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Mountaineer

EXPLORE • LEARN • CONSERVE

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

On the cover: Artist Claire Giordano with her painting on Mt. Rainier. Photo courtesy of Claire Giordano.

Features

Columns

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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.


Photo by Rick Meade.

This January I helped instruct an AIARE 1 avalanche education course that The Mountaineers hosted in the Baker backcountry. Due to the risks of COVID-19 exposure, last winter we made the difficult decision to reduce our avalanche education course sizes and not allow students or instructors to stay in our lodges. We were excited to return to Baker Lodge this winter, putting protocols in place to keep everyone as safe as possible: proof of vaccination, a negative antigen rapid test on arrival, and KN-95 grade masks were required. Feedback from students and instructors alike was great, and we had a fantastic weekend.

As I reflect back on the last two years, I'm deeply grateful for our community, and I'm proud of the fact that our Mountaineers community chose to address the challenges of the pandemic boldly. In just the last year, more than 2,000 Mountaineers volunteers gave over 110,000 hours of time to teaching, leading, and stewardship. Together, we offered 259 seminars, 170 courses, and 2,374 trips. We have an average of 11 Mountaineers programs happening every day. We've heard many stories from folks about how The Mountaineers was the one part of their life where they could feel a sense of normalcy and community in a pandemic world.

It's no surprise that as a result, membership is at a record high, having just crested 15,000! Our publishing division had a near-record year in 2021, and is off to a very strong start in 2022. Our youth programs are in high demand as more and more parents recognize the value of transformative outdoor experiences for their children. And by the end of this year, the Tacoma Program Center will become our first facility to be "net zero" - completely energy self-sufficient and producing no carbon emissions.

We believe that outdoor adventures promote physical, emotional, and mental health for people of all ages. As our volunteers continue to lead trips and teach courses, they're playing an important role in the community by teaching people how to do that safely. We also believe that the spirit of volunteerism and a welcoming community contribute to people's sense of belonging and desire to give back, a virtuous cycle that brings out the best in all of us. We saw this through our incredibly generous donors, who helped us weather unprecedented financial challenges and who are making the outdoors accessible for those in need. Without our public lands, all of this would be lost, and our community has continued to be fierce advocates for the outdoor experience and has worked to reduce our collective impact on the planet.

It's no secret that 2021 was a challenging year. The year that was supposed to be the post-pandemic year was anything but. The world was caught in endless false starts, and nearly everyone experienced creativity fatigue. To me, this makes the work of our community even more valuable, and more impressive. As spring peeks around the corner, I'm optimistic that even better days lay ahead.

Tom Vogl
Mountaineers CEO

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

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editorsnote

Photo by Ida Vincent.

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Photo by Paige Madden.

"Spring is always here by the fifth of March." That's what I tell myself as I take long winter walks, keeping my eyes on the sidewalk for any early crocuses peeking their heads out of the earth.

The "fifth of March" rule is something my family has followed for years. With the weather growing increasingly inconsistent, I'm not sure how much longer the rule will hold, but if anything it's a light at the end of the (dark, wet, and cold) tunnel of Washington winters. For the record, I do know that most people consider spring equinox to be the end of winter. I just prefer to listen to the flowers.

This year, we all seem especially eager for spring to arrive. More than the usual desire to escape our endlessly grey weather, our cautious optimism is largely fueled by hope that the burden of the pandemic will soon lighten. Like a bad carnival ride, COVID-19 has had us spinning way too fast for far too long. And not to take the metaphor too far, but I think most of us are nauseous.

Spring is a natural time to feel a sense of rebirth. With waning restrictions, many of us have started to creep out of the cocoons we've created in the last 24 months. As stories for this edition slowly arrived on our desks, the theme of "reemergence" began to take shape. In *The Olympic Mountain Project, Part II*, Nate Brown shares his experiences finishing his goal of climbing 30 peaks in the Olympics after a forced hiatus due to COVID, offering more of the jaw-dropping photos we saw in Part I. In *Half Moon Bouldering* we hear the story of Gloria Man, an immigrant from Eastern Europe who started her business with the goal of cultivating a new kind of climbing community. Member and artist Claire Giordano offers tips for hopeful naturalists and watercolorists to capture the joys of spring in *Stop and Paint the Wildflowers*. We also have excellent how-to pieces this edition, with information on how to submit pika observations to Fish & Wildlife, a highly-detailed (and funny) manual on managing zippers, and a thoughtful pandemic debrief guide based on AIARE education practices.

Our regular columns are full of inspiring content as well. *Peak Performance* offers tips to jiggle yourself free from stagnation with five-minute actions. *Retro Rewind* features the story of Stevens Lodge volunteer John Hansen, who spent decades helping build the lodge into what it is today (quite literally – he was there for both the original build and the expansion). Craig Romano shares his personal reflections and growth during the pandemic in *Trail Talk*, and we have an important update in *Impact Giving* on the current status of the lawsuit with the Keta Legacy Foundation and our hope for a resolution.

What the future holds is still unknown, but like any carnival ride it eventually has to come to an end so that we might stumble off in search of water and a conciliatory elephant ear. "Normal" is relative, as we have come to realize, but we will return – to the trail, to the mountains, and to each other. As we reemerge this spring and in springs to come, we might not be quite the same as we were before, but we will be there regardless to bask in the light. By the fifth of March, no doubt.

H. O.

In How to: Make an Efficient DIY Boot Dryer, *member Esther Andrews shared her system for an at-home boot dryer that she claims works better than commercial ones. Our community was stoked to add this to their list of gear hacks:*

"I love this DIY option! Thanks for sharing. I hope to see more DIY ideas."
-Beth Crispin, 13-year member

"This is awesome Esther! I've already shared with another 'wet shoed' family and will be making this."
-Birgit Grimlund, 3-year member

"You can use the same principle to dry out water bladders using an aquarium air pump."
-Adam Greenbaum, 6-year member

"Would this work for mittens/gloves too?"
-Jennifer Bodley, Facebook commenter

We're thrilled when our members express their support for our programs, the natural world, and each other. Thank you Mountaineers for always maintaining the enthusiasm that lights up our community:

"Deling is an amazing climb leader!"
-Joanna Maltbaek, 3-year member, responding to "10 Essential Questions: Deling Ren"

"Indeed, good news. Fondly hoping that 'protecting important places in Washington' includes the most local of conservation actions - stewardship of wild lands and waters."
-Peter Hendrickson, 17-year member, responding to "Announcing Outdoor Alliance Washington"

"Way to go Takeo!!!"
-Eva Schoenleitner, 18-year member, responding to "Leader Spotlight: Takeo Kuraishi"

Our community puts a lot of heart into Mountaineer magazine, and we're always happy when readers let us know they like what they see:

"This is an excellent article in such a crowded world. I found parallels to what surfing used to be. Thanks for posting it online."
-Sergio Rojo, 2-year member, responding to "Trail Talk: It Doesn't Always Take a Village"

"Olga beat all the men with the longest ski jump!"
-Joan Burton, 71-year member and Mountaineers Books author, responding to "Retro Rewind: Ski Jumping on 4th Avenue"

"My daughter and I skied this run last Feb 13. Twice! No air, though. We started and ended at my house."
-Bruce Burger, Facebook commenter, responding to "Retro Rewind: Ski Jumping on 4th Avenue"

"Megan, this is a brilliant tribute to friendship, adventure, mountaineering, to two lives well-lived - and to the legendary Fred Beckey. Thank you."
-Rebecca Chamberlain, 14-year member, responding to "The Speed of Love: Going the Distance with Fred Beckey"

Last December, Jim Whittaker and Diane Roberts wrote a letter to our community expressing what it means to them to give back to The Mountaineers. Readers flooded the comments section:

"Anyone who hasn't read *A Life on the Edge* by Jim Whittaker needs to get it done! An amazing story about an incredible life."
-Marilyn McCartney, Facebook commenter

"If I were half the man Mr. Whittaker is, I would be twice the man I am."
-Michael Ross, Facebook commenter

"I remember you [and your twin brother Lou] coming up skiing at Meany as teenagers. I think you bottomless pits were first in line for meals and standing in line for seconds before some had even eaten. That was a great place to learn the love for the outdoors."
-Barbara Jean Collins, Facebook commenter

"A great guy for sure!!! I so enjoyed sailing with them on Puget Sound and hearing his many stories."
-Patty Taylor Ross, Facebook commenter

"Thanks to Jim and Diane for what they bring to our understanding of how humans learn by moving through the world."
-Wynn Miller, Facebook commenter

"Both of them are treasures and wonderful people."
-Tim Kovacs, Facebook commenter

Name Andrea Shadrach

Hometown Freeman's Village, Antigua & Barbuda

Member Since February 2020

Occupation School and clinical psychologist

Favorite Activities Hiking is Mother Nature's therapy for me. I need to get out on the trails at least once a week, and I'm definitely hiking two or more times a week if the weather is favorable and I have a hiking buddy.

How did you get involved with The Mountaineers?

I first heard about The Mountaineers through a meetup group, Women's Hiking Connections 40 & Up. I later went for a hike with Julie Cauthorn, who was also a Mountaineers member. I was impressed with her speed, which she credited to the Conditioning Hiking Series (CHS). I was determined to join The Mountaineers so that I could also improve my hiking pace with this CHS group.

What motivates you to get outside with us?

I'm forever a student at heart, so the myriad of opportunities to learn from outdoor enthusiasts who are passionate about their sport is very appealing to me. I have been able to indulge my passion for learning and personal growth in a variety of courses, including taking every single navigation course offered by The Mountaineers. I've also stayed involved as an instructor and leader because navigation is a skill you have to keep using.

What's your favorite Mountaineers memory?

My Enchantments thru-hike will always be a favorite memory. I remember saying repeatedly, "This is what Heaven must look like!" Climbing up Aasgard Pass was long and hard! I was really thankful for the knowledge and training I had learned in my Alpine Scrambling Course. Looking back at Colchuck Lake made that arduous climb bearable.

Who/what inspires you?

My first hike was on Mother's Day in 2018. I had on sneakers and my daughter's old backpack with my raincoat, a water bottle, and snacks. The hike leader, Rosemary Sutton, started chatting with me about hiking gear and the essentials I needed to have in my pack. I knew zilch about hiking safely and was a little flabbergasted at what was required. I didn't show up with The 10 Essentials on the next trip either, but over time, I gradually acquired most of the essentials. In fact, I didn't purchase a headlamp and compass until I joined The Mountaineers.

Rosemary is my inspiration. When I grow up, I want to be just like her! She is in her 70s and leads an easy hike almost every Sunday, encouraging and supporting a small group of women with her words of wisdom. I'm grateful every day that I met her at Lord Hills Park for my first hike. We hike together to this day, and I'm still learning from her.

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

I'm a beneficiary of Mountaineers scholarships, with which I was able to apply to WFA and scrambling. I'm now paying it forward. I've instructed with Wilderness Navigation and will be an Assistant Instructor for the upcoming Staying Found Course. I recently earned my Hike Leader badge and will be co-leading CHS hikes. I've also agreed to instruct with Map & Compass and will be pursuing my Backpacking Leader badge this spring.

What does adventure mean to you?

I'm not particularly adventurous, because I'm innately risk-averse. Being on a new trail or a new mountain is always an adventure for me. But I'll take a deep breath and try almost anything once. Although I'm terrified of heights, I've climbed mountains with an ice axe!

Lightning round

Sunrise or sunset? Sunrise

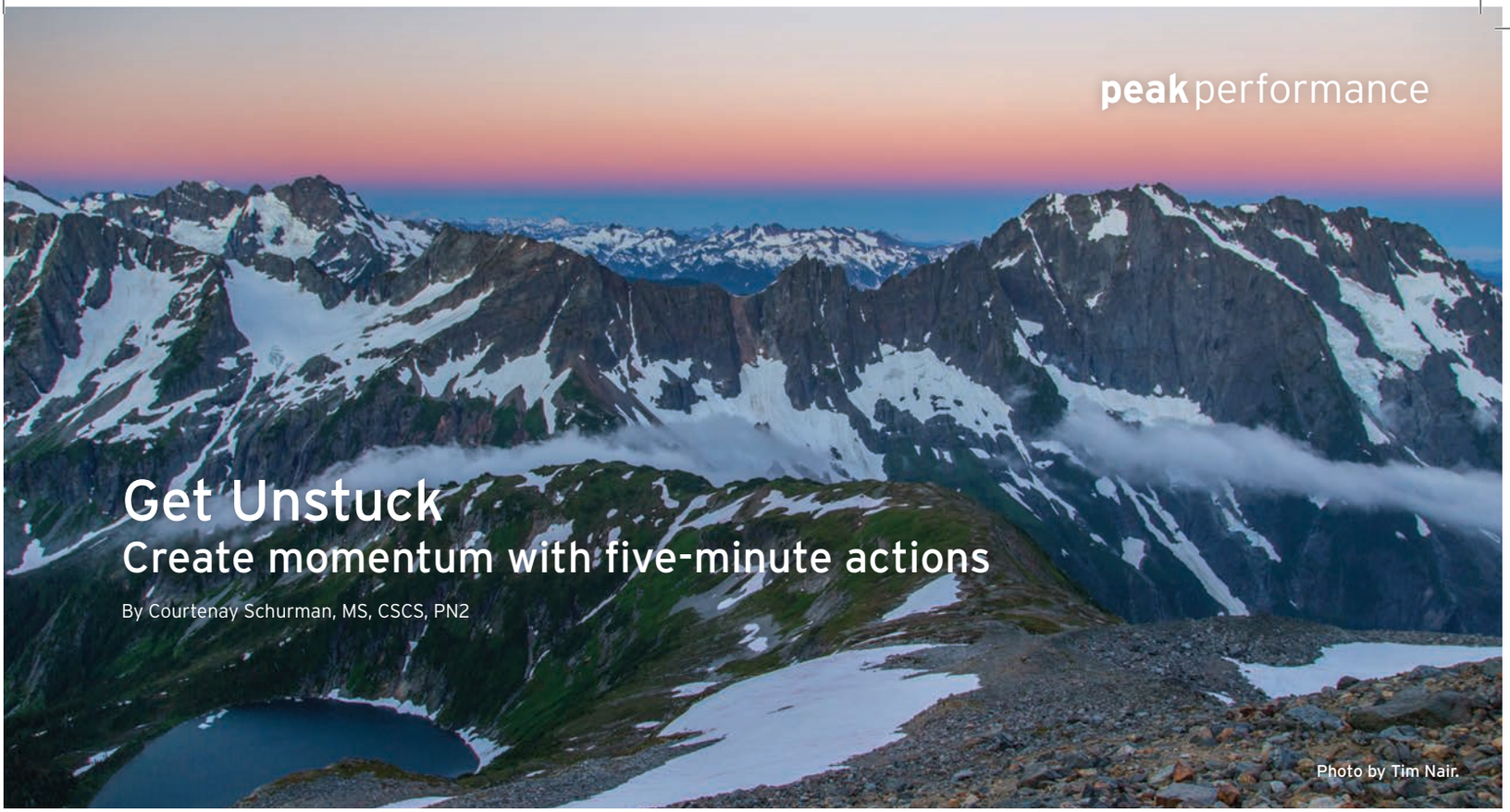
Smile or game face? Smile

What's your 11th Essential? An audio book or podcast

What's your happy place? Being near water - the ocean, a river, a lake, or a waterfall

Post-adventure meal of choice? Protein! I'm always craving a salad topped with chicken or fish after a long hike

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



Get Unstuck

Create momentum with five-minute actions

By Courtenay Schurman, MS, CSCS, PN2

Photo by Tim Nair.

If you're like me, you might have some important goals in mind for this year. Perhaps you're not quite sure how to get started on them. On my blog at CourtSchurmanGo.com, I recently shared how using five-minute actions can be a fantastic trick for getting yourself unstuck.

What does a five-minute action do?

A five-minute action is a small step that helps create forward momentum. The saying goes, "No one climbs Everest in a day," and that's certainly true. If you're feeling daunted by a big goal, ask yourself, "What five-minute action could I do to get one step closer?" Consider the many steps (literally and figuratively) required to get to any summit. You must gain skills needed to travel safely over snow. Find climbing partners. Request a permit from the right organization. Acquire the necessary gear. Do sufficient physical conditioning. And learn about the route and current snow and weather conditions.

The list can seem daunting, at times insurmountable. But by first listing all the actions you need to take, and what skills you need to acquire, you can identify small steps you can take today to move closer to your goal. Like registering with a guide service for your climbing date, or calling a few friends who might want to go with you. By taking a five-minute action, you get momentum behind you. You become inspired. You get energized, and the collective energy propels you forward.

Five-minute fitness actions

This idea works with my personal training clients, too. If you're having trouble committing to an entire strength workout or a long walk, instead, consider what you could do in just five minutes. Set out your workout clothes (bonus points for putting them on). Fill your water bottle with ice. Call a friend to meet at the trailhead. Walk out to your mailbox... then keep going. Show up at the gym and do your warm-up or a few stretches.

What would happen if you committed to just five minutes the next time that you're thinking of backing out of your workout? By setting your intention and starting, you overcome inertia and create forward momentum. Try it, and promise yourself: "If I'm not feeling up for it after five minutes, I can stop." By the end of that time, nine times out of ten you'll keep going as you've already done the hardest part - showing up.

When to use five-minute actions

Everything worth doing has some five-minute action associated with it. Can you take five minutes to schedule an hour of quality time with your spouse or child? What about emailing an accountability partner who will help you stick to your workout goals? Would it help to have a guide service send you climbing information you could post at your desk for motivation?

Anyone can find five minutes. The key is to do so consistently. Move forward, even if it's just a few steps every day. The small steps accumulate, and sometimes they grow into ever-larger chunks of time. Once you get started, the hardest part is over. Since you've invested a little time, energy, or money, you will be much less likely to quit. Remember, the goal is not perfection. The goal is to get unstuck and get moving in the right direction. Five minutes at a time.

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 www.bodyresults.com or send a question to court@bodyresults.com.

If you'd like more ideas on how to get unstuck, subscribe to Courtenay Schurman's free weekly blog at CourtSchurmanGo.com.

Valley of Giants

Stories from Women at the Heart of Yosemite Climbing

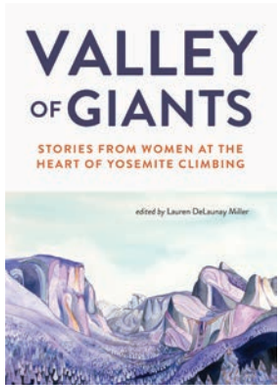
An interview with author Lauren DeLaunay Miller

Lauren DeLaunay Miller is the editor of a new anthology that shares the stories, famed and previously untold, of the remarkable women who have shaped Yosemite climbing history. *Valley of Giants,* published by Mountaineers Books, is a first-of-its-kind collection that gathers stories from journal excerpts, original essays, interviews, and archival materials from almost 40 contributors, including legends like Lynn Hill, Steph Davis, Kate Rutherford, Beth Rodden, Chelsea Griffie, and more. Lauren has worked for Yosemite Search and Rescue, served as Vice President of the Bishop Area Climbers Coalition, and as event coordinator for the American Alpine Club's Bishop Craggin' Classic festival. Read on as Lauren discusses her inspiration for this book, what it taught her, and more.

This interview originally appeared on Climbing.com, conducted by Madeline Taub.

Why did you decide to write this book?

The writing of this book was kind of a long process; I probably spent just as long thinking about it as I did writing it. I think that's because it took me a while to feel like I was the right person to do it, even though I'd always known that it was something that needed to exist. I go back to this Galen Rowell quote: it basically says that he makes no apologies for excluding women from climbing literature history because they weren't involved in early ascents in Yosemite. When I got to Yosemite, I found that that was not true and that there were inspiring women all around me who were telling their stories — but not with the same authority to write them down. There have been articles that have done a lot to highlight women's experiences, but I think that there's something really important about a book that feels really concrete compared to other types of media.



What surprised you while writing this book?

I think I felt surprised by how influential women were in the really early days, I kind of cut [the timeline] off at roped fifth class climbing, which was introduced in Yosemite in the 1930s. But in the 30s, the 40s, the 50s, early 60s, I was pretty surprised at how many women I was able to find from that period. It was

interesting making these wonderful connections between what was happening in the climbing world at the time and what was happening in like a larger American cultural context. I mean, I'm not a historian by trade, but it doesn't take a genius to see that, oh, in 1972 and 1973, we get Roe vs. Wade, we get Title IX, and we also get the first all-female ascent of El Cap. These things are not coincidences. This book is about climbing, of course, but it really showed me how much it's not just about climbing.

What makes the history of women in Yosemite unique, as compared to other climbing areas?

In Yosemite climbing, the lore and the storytelling component is huge. I've climbed all over the country and I've never come to anywhere where people are so steeped in that history. Every time you go to the crag in Yosemite, people refer to the routes by names. I would venture a bet that more people know the first ascensionists of the climb that they're climbing on in Yosemite than anywhere else. History is much more present there than it is in other places, which made me feel like if you are going to start a project like this, Yosemite was the natural place to start, not just because that's where I've spent most of my climbing career, but because that lore already exists — it just has gaping holes in it.

What are some of the main things you hope people come away with after reading this book?

I tried to write this book in such a way that it's appealing to all different types of people. I think that there's a good chance that, if you read it without looking at the title or the names of the authors, you'd hardly even recognize that it's a book about women's history because there's just so many good climbing stories in there. There are some stories in it that are really climb-y, that are really going into the weeds in aid climbing and things like that, and then there's some stories that just share the joy of being at Camp Four or climbing with your family members. I guess I just want people to realize how many stories are left out, and then think about why that's been the case and what we can do to make everyone feel like their voices are worth being heard.

Read the full interview at Climbing.com. Valley of Giants *is available for purchase at our Seattle Program Center bookstore, online at mountaineersbooks.org, and everywhere books are sold.*

staffpicks

The Packraft Handbook

By Luc Mehl, illustrated by Sarah K. Glaser

Learn to maneuver through river features and open water, mitigate risk with trip planning and boat control, and react when things go wrong. This comprehensive guide to packrafting has something to offer everyone, from expert paddlers to those just getting started, with a strong emphasis on skill progression and safety. Author Luc Mehl is a leading packrafting authority with 15 years of hard-earned experience under his belt, as well as a swiftwater safety instructor whose teaching background is clearly evident in the book. Detailed illustrations by Sarah Glaser bring Mehl's expert guidance to vivid and easily comprehensible life. Already called "the bible of packrafting," this 2021 National Outdoor Book Award winner is a must-have for any paddlers who want to develop their skills.

The Skies Above: Storm Clouds, Blood Moons, and Other Everyday Phenomena

By Dennis Mersereau

Useful and lovely, *The Skies Above* is for anyone who has marveled when a sunset paints the sky pink and gold or when a storm's power buffets the windows and bends the trees. Accessible science, illuminating illustrations, and stunning photography bring the meteorological world to life in this new book from longtime weather writer Dennis Mersereau. From basic concepts like weather fronts and types of precipitation to more unusual occurrences like polar vortexes, meteor showers, solar eclipses, and the spectacular mammatus clouds that signify a supercell thunderstorm, Mersereau tracