchu and so many other mountains. Since we were kids she would take us to the mountains to pick apples or to go to the beach. We were going somewhere all the time. Then, when I became an adult, I forgot that. I got caught up with the whole social life. And when I quit drinking I remembered, 'Oh, the mountains are there. And you like them, and this is the best place to be.'"

Luis began growing his gear collection and started venturing out on his own. He joined a few outdoor-oriented Facebook groups, and signed up for a single-day thru hike of the Enchantments. Twelve people RSVP'd, but only three showed up. "The people that went, let's just say that they were not prepared. They didn't do the research. I had to give away my jacket, water, gloves, food. It was horrible. We went to dinner after and one of the other guys told me about The Mountaineers. When I got home I spent like three hours reading everything online before I decided to join.

"I saw a work party at Meany Lodge, and I was like 'well, why not give it a try?' Plus I was still like getting used to not drinking and having less friends and I needed to keep myself away and busy for my own sanity. And so I decided to go.

"Going to Meany was what I needed. I needed a sense of belonging."

"The first weekend I didn't even know what was I getting myself into. But everyone at Meany was really welcoming. They showed me around, they shared stories, and they had food and coffee and everything was ready." Meany had posted three work parties that year, and Luis signed up for all of them. "I felt really welcomed and I really liked the people. It was like a sense of a family. And after having a bunch of friends and partying all the time, going down to just a few friends can be kinda overwhelming. Going to Meany was what I needed. I needed a sense of belonging."

On the last day, the other volunteers asked if he would be interested in volunteering for the winter season. Luis was



The Meany rope tow, as seen from inside the tow building.



Luis celebrating during a fun day in the mountains.

surprised to even be asked. “I was like, me? Why? Really? I kept asking them why, but thought that I was really interested. It felt really awesome.”

Mr. Campos, rope tow operator

Luis embraced his new family with open arms and boot-laden feet. The first year he signed right up for snowboarding lessons. He’s only snowboarded once before, but the rope tow provided him with his first “uphill” experience. “The first time I rode the tow I was strapped to a snowboard. My chicken legs were shaking!” Despite the terror, he was hooked.

He tried to bring his friends along for the fun too, but ran into resistance. “I realized through this whole transition from me not drinking to becoming more outdoorsy that change comes from within. You cannot force someone to change. I try with my friends, but it hasn’t really worked. You have to have that

willingness to move forward and to venture into the unknown. You have to have that sense of adventure.”

Last year he took Basic Climbing with the Olympia branch. Despite living in Seattle, he sought out the course in Olympia because he was attracted to the smaller community. He’s now in the Olympia Intermediate Climbing course, has graduated from Wilderness Navigation (with Tacoma) and Wilderness First Aid (with Foothills), and earned his AIARE I certification.

Luis spends most winter weekends at Meany Lodge. “It’s a really accepting place and you can be yourself. It’s perfect because you get away from the whole busy life and you’re just an hour away. There’s no cell phone coverage. It’s just a lot of books, a lot of games, and you socialize with people with the same interests – the same love of outdoors. It’s a big family pretty much.” A big family built over cups of cocoa, snowball fights, and a 17 mph rope tow. ▲▲



The Meany Lodge Experience

Meany Lodge is The Mountaineers oldest winter sports resort, located 60 miles east of Seattle near Stampede Pass. Completed in 1928, former club Secretary Mrs. Stuart P. Walsh wrote of the ski lodge dedication in the Mountaineer Annual in this way: “Eight years ago the building of a shelter cabin for ski enthusiasts was unthinkable. So unknown was the sport in the Northwest that the few men and women indulging in it were regarded as veritable superhumans by their sure but clumsyfooted brethren.”

The superhumans continued to enjoy winter, and today Meany Lodge is home to 32 downhill runs accessible by rope tow. Volunteer ski instructors teach drop-in ski and snowboard lessons, and lead snowshoe and cross-country skiing treks. The lodge consists of three floors with gear storage, a kitchen and dining room, and sleeping bunks. Visitors enjoy excellent meals, lively evening games, and an opportunity to unplug for the night or a weekend.

In 2014, Meany volunteers, led by Nigel Steer, revived the historic Patrol Race, an 18+ mile ski route from Snoqualmie Pass to Meany Lodge (the first of its kind in North America). Three-person teams compete for the quickest time, winning bragging rights and wood-carved trophies. Lottery registration for the 2020 Patrol Race is open now until the end of December. Learn more at mountaineers.org/meany.

"Winter is not a season, it's a celebration."

- Anamika Mishra





Two members of team Dirty Bird Skimo enjoying snowy weather during the 2017 Patrol Race. Photo by Rick Meade.

SNOW GOAT SKIMO

Supporting the boom in uphill ski racing

By Trevor Dickie, Content Associate

It must be nice, being a mountain goat. To move through the mountains with speed and grace, inspiring fear, respect, and admiration in all who lay eyes on you. With gravity-defying climbing skills and a legendary beard, mountain goats are untouchable.

If you aspire to mountain goat-level greatness, then I have a sport with your name written all over it. All you have to do is find yourself a set of fear-inspiring lycra, lighter-than-lightweight skis, and a higher-than-high ability to suffer.

Just kidding. Spandex suits are not required (only encouraged).

The sport I'm referencing is ski mountaineering, or skimo for short. It's sort of a hybrid between ultrarunning and backcountry skiing, where the goal is moving fast and light to cover great distances and elevation in the mountains. In the Pacific Northwest, skimoers Jason Dorais and Tom Goth recently broke the fastest known time on Mt. Rainier. They climbed from Paradise to the summit of Mt. Rainier and skied back down in just under three and a half hours in May 2019. Their feat is the epitome of skimo.

Skimo is functionally the same as backcountry skiing. Backcountry skiers use gear – also called a “set up” – similar to traditional downhill ski equipment you'd find in the resort, but with added features to give the user the ability to climb uphill with skis and boots on their feet. Backcountry boots have a walk mode, providing a much larger range of motion than traditional alpine boots, and bindings are equipped with a climbing mode where only the toe piece is attached and the heel is free to move up and down. For grip, skins are placed on the bottom of the skis. They feel a lot like horsehair, smooth in one direction and grippy in the other, providing good traction

when climbing on moderate level slopes. When it's time to descend, the skins are removed and the boots and bindings are transitioned into ski mode. This gear allows the skier to explore and enjoy areas not accessible by chairlifts.

Skimoers take backcountry skiing a step further. Their gear is designed for the uphill, meaning two skis, boots, and a set of skins weighs roughly the same as one of my regular ski boots. The weight savings comes at a cost though, namely in performance on the ski down. But that's okay. Your average skimoer spends 90% of their time going up, and 10% of their time trying not to wipe out on the way down.

Like many other winter activities, skimo is a group activity. Aspiring skimoers will discover a vibrant, passionate, welcoming, encouraging, community that is yes, sometimes a little competitive. Which makes sense. You don't generally find mountain goats on their own either, do you?

One way that people get into skimo, at least around here, is through the annual Patrol Race hosted by Meany Lodge. In the 1920s, adventurous Mountaineers scouted an 18+ mile ski route between our two mountain lodges (the Snoqualmie Lodge, at Snoqualmie Pass, at Meany Lodge, near Stampede Pass). In 1930, they inaugurated a race over this route. This race was the first of its kind in North America, and it ran for 14 years before falling out of favor during World War II. Volunteers revived the Patrol Race in 2014.

One of the Patrol Race's early fans was Richard “Dick” Kresser. He was first introduced to The Mountaineers by Gavin Woody, past-President of The Mountaineers Board of Directors, when they met through ultrarunning. Gavin and Dick are both military veterans, and they quickly bonded over their shared





There's something for everybody at Snow Goat events. Founders Maudie Jordan and Dick Kresser, at top-center. All photos courtesy of Snow Goat Skimo.

ability to stay awake during multi-day races. Gavin invited Dick to be his partner a few years ago to support a Mountaineers fundraising traverse of the Tatoosh Range, and, on that trip Dick - who is on Stevens Pass Pro Ski Patrol in addition to being a trail-runner and endurance athlete - learned about the Patrol Race. He signed up.

After discovering an appreciation for skimo races as a competitor in the Patrol Race, Dick was looking for more opportunities like it, but found few. "I really wanted to see more stuff like [the Patrol Race]. Not just to be able to compete and have that place for people to compete with each other, but also to form that community and have that after-race party where everyone is still high on the adrenaline pumping through their veins, laughing and having a really good time." The idea for Snow Goat Skimo was born.

The need for organized skimo races was large. "I was like well, we need these events here in Washington, and we don't have any really," said Maudie Jordan, who together with Dick cofounded Snow Goat. "That's kind of what set the track for us wanting to do this together."

As life and adventure partners with a love of skiing and community, Maudie and Dick found themselves well-equipped

to bring more races to the Pacific Northwest. They both have backgrounds in event organization with communities that share the same masochistic and adrenaline-loving genes as ski-mountaineers: trail running and mountain biking. These communities also happen to have plenty of skimoers in their midst. Snow Goat's website offers a hypothesis to explain the crossover. "Skimo has been growing as large numbers of cyclists, runners, and others find it a great way to stay in shape in the winter. They quickly realize it might be more fun than their main summertime sport!"

While Dick was already subscribed to the winter lifestyle, Maudie is a relative newcomer to the sport of skiing. But she fell in love quickly. Her website bio cites a passion for sharing her newfound love of skiing with others, just in case they might love it too.

Snow Goat is in its second season as a Pacific Northwest organizer of ski-mountaineering races. After a very successful first season, Snow Goat released its 2020 race calendar with events at Crystal Mountain, Loup Loup (outside of Winthrop), and Snoqualmie. It's a dream come true for Dick, whose website bio states that "since a few of his favorite things are skiing, going uphill as quickly as he can, and putting on events, he figured he'd start a few more skimo races in the Pacific Northwest."

The skimo courses often wind through mountainous areas, much like how a marathon might wind through city streets. Different sections offer different challenges, with similar skills needed for all races. The courses generally feature some bootpacking, where racers carry their skis to ascend a steep section, multiple transition points from skinning to skiing, and plenty of uphill travel on skis. Races can take place inbounds at ski resorts or in the backcountry, and sometimes it's a mix of both.

For those brave souls who sign up to compete, racers have different categories to choose from. For example, in the Loup Loup race competitors can compete in the "recreation" league within a one-hour time window, or in the "race" category within a four-hour time window. In both, the goal is to get as many laps as possible along the boundary edge of Loup Loup, ascending roughly 1,100 vertical feet each race. The 2019 winner managed 14 laps, covering roughly 28 miles and 16,000 vertical feet. Mountain goats may even struggle to do that in four hours.

Throughout their first season of races, Dick and Maudie received plenty of positive feedback to reinforce what they were doing. It seemed that a set of organized events was just what the community had been waiting for. "Right now, there's not that many backcountry ski events for people to meet new touring partners, make new friends, and reconnect with friends," Dick said. "People naturally want to challenge themselves and create those bonds after an event."

Dick sees the hunger for these events not just from skimo racers. Lots of excitement is coming from the broader ski community as well. "There's the guys in lycra and then there's the people out there who have no aspirations to race, who are just looking to go out and have a really good time and challenge themselves," Dick said. "Everyone is racing for a different reason and everyone is out there having a fun time challenging themselves."

As much as these races are about the competition, they're also about meeting new friends, finding new skiing partners, and having a good time along the way. "It's primal really, going out there and exerting your body and then coming together and sharing stories," Maudie said. "I think that creates a bond and connection among people, and honestly has for centuries."

If Dick and Maudie have a goal with Snow Goat Skimo, it's to build community, and provide people with the opportunity to share what they love with others. "I just want to see other people have the opportunity to do things like this, get into it, and create a community," Maudie said.

When mountain goats are born, they're given little time to learn their way in the mountains. Within minutes they're on their feet, moving with agility, doing their best to keep up in their little herd. Perhaps Maudie and Dick are right. Moving through the mountains, sharing it with others, and adding a hint of competition is more natural than we might think. ▲▲



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White-Tailed Ptarmigan

Ghost birds of the winter Cascades

By Derek Stinson and Mike Schroeder

Washington is a haven for birders, and yet we still have huge gaps in our understanding of some of our most iconic wildlife. Take the White-tailed Ptarmigan for example. Many of you have likely spotted ptarmigan in the Cascades in their summer plumage, blending in with their rocky alpine habitat, but reports of these beautiful birds in their all-white winter plumage are few and far between. As a result, our knowledge of White-tailed Ptarmigan winter habitats in the Pacific Northwest are meager.

In fact, most of what we know about ptarmigan in winter comes from Colorado, where conditions are very different than in the Cascades, as they have less snow, drier snow, and cooler temperatures. That's why we'd like to invite you to learn more about the White-tailed Ptarmigan, so that you can help us spot and record these birds on your late fall, winter, and early spring trips to the alpine. In turn, you'll help scientists improve our understanding of their ecology, distribution, and needs.

The White-tailed Ptarmigan is the smallest species of grouse, and the only ptarmigan found in the lower 48. Ptarmigan are one of the few critters adapted to the rigors of alpine winters; their plumage changes color and they gain weight on a diet of willow and alder buds. When snow accumulations allow, they use their heavily feathered toes as natural snowshoes, and routinely roost under soft snow for protection from the harsh weather.

The female ptarmigan incubates 4-6 eggs in a nest on the ground while the male stands guard, sounding an alarm to identify an intruder. At hatching time, the male joins other males to summer at higher elevations, while the female leads the chicks away from the nest. As the young mature, adolescents aggregate and form flocks, while the adult males typically flock separately. Adults often return to the same territories and wintering areas year-to-year. The ptarmigan longevity record is about 15 years. If our local ptarmigan behave like those in Colorado, they shift to lower elevations with the first snowstorm, generally foraging on ridges where the wind keeps willow bushes exposed, or in drainages where shrubs are tall enough to be exposed above the snow. On windy days they may seek shelter behind rocks or in krummholz (stunted, windblown trees and shrubs near tree line), and during storms the flocks may move into stream bottoms and avalanche chutes.

As with all wildlife, human activities can negatively impact ptarmigan. This can happen when food is made available to ravens, which prey on eggs and chicks. We also have an



Male ptarmigan in winter at Panorama Point, Mt. Rainier. Photo by Kahn Tran.

impact on alpine vegetation. The greatest long-term threat to ptarmigan in Washington is climate change, which is likely to affect their alpine habitat and the connectivity between areas of occupation. ▲▲

Derek Stinson is an Olympia Mountaineer and wildlife biologist. Mike Schroeder is a research scientist, who has specialized on grouse and is the current chair of the Grouse Group within the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Both work for Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Report Ptarmigan Sightings this Winter

Our records of ptarmigan in Washington are nearly all summer observations. Help us change this by recording ptarmigan activity in other seasons, especially winter! Please:

- Take pictures! Pictures can tell us so much about behaviors and habitat.
- Provide detailed location information, including UTM or latitude-longitude, elevations, and a description of locations. Saying "near Paradise" isn't as useful.
- Record any details about vegetation, weather, and behavior that you can.
- Be careful to distinguish ptarmigan (all white in winter; wings white year-round), from blue grouse (sooty or dusky; dark wings; larger birds), which are often found in subalpine conifers.

Observations can be recorded online at wdfw.wa.gov/get-involved/report-observations or sent to us directly at wildlife.data@dfw.wa.gov

SNOW CAMPING 101

An ode to the cold

By Teresa Hagerty, Foothills Backpacking Committee



The colors of snow camping. Photo by Teresa Hagerty.

You have a dream of waking up to the perfect winter morning - just you, the stars, and the sunrise on the mountain. It sounds delightful, but one thought may give you pause... why sleep in a freezer?

Yes, it's cold out there. But it's also breathtakingly beautiful, there are no bugs, and you can eat ALL of the calories. You'll also find that otherwise popular or no-camping-allowed destinations are great winter options. Have you always wanted to wake up at Artist Point with a million-star view of Koma Kulshan? In winter, you can.

Gear

First thing's first, let's talk gear. Take a deep breath. You can do this by building onto your existing three-season backpacking gear. All it takes is a few additions, substitutions, and tweaks to prepare to sleep on the snow.

Sleep systems

Your sleep system should be your top priority - it can be the difference between a great time and a miserable night as a human popsicle.

Start with your three-season sleeping pad and determine its R-Value, a metric of insulation power. Most three-season pads are rated between 3 and 4, and you'll want a total R-Value of at least 5 to sleep comfortably on the snow. The good news is that R-Values stack - for instance, a pad with an R-Value of 2 and a pad with an R-Value of 3 can be stacked to create a total of 5.

A popular and inexpensive tip is to stack an R-Value 2.6 Therm-A-Rest ZLite on top of your existing three-season pad. Live your best Princess and the Pea life.

Water treatment & filtration

Winter water treatment is accomplished by melting and boiling snow for at least 2-3 minutes. This is because water boils at a lower temperature at altitude, and as a result needs to boil longer to kill bacteria. A Steripen is an excellent alternative as it requires only melted water and is effective against bacteria, protozoa, and viruses. Keep in mind you must use water free of particulates with a Steripen.

To store water bring your Nalgene's, as the hydration hoses on water bladders are useless when they freeze. Store the water bottles upside-down as well - remember that water freezes from the top down! Leave flow-through style water filters at home too. By taking a ceramic filter into snowy conditions you're risking water freezing (and expanding) within, potentially destroying it.

Wearable gear

Be brutally honest with yourself when selecting winter layering pieces. Will that jacket keep you warm for four hours at rest in 20-degree temperatures? Nope? Then don't bring it. A wintertime afternoon picnic at Gold Creek Pond is an excellent testing ground. Add the additional layers outlined in the sidebar to your standard three-season backpacking layering list to stay nice and toasty.

It's also essential to protect your eyes and skin from harsh alpine sunshine. Up to 80% of the sun's UV rays are reflected off of snow. Your eyes and skin should be covered as much as possible at all times. Re-apply sunscreen every two hours and don't forget the inside of your nose. Go ahead. Get in there.

Technical gear

You'll always want to have foot traction devices in below-freezing conditions in case you hit hard snow or ice. A lightweight avalanche shovel is also a must to create a flat tent platform and to dig out snow for melting into water. And, last but not least, you need buried snow anchors instead of summer tent stakes.

Campsite selection & setup

Winter campsite selection follows a different set of rules. Be safe, be smart, and respect Leave No Trace standards by following a few simple campsite selection rules:

- Always on five feet or more of snow cover (protects fragile vegetation from damage)
- Not on or under avalanche terrain (30-60 degree slopes)
- Avoid terrain traps (ex. creek beds)
- Dodge tree bombs - never set up directly under snow-laden trees

Once you've settled on a location, start by walking a perimeter outline the size of your tent and vestibule(s), then stomp down the snow in the middle of your tent site. Snowshoes may make this easier in powder snow. It's a good idea to orient tent door(s) on the downhill side to protect against downward-flowing cold air.

And now, walk away for 20 minutes. Grab a snack. Leave it alone. Your snow tent platform will naturally settle and solidify. Once 20 minutes have passed, return to your tent site with your avalanche shovel. Your next job is to stomp, dig, or pack the snow flat to create your tent pad. Then set up your tent and stake it out using snow stakes or ice axes if you've got 'em. Extra time may allow for the construction of wind walls, kitchen pits, and snow wall sheltered latrine areas. So fancy!

The process of finding a campsite, stomping out your tent platform, and staking your tent in the snow can take much longer than expected. Plan to arrive at your campsite with two hours of daylight to spare.

Key skills

Staying warm at camp

It's easier to stay warm than it is to get warm. This means you'll want to avoid sweating (getting wet is never good in freezing temperatures), so follow the rule of "be bold, start cold" when hitting the trail, then layer up as soon as you're at rest. Make sure to also eat and drink every hour to keep fuel in the tank.

Staying warm and maintaining a steady intake of quality calories is especially important before bedtime, making it the ideal time for some chocolate-fueled dance parties.

Sleeping warm - pro tips

- Sleep in dry socks & down booties
- Wear a balaclava & breathe outside of your sleeping bag (keep moisture at bay!)
- Stash a well-sealed hot water nalgene in your sleeping bag

Leave no trace

Winter snow camping presents a unique set of Leave No Trace challenges. Our obligation to travel and camp on durable surfaces, dispose of waste properly, respect wildlife, and respect other users remains imperative all year round.

The most significant challenge is the use of a blue bag. A blue bag is a double-bagged method of packing out solid human waste, and is a requirement in snow-covered environments. Remember to directly deposit into your blue bag - do not scoop solid waste off the snow (yes, this means pooping into a bag). The scoop method contaminates the snow and traps meltwater inside your blue bag.

Tent pad pits can also become terrain hazards for backcountry skiers, so be awesome and fill 'em back in. ▲▲



A wet winter kitchen. Photo by Ida Vincent.

Winter Camping Checklist

Sleep System

☐ **Sleeping pad(s):** Cumulative R-Value of 5 or higher

☐ **Sleeping bag:** Rated to 20 degrees or less

Pro Tip: silk sleeping bag liners add up to 15 degrees of warmth

Hydration System

☐ **Storage:** Wide-mouth water bottles

☐ **Water treatment:** Steripen or enough fuel to boil for 2-3 minutes

Wearable Gear

☐ **Eye protection:** full-coverage sunglasses or glacier glasses

☐ **Head layers:** hat and Buff or balaclava

☐ **Hand layers:** mid-weight glove liners (2 pair) & waterproof shell gloves

☐ **Torso layers:** heavyweight insulated parka

☐ **Leg layers:** insulated leggings & softshell pants

☐ **Foot layers:** insulated boots & socks (2 pair)

Technical Gear

☐ **Traction devices:** microspikes or crampons

☐ **Avalanche shovel**

☐ **Snow/sand tent anchors**

Leave No Trace

☐ **Blue bags:** pack out solid waste

☐ **Bear cansiters** (where required)

Your orientation is finished - welcome to the wonderful world of winter snow camping! The early morning alpenglow is so worth it. See you up there.

DAWN PATROL

5am is the best adventure time

By Hailey Oppelt, Communications Associate

Borrowed from early military aviation's dawn reconnaissance flights, the phrase "Dawn Patrol" was adopted by recreationists to describe 5am pre-work adventures, allowing you to fit two days into one. Pulling it off isn't easy, but with an iron will and a few cups of coffee it can be done. Hear from three of our favorite Dawn Patrollers on what motivates them to roll out of bed long before sunrise, and why it's so worth it.

Gavin Woody: The Sunrise Chaser

I've been doing dawn patrols for about 12 years now, as long as I've lived in Seattle. I work a corporate job and have a family that I want to spend time with, so mornings are really the only time available to me. Most of my stuff is done alone, in the dark, and in the rain. Having been in the army, getting up early and working out was just the way we did things - I'm used to it. If I'm getting out before work the alarm goes off at 4:30am. I live in Issaquah so I can get to Tiger Mountain in 8 minutes and run Cable Line any time of year, fitting in 5-10 miles and a couple thousand feet depending on how early I get there. It sounds corny, but I love to see the sunrise. And you never know if you're going to get it. It's also just a much richer experience seeing the sunrise after putting in all that work, rather than waking up and seeing it from my front porch.

In the winter I like to ski, which really is the apex of dawn patrolling for me. I always ski with partners for safety, and we have a group of dawn patrollers on Facebook - other working professionals who have families and still want to get after it. We'll meet in Issaquah at 5am, be skinning by 6, climb until 8, ski down until 9, then get to work by 10. On primo days we've skied the Slot Couloir or the Bryant Couloir. It's like having two days in one. There's a certain level of satisfaction with rolling into work, knowing that you just had this great adventure, when most people are still on their second cup of coffee. It's a really good feeling, and it sets me up for a great rest of the day.

It's always going to feel like it's too early when the alarm goes off, but getting a workout in early in the morning and seeing the sunrise is going to reward you tenfold of what you put in. Just get out there - and bring a strong headlamp.





Krystin Norman: The Never-Bailer

I first got into Dawn Patrol when working at Fred Hutch as a way to fit in bike rides, rock climbs, or short skis before work. Now I work as a microbiologist at Fremont Brewing where I need to be in at 7am, so it makes Dawn Patrol a little more difficult. I'll often Dusk Patrol, getting into work when the brewers arrive at 5:30am so I can slip out early and fit in an activity before dark. I'll often clean my climbing routes with a headlamp, bike back after sunset, or sometimes fit an actual backcountry mission in after work. I also volunteer with SheJumps and work a couple side jobs in the outdoor industry - I'm busy, but I like to be busy. I sometimes feel like a dog that needs to be walked.

I once tried to climb Mount Stuart on a one-day weekend, planning to go straight from the mountain to work the next morning. That didn't really work - we ended up having an unplanned bivy after summiting at sunset and attempting to walk down the Cascadian Couloir with a dead headlamp and no spare batteries. Fortunately my climbing partner is an ER doctor and has a very high tolerance for epics, but it was one of the colder experiences of my life.

I'm definitely more of a partner person - for safety reasons, and because having a partner allows you to share the experience with someone else. Once you make plans with someone you can't bail, the plans are set in stone. You also hold yourself accountable - you can't bail on yourself because you can't bail on your friends. Doing partner activities strengthens your friendships and motivates you to get out. I also remind myself that I've never gone out and regretted it, even if it's 36 degrees and raining. The only time I might bail is if it's really bad out, and my partner already bailed... then I'll consider it.

Roger Strong: The Overstoker

On a Dawn Patrol morning, I'll actually wake up five or ten minutes before my 3:30 alarm to check the weather - I just get excited about each day. I can go on four hours of sleep for three or four days at a time, and I blame my 20+ years of crab fishing for that. There's so much to do and I feel like the clock is always ticking.

In summer I usually trail run to go solo a climb two or three times a week, hitting the trail by 5am. The days are longer and the light is quicker, and I play this game with myself where I get to the summit just as the sun's coming up. I have a little ten minute yoga session at the top to welcome the day, then run all the way back to the car before heading to my morning meetings.

But winter is what I really love. The days are shorter and the weather changes every few minutes, depending upon exposure and what storm is bringing (or not bringing) in snow. I feel like winter is this gift, whether it's ice climbing or ski touring or ski mountaineering. I love it more and more as I get older - my wife and daughter even nicknamed me "The Overstoker". Ice climbing is one of my favorite things in life, and Snoqualmie Pass surprisingly has it all. I'll go get a few laps in skiing, then go back to the car, grab ice tools and crampons and solo a couple pitches before work. There's nothing like it.

I love getting up early, getting blood flowing and breaking trail in the snow. I've been blessed to be a sponsored climber and skier for over 20 years, long before my wife and I decided to have a baby, and now work sales in the outdoor industry. I feel blessed my body allows me to get up that early, but truly want to see more people experiencing the beauty of the sunrise. I love that I can reach and inspire more people now than I could as a professional athlete and crab fisherman. I want to see more people beating me to the trailhead and sharing their experiences and knowledge. It's true, those first 20 minutes kind of suck - you're sweaty and it's raining, or it's snowing, or you ate or drank too much the night before and think you might throw up - but then you finally find your equilibrium and the next two hours are bliss. ▲▲



Photo by Joe Stock.



Peril in the Pyrenees

By Craig Romano, Mountaineers Guidebook Author

Hikers begin the descent into Spain from the 7,450-foot Port de Boucharo straddling the French and Spanish border in the Pyrenees. Photo by Craig Romano.

I had hiked the route from the Col de Tentes over the 7,450-foot Port de Boucharo, straddling the French and Spanish border to the medieval town of Torla in Aragon, a half dozen times. It was one of my favorite hikes to bring folks along on when I worked as a hiking guide in the Pyrenees for Portland-based Mountain Hiking Holidays. I loved looking for edelweiss, pointing out izards (a chamois native to the Pyrenees), explaining the fascinating history of the route (used by pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago and refugees during the Spanish Civil War), and highlighting so many other facets of this fascinating route to the folks I was guiding.

Over the course of the five years that I guided in the Pyrenees, this route had changed little. I knew exactly where to look for certain flowers, point out wildlife, locate a bunker, direct attention to monstrous sedums, build excitement for upcoming waterfalls, and instill intrigue for upcoming medieval ruins. But on my seventh journey something profound had changed at the end of this 11-mile route. As I approached the bridge spanning the Barranco Repetruso (Repeat Ravine) I stopped fast in my tracks and stood thunderstruck. There, in front of me, spanning

the high rocky ravine was a brand new pedestrian walkway complete with shiny metal railings. Gone was the narrow bridge sans walkway and guardrails.

I stared at the shiny new bridge addition as if I had just attained some form of enlightenment at the end of my journey. My group was dumfounded. After all of the medieval ruins and structures, cascading rivers, old-growth beech forest, and stunning high alpine terrain we had just traversed, why was their guide standing in a trance at a road bridge on the edge of a tiny village? Snapping out of my trance, I turned to them and said, "During dinner tonight, let me tell you about that bridge and one of the most intense moments in my tenure as a guide in the Pyrenees."

Just one year prior that old bridge had put me through one of my biggest tests as a guide. When my wife Heather and I were hired to be guides in the Pyrenees, we worked hard preparing ourselves for the job. Heather, who had a degree in Spanish, now studied French as well. I spent time trying to learn the Spanish and French names for much of the flora, fauna, and natural features of the region. We both studied the area's history and

became acquainted with the communities we would be based out of, learning the food and wine of the region (one of the toughest parts of the job description - kidding). We studied maps and scouted the trails and towns before guiding folks through them. And, we also took The Mountaineers MOFA (Mountaineering Oriented First Aid) Course, a prerequisite to our being hired.

Our clients were constantly interested in the flora, fauna, and history of the region, and we got better each trip rattling off the answers to their queries. My Spanish greatly improved and I gradually learned enough French to get by, although I made a few faux pas (how apropos) along the way. My verb tense use, in particular, made for some tense conversations, like when I meant to say, "look at the izards in the meadow eating..." and my recipient looked at me aghast thinking I wanted to eat the izards in the meadow.

But while we refreshed our mountaineering first aid each year by reviewing procedures and making sure our first aid kits were stocked, we were never called on to use those skills until the bridge made it so. Ironically, I would be called to the rescue not high on a mountain pass but at a rocky ravine in a pastoral village.

It was close to 10pm and we were in a restaurant with our clients in tiny Torla, finishing a great meal complete with copious glasses of wine. It's the way we finished most of our days hiking in the Pyrenees: with good food and wine over good conversation with our clients who hailed from various part of the states. I don't quite recall exactly what we were talking about at the time one of our clients - who had left early to walk the quarter mile back in the dark to our accommodations - frantically burst into the restaurant and exclaimed that Simone had fallen off the bridge.

Simone was one of my favorite clients on this tour. She was the French mother of one of our American clients. She was of rural stock before moving to Paris and she displayed more of a no-nonsense, salt-of-the earth persona than one of big city pretentiousness. She walked with a limp and had bad vision in one eye, but was as tough as nails. Apparently, as she was walking across the unlit guardrail and barrier-free narrow bridge over the ravine in the dark, she was temporarily blinded by the lights of an oncoming car, and as she moved closer to the bridge edge she went over it.

Whatever light buzz from the wine I had quickly burned off. My heart raced. I'd walked over that bridge many times, and knew that it spanned 30-feet above a boulder-littered gulch. The bridge, with its semi-exposed edges, was dangerous to cross if you had to move aside for a passing vehicle. A fall from that bridge would certainly mean serious injury, or worse.

I was dressed in slacks, a blazer, and loafers. I shed the blazer and without hesitation took off running down the darkened road. Along the way my heart was racing with adrenaline from both the sprint and the anticipation of the scene I was about to enter. I kept repeating to myself to stay calm. I tried to block out images in my head of the condition I feared Simone would be in when I reached her. I prepared myself for the worst. I kept breathing deeply and telling myself to stay strong. I got to the bridge and immediately started working my way down into the

thorny, rocky ravine. It was futile as it was too dark and my loafers offered zero traction on the rocks. I quickly retreated and ran into our nearby hotel, changed into hiking boots and grabbed my first aid supplies and headlamp.

By this time local search and rescue had arrived (summoned by our hotelier). I descended back into the dark ravine continuing my mantra to stay calm. As I approached I heard Simone moaning. She was alive and conscious. My light made contact with her along with two medics. I was beyond relieved that the worst-case scenarios I had braced myself for did not happen. More help descended. Heather arrived and took on role of translator, translating French to Spanish and back. I assisted in hoisting Simone out of the ravine. There, folks far more adept at major medical emergencies took over.

As we transported Simone to the awaiting ambulance, I couldn't help repeating in my mind, "I can't believe she is alive." Luckily, when Simone fell off of the bridge, a tree growing in the ravine broke her fall, slowing her descent and helping to cushion her impact on the rocky floor. A couple of days later we would get word back from the distant hospital that she had broken several bones and had some good lacerations and contusions, but she would recover with time (which she did).

I got very little sleep that night, and my mind was preoccupied with the event during the next day's hike as well. Between replaying the evening on a loop in my mind and feeling a deep sense of relief that Simone had survived the fall, I also thought about how glad I was that I had taken the MOFA class. It definitely made a difference. The role playing during incident scenarios had prepared me to know how to stay calm and to be a good responder.

MOFA is one of those things you take and hope you never have to use. Like knowing how to survive if your backcountry plans go awry, MOFA is knowledge, and knowledge is empowering. It can also mean the difference between life and death. And while I was called to act near a trailhead and not deep in the backcountry, the skills you learn in a MOFA class can carry over to other emergencies - like if an earthquake were to hit, or if you came upon an accident scene.

And there is another story here about that bridge. Simone's fall was the catalyst to finally get the village to address it. A local business feud was partially to blame for inaction, and government officials had been squabbling over it for years. This incident put adding the pedestrian way along the bridge on the fast track. As I walked across it for the first time I stared down into the ravine and nodded one more time that I couldn't believe Simone survived the fall. That evening I toasted her recovery and the new bridge walkway. And now all these years afterward, I am long due to refresh my MOFA skills. ▲▲

Craig Romano is an award-winning author who has written more than 20 books. His latest release, *Urban Trails: Tacoma* (Mountaineers Books) highlights the best trails for walking, running, and hiking in Tacoma, Puyallup, South King County, and Anderson Island. Some of his other titles include: *Urban Trails Seattle*, *100 Classic Hikes Washington*, and *Day Hiking Olympic Peninsula* (2nd edition).



T. R. Conway, Elizabeth Wright, Lulie Nettleton, Helen MacKinnon, Norm Engle, Edith Knudson, and L. A. Nelson at Snoqualmie Lodge on April 20, 1920, a time when winter sports were just beginning to catch on. Photo by Rodney L. Glisan.

When Lifts Stop Running

Washington ski resorts of yesteryear

By Trevor Dickie, Content Associate

Skiers and snowboarders in Washington State are lucky to enjoy a wide range of opportunities to zip down the hill. You want the deepest snow? Head to Mt. Baker. Easy access from Seattle? Snoqualmie has you covered. Looking for something small and community-oriented? Visit Meany Lodge! With a range of options to choose from, Washingtonians have it pretty good. Over the past 100 years though, the ski map of Washington has changed dramatically. The Cascade and Olympic Mountains have been home to dozens of resorts, and the ones you see now are the few that remain. Of the current popular areas, few were present in the minds of skiers before the last few decades. Buckle your boots - we're going for a trip to the hidden gems of yesteryear.

The Mountaineers at Lost Lake (1914-2006)

The original Mountaineers Snoqualmie Lodge served as an all-seasons adventure hub for Mountaineers to climb, hike, and ski in the early 1900s. It was described as a beautiful, rustic, off-the-grid lodge, and Jim Kjeldsen wrote about it in detail in *The Mountaineers: A History*. "The original Snoqualmie Lodge was built on a knoll about a quarter-mile southwest of

the lake. The structure was made almost entirely of materials found on site, including logs that were peeled, cedar that was turned into roof shakes, and stones for a huge fireplace." The lodge was an important focal point in the early days of The Mountaineers, allowing members to develop their climbing and skiing skills and giving them access to Snoqualmie Pass before the highway was built. That all changed when the lodge burnt down in 1944, after a spark from the caretaker's bonfire lit the highly-flammable cedar shakes on the roof. After the dust settled a new plot of land was purchased, this time chosen with skiing specifically in mind, and a new lodge was built. The Mountaineers enjoyed skiing, climbing, and other activities around the new Snoqualmie Lodge until it also tragically burned down in 2006. The Pacific Crest Trail now winds through the old property.

First in the West (1921-1936)

The Cle Elum Ski Hill was best known for its status as the first ski hill west of Colorado. An immensely popular resort in the Snoqualmie Pass region, it attracted hundreds of skiers each winter weekend by the late 1920s, when organized skiing

centered on jumping contests. Cle Elum Ski Hill featured a state-of-the-art ski jump and toboggan course, and hosted races and jumping competitions that attracted competitors from across the Northwest. All good things come to an end sadly, and competition with resorts closer to Seattle coupled with the steep slopes and lack of uphill assistance took business away from the small operation. The owners of the resort spent the early 1930s building new features and bigger jumps to try and attract crowds and competitions, but it was outshined by the newer, fancier Snoqualmie Pass resorts. As downhill and slalom skiing became the premier competitive arenas of the sport, the jumping and cross-country features of the Cle Elum Ski Hill became antiquated. The hill closed permanently in 1936.

A skier's paradise (1937-1970s)

Mount Rainier National Park's Paradise is a winter recreationist's heaven, as its name suggests. If you're willing to slap skins on your skis, strap into snowshoes, or explore the sledding area on foot, endless fun is available – albeit with a bit of work. But skiing at Paradise hasn't always been solely human-powered. Eighty years ago a rope tow was installed, and Olympic tryouts were held there in 1935 (rumor has it that eager Mountaineers members also participated, but performed poorly in relation to the superior techniques of the rest of the world). Unlike other ski areas' machinery that stayed put over the summer, the equipment installed at Paradise was required to be mobile. Regardless of the popularity of the area in winter, the park stood by its rule that anything set up was taken down for the summer to protect the scenic views. Paradise stayed popular, especially post-World War II, when ski-trained soldiers came to enjoy their new skills upon returning home from war. The demand for lifts kept growing, but the park stood by its rule. This led to the idea for the Forest Service to lease nearby land, creating the Crystal Mountain and White Pass ski areas. Their popularity and modern amenities shrunk the crowds on the Paradise rope tow, eventually allowing for its dismantling in the mid-1970s.



Skiers at Snoqualmie Pass, 1938. Photo from the Don Sherwood Parks History Collection (Record Series 5801-01) courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

Above the treeline (1951-1978)

Though you may know it for its easy access, beautiful valley views, and popularity as a Western Cascades hiking destination, Mount Pilchuck held a resort on its slopes for nearly thirty years. The base of the resort sat at about 3,100 feet, with lifts running from 2,600 to 4,300 feet near the peak. You can thank the ski resort for the easy road access high into the mountain's current hiking trails. The first rope tow was installed in 1951, followed by a few more throughout the 1950s. In 1963 the ski area gained its upper chairlift, and the snow was so deep that year the lifts needed trenches dug for them to run up the mountain. In 1967, a lower chairlift was added. Mount Pilchuck is still known for its great views of the valley below, and on a sunny day at the resort the panoramic views were said to be incredible. But the resort sat upon a mix of federal and state land, making management and permitting for the area a logistical nightmare. Eventually, the complicated setting, combined with off-and-on snow years (it was prone to rain due to its lower elevation) made it hard for the resort operators to plan and expand long-term. The 1978 season was the resort's last, and a couple years later the lifts were purchased and removed from the mountain by Crystal Mountain Ski Resort.

In the trees (1969-1974)

The cheerily-named Yodelin may be familiar to backcountry and Nordic skiers. Located in the Stevens Pass/Highway 2 area, it's a popular touring spot filled with beautiful, gladed runs, with small structures hinting at the area's skiing history. In the 1960s and 70s, it was a popular resort in competition with today's well-known Stevens Pass Ski Resort. Just a few miles east of where Stevens Pass sits today, Yodelin was surrounded by cabins where families could stay and enjoy the winter resort experience. It was quaint, without many of the amenities of the larger resorts, but was popular and had good snow. Tragically, in 1971 an incredible storm dumped wet, heavy snow onto the mountain, resulting in a massive avalanche that crushed two cabins and killed four people. The ski area would never truly recover from the disaster, and that, paired with competition with the larger and more popular Stevens Pass, resulted in Yodelin closing its doors in 1974. It sold some of its equipment to its growing neighbor and the area became the backcountry favorite we know today. ▲▲

Why Costa Rica Keeps Calling Me

By Patti Polinsky, Global Adventures Leader

Wildlife in Costa Rica. Photos by Patti Polinski.

A trip to Costa Rica is an all-sensory experience. The various fragrances are more pleasing, and different, than any you experience here in the US. The sounds are unique too, with wildlife chattering in preserves and an entertaining hum buzzing through the towns and villages. The sights are raved about, and it's easy to see why; you'll find tree-top bridges, great sand beaches, vibrant farms growing flowers shipped to local shops, stunning volcanoes, aromatic coffee farms, and, of course, rainforests teeming with life.

In March 2019, a group of Mountaineers set off to Costa Rica to have this all-sensory experience firsthand. Federico, our guide, came bubbling into the hotel in San Jose that first morning to greet us, and little did we know how much excitement he had in store over the next 11 days. We met our driver too, Shampoo, a middle-aged Costa Rican who was always smiling. Even though he said, "I do not speak English," he was still generous enough to laugh at all of our jokes. We wondered, why the name Shampoo? He gained that nickname because his pure white hair, cropped short against his head, from a distance looked like he had forgotten to rinse his head after sudsing up with shampoo!

In Costa Rica we learned about the concept of "Pura Vida", which means being happy and keeping your eyes off your watch. We greatly enjoyed the slow, relaxed, and unhurried pace we found upon arrival. A sense of community was present wherever we went, as you'll talk with everyone you cross paths with (regardless of the language spoken)! Taking time to enjoy where you are and the people you are with was a lesson we were happy to learn.

Unplanned experiences happened every day. When we arose in the morning, we always wondered where and what Federico would share or if we would find treasures not listed on the itinerary. At one of the lodges where we stayed, nearly everyone had a story about their unique bungalow with open-air showers. Some opened their door to a wonderful tree-lined and wildflower-enclosed outdoor bathroom. Others found a 3-inch scorpion sitting in the middle of their shower and an iguana on the front porch, tail wrapped around a beam. Some heard a group of howler monkeys hooting across the forest, noisily announcing their arrival. Others enjoyed the music of a



Observing local flora and fauna.

melodious blackbird as they showered. I've never been to another place where you can see so much of Mother Nature by just being there!

When we stopped to see greater-than-life-sized topiary around a church, we heard music from a distance. With time to explore, we were thrilled to discover a local Saturday farmers market! We saw fruit and vegetables, the same ones we'd been enjoying all week but had never seen raw. Stalls featuring local candies and crafts sat nearby. The music only added to the wonderful experience.

Federico offered so many unexpected moments. When he heard or saw anything, we'd change direction immediately not to miss it. One minute we'd be in the midst of a cultural experience and the next we'd be staring at an animal you'd never expect to see. A locally renowned photographer, Federico had an uncanny ability to make birds materialize into the center of his spotting scope for us enjoy. The mantra for our time together became: "Keep your cameras and cellphones at the ready to capture these special, one-time only experiences in Costa Rica." Federico was an amazing guide, and made this first Mountaineers trip to Costa Rica a lifetime adventure for all of us. ▲▲

Interested in your own all-sensory experience? We have a number of upcoming Global Adventures trips led by our experienced volunteers to help you explore around the world, including a trip back to Costa Rica where we'll see turtles nesting and eggs hatching. For more information, visit mountaineers.org/globaladventures

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15-20% off trips and mountaineering gear at their Redmond store

And more!

For more information, visit

www.mountaineers.org/benefits

Photo by Todd Sweatland

The Mountaineers WINTER BOOK SALE

**December
2-23**

25% off all books and maps

35% off book bundles

50% off book "seconds"

25% off logo merchandise

50+% off clearance titles

OPEN WEEKDAYS: 9am-5pm

EXTENDED WEDNESDAY HOURS: 9am-7pm



→ **This holiday season save 25% on all memberships!** ←

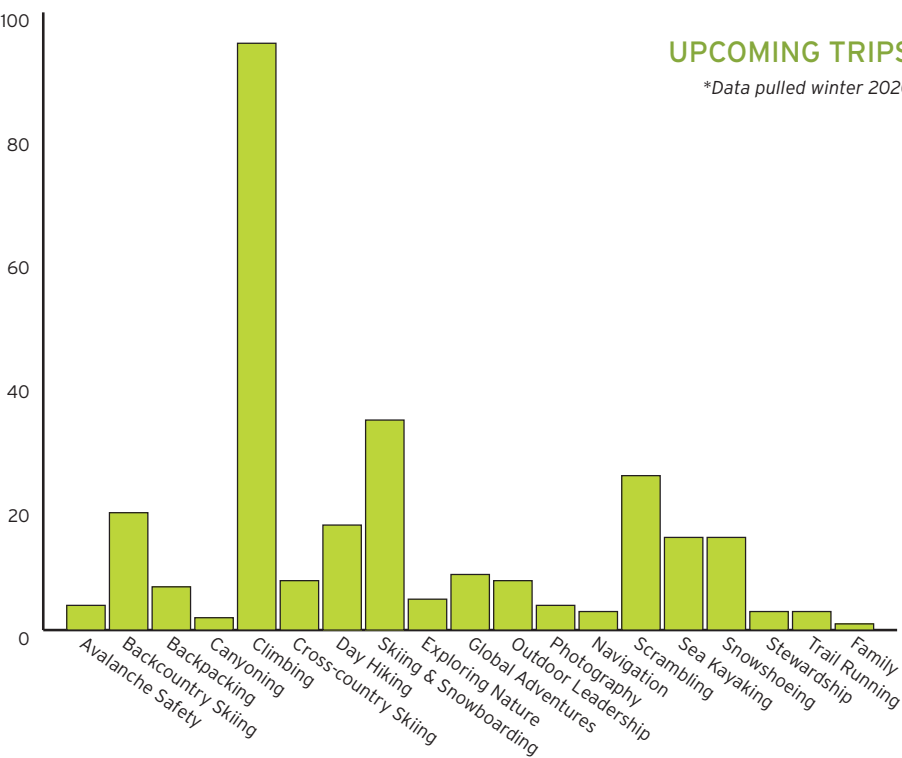
Give the gift of the outdoors with a Mountaineers membership! We're offering 25% off all memberships so that you and your loved ones can get outside together - our deepest discount of the year. We have tons of courses, activities, and youth clubs across our seven branches waiting to be explored. Spend 2020 outside with us!

Available December 2-23. Learn more at mountaineers.org/gift-membership



Mountaineers Activities

The Mountaineers has over 270 activities on the calendar RIGHT NOW, and our volunteer leaders are listing new things every day. The best way to get involved is to go online and find your next adventure today!



THE MOUNTAINEERS 2018 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mountaineers climbed over
44,421,581
feet in elevation and traveled over
158,784 miles



 **13,153**
members

 **2,865**
volunteers

 **393,000**
books sold worldwide

 **49**
courses, seminars & clinics
devoted to outdoor leadership
development

 **540**
new volunteer leaders

 **4,504**
individual actions to
protect public lands

199,975 volunteer hours
spent connecting others to the
natural world

486 people trained in
low-impact backcountry skills
through eLearning courses

81% of books produced with
recycled or FSC-certified material

7,500 Washingtonians
engaged in support of the Land
and Water Conservation Fund

14,000 stewardship hours
dedicated to protecting the
wild places where we play

 **9,064**
youth experiences

 **2,876**
youth engaged in the outdoors

 **96**
full-time employee equivalent
fulfilled by volunteers

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 includes day hikes, backpacking trips, stewardship activities, photography outings, and occasional sailing opportunities! Also, consider taking a basic or introductory course like Basic Snowshoeing, Introduction to Rock Climbing, Navigation, and much, much more! Visit www.mountaineers.org/courses to see what's currently available.

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

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

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

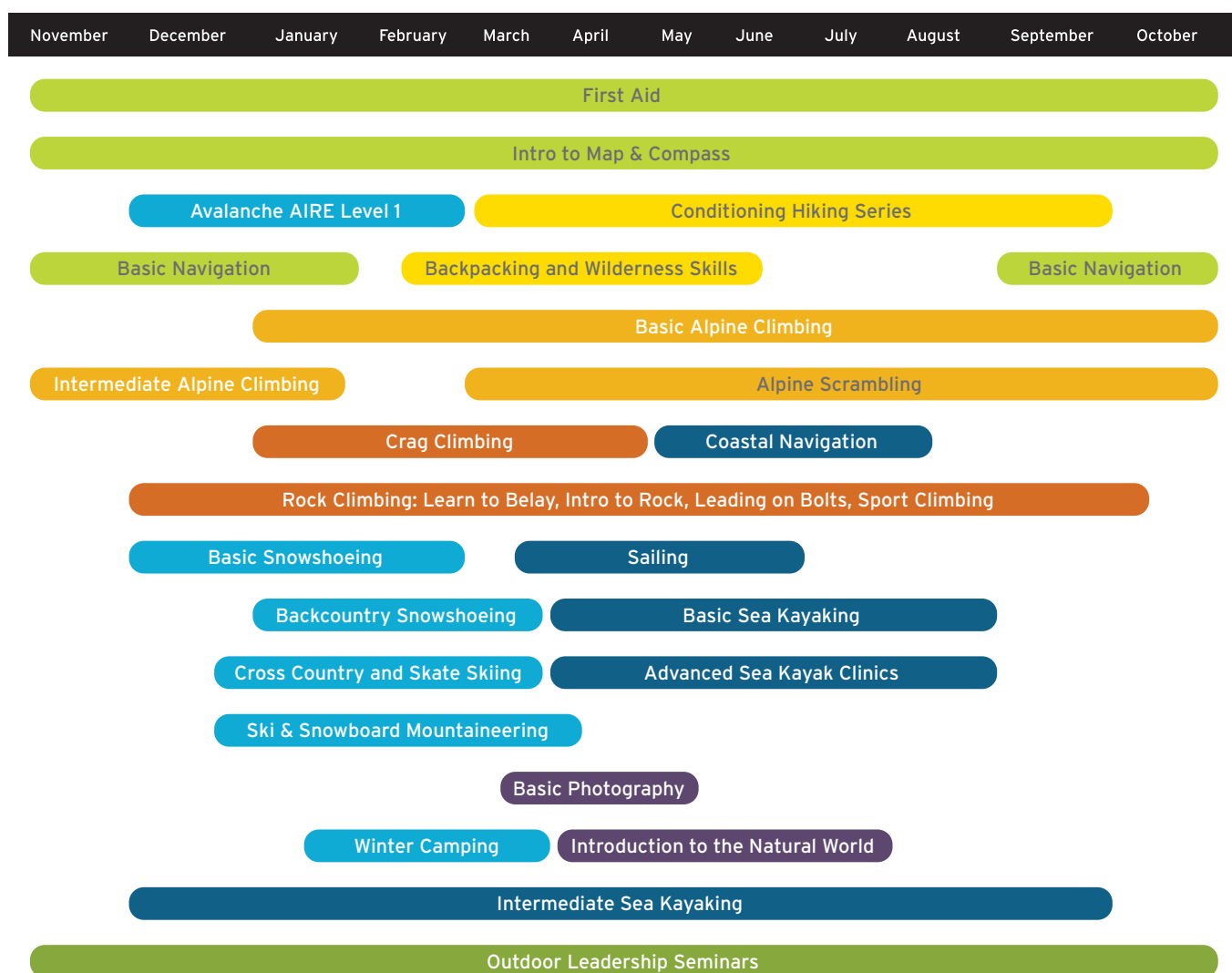
What if the activity is full? Sign up for the waitlist! Yes, it works. We have roughly a 10-20% drop-out rate in courses and activities, so spots often become available.



The Mountaineers Course Overview

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

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



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

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

www.mountaineers.org/bakerlodge

Our rustic Mt. Baker Lodge is nestled in the spectacular North Cascades and is a beautiful getaway all year round. Located within walking distance of the Mt. Baker Ski Area and numerous summer and fall hiking trails, enjoy the mountains and valleys in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and surrounding wilderness from the comfort of Baker Lodge.

Stevens Lodge

www.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.

Meany Lodge

www.mountaineers.org/meanylodge

Built in 1928, this destination ski resort is located off of I-90 at exit 62 (Stampede Pass exit). Meany Lodge provides a warm, family-friendly environment for all. Our nationally-recognized snowsports school offers lessons January and February in downhill skiing, snowboarding, back-country uphill travel, and Nordic skiing. Sign-up for series lessons with flexible schedules or drop-in lessons. We also offer trek-and-lunch as an activity. The lodge sleeps 97 people and is available for meetings, conferences, and wedding rentals.

Kitsap Forest Theater

www.foresttheater.com

Theater inspired by a magical place! Join us for a grand adventure as you stroll down the forested trail to our breathtaking theater and create a treasured family tradition. Our 2020 season brings *Beauty and the Beast* (spring) and *Big Fish* (summer) to life on our unique stage. These uplifting and family-friendly musicals will appeal to young and old alike - treat yourself to a day away in the forest. Tickets are available online, give the gift of outdoor adventure to the whole family and save on our two-show package.

Help Wanted: We are looking for actors, cooks for weekend rehearsals and performances, and help with set building, costume sewing, prop collecting, ushering, and parking for shows.

Kitsap Forest Adventure Camp: This January, sign your K-4 campers up for an exciting summer day camp (July 6-10, 13-17), or join in the fun yourself and come work with us - we're hiring! Spots fill up fast, so don't delay. We offer ferry transportation from Seattle.



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: Krissy Fagan, kristenfagan@hotmail.com
Website: mountaineers.org/bellingham

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

Branch Council meetings are on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Visit our branch calendar for details.

EVERETT

Chair: Elaina Jorgensen, elaina.jorgensen@gmail.com
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 over a dozen programs. As a smaller branch, we value companionship and regularly host events including monthly open houses and annual gatherings like our Salmon Bake, Gear Grab & Potluck, Annual Awards Banquet, and more. Check our branch calendar for details. Our branch is also known for our unique Lookout and Trail Maintenance Committee, which restored and continues to maintain the historic Mt. Pilchuck lookout.

KITSAP

Chair: Jerry Logan, cjtjlogan@gmail.com
Vice Chair: Bill Bandrowski, bill.bandrowski@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 March, June,

and December. Please join us! Visit our branch calendar for details.

SEATTLE

Chair: Bill Ashby, wsashby@gmail.com
Chair Elect: Jared Pearce, jared.pearce@gmail.com
Website: mountaineers.org/seattle

Courses & Activities: avalanche safety, canyoning, climbing, cross-country skiing, exploring nature, first aid, folk dancing, hiking & backpacking, navigation, outdoor leadership, photography, retired rovers, sailing, scrambling, sea kayaking, snowshoeing, and stewardship. The Seattle Branch began as the sole club location in 1906 when The Mountaineers was founded. Our Meet The Mountaineers open houses are held about once a month and are a great way for new and prospective members to learn about our many offerings. Our branch is also home to the Seattle Program Center, which features a book store, indoor and outdoor climbing walls, event spaces, and more.

Branch Council meetings are held every other month (except summer) to discuss new and ongoing initiatives. Our branch is growing rapidly, and we are actively seeking people to support our community - no prior experience required. Visit our branch calendar for details.

FOOTHILLS

Chair: Cheryl Talbert, cascadehiker@earthlink.net
Websites: mountaineers.org/foothills

Courses & Activities: AIARE avalanche safety, backcountry and downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, outdoor leadership, scrambling, snowshoeing, stewardship, 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. Our signature programs include a Backpacking Building Blocks (B3) Course and a Ski & Snowboard Mountaineering Course, and our new Conservation Committee is busy conducting trail work and advancing stewardship education and advocacy. We also host film screenings, guest speakers, and other community events, and we're 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 taking 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. Visit our branch calendar for details.

TACOMA

Chair: Curtis Stock, cstock34@msn.com
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 to get involved is our Meet the Tacoma Mountaineers event, held at our Tacoma Program Center on Jan 16. The evening will consist 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.

OLYMPIA

Chair: Bob Keranen, keranen@hcc.net
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 Speaker Series and Potluck runs from October to May. Join us on Jan 8 to hear Anthony Joyce describe his 1300-mile paddling journey down the Mississippi River, Feb 5 for Neal Kirby's presentation on his trip to Tasmania's Overland Track, and Mar 4 to listen to Ras and Kathy Vaughan describe the incredible 2600-mile route they established, the UP North Loop.

Branch Council meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month. Members are encouraged to attend. Visit our Branch Calendar for details.

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 is 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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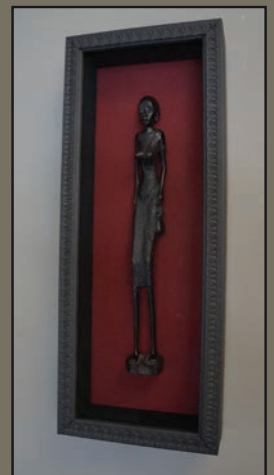
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DID YOU KNOW?

Ski equipment of the 1930s

By Hailey Oppelt, Communications Associate



The Mountaineers Ski Team at Mount Baker in the mid-1930s. Wolf Bauer described the team's uniforms as "natty sweaters with insignias even the most nearsighted judge could not fail to identify a mile away." Photo by Robert H. Hayes.

The 1930s were a decade of firsts for skiers. New technologies, techniques, and ski areas were opening possibilities for the sport that used to be associated only with the European elite. With the introduction of the rope tow, those unwilling to climb were able to enjoy the same downhill thrill, and its popularity exploded. The number of skiers doubled between the late 1920s and the early 1930s, with an estimated one million American skiers in 1936. This, paired with new types of skis, methods of instruction, and options for gear, catapulted the sport into the American consciousness, and skiing as we know it today began to take shape.

The Skis

Two new types of skis hit the market in the 1930s - laminated skis and aluminum skis. Laminated skis had been attempted before, combining woods like hickory or ash with lighter, more flexible woods like spruce or basswood to create a strong, lightweight, and springy ski. However, the glue used was not waterproof and as a result the skis would often delaminate after a few full days on the hill. The first successfully laminated skis were invented in 1932 using casein glues that could withstand moisture, allowing skiers to zip down the mountain without fear of their skis coming apart beneath them.

Mass production of aluminum skis and poles was also an exciting development for backcountry skiers, although they needed to be imported from Europe. Metal edges on wooden skis had been introduced in the mid-1920s, allowing skiers to edge more effectively. However, these edges were screwed into the wooden body of the ski and often came loose and could break. This resulted in many skiers carrying spare edges and tools to

make field repairs, which was not ideal. Despite the comparative durability of aluminum skis, their limited availability meant that wooden skis remained popular in the states during this era.

The Threads

Much like today, ski fashion was a big element of the sport for many, especially as skiing gained popularity and ski clothing hit fashion magazines. Two-toned outfits were popular, with contrasting colors for the top and bottoms. The introduction of knit, stretchy yarn also meant that tight-fitting trouser and sleeve cuffs were now possible to keep out snow. Heavy wool was commonly used for its durability and ability to maintain warmth while wet, with a cotton flannel lining to avoid skin contact with the aggressively itchy fabric. Women wore wool ski pants like men, and many attribute the development of 'sport clothing' to women's pants becoming the norm today.

The Techniques

Ski instruction began to take off in the 1930s as more and more novice skiers took to the slopes. These instructors were often associated with a club or hotel, and standards for education slowly took shape. The "Arlberg technique," created by Hannes Schneider and popularized through ski instruction videos in the 1920s and 30s, became the dominant teaching methodology by the end of the decade. The technique focused on a turn progression, taking the skier from snowplow turns to parallel turns through a series of steps. Though we now have very different ski equipment, this technique and its many variations is still commonly taught at ski schools today. ▲▲

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The Mountaineers presents

BEWILD

Stories of Passion & Adventure

Sharon Wood | Jan 9

In May 1986, Canadian Sharon Wood became the first North American woman to summit Mount Everest. In her gripping, adrenalin-filled memoir *Rising: Becoming the First North American Woman on Everest*, published by Mountaineers Books, Wood's presentation reflects on the seventy days she spent on the mountain and the pivotal experiences and influences that brought her to that staggeringly beautiful and austere corner of the world.

Doors open at 6pm | Show at 7pm

**The Mountaineers
Seattle Program Center**

www.mountaineers.org/bewild



Photo of Vik Sahney by Adrian-Mathieu Morin.

Charlotte Austin | Feb 12

In both 2017 and 2018, Charlotte led teams successfully to the summit of Mount Khuiten (14,350'), the tallest mountain in Mongolia. Straddling the borders of Russia, Mongolia, and China, Khuiten is a remote, rarely climbed peak in the far western provinces of one of the world's least populated countries. Join us to hear Charlotte's stories of driving across the Gobi desert, see photos of expedition supplies being packed onto load-bearing Bactrian camels, and learn about mountaineering in the land of Ghengis Khan.

Brendan Leonard | Mar 12

Brendan Leonard bought the url semi-rad.com for \$29 in 2011, intending to write a weekly post about adventure for a year and see what happened. Almost nine years later, his words on Semi-Rad are read by half a million people each year. His new book, *Bears Don't Care About Your Problems*, is a collection of the best Semi-Rad stories with all-new color illustrations. At this event, Brendan will tell stories covering the history of Semi-Rad, which started as one guy cracking jokes about the outdoors on a small blog, and is still really just one guy cracking jokes, but for a few more readers.

Vik Sahney | May 14

Vik Sahney is an outdoor adventurer and business leader who is currently serving as the Vice President of The Mountaineers Board. He is also a climb leader. During his presentation, Vik will share stories of humble beginnings and exceptional challenges, which resulted in him becoming one of about 350 people and the first Indian-American to complete the Seven Summits.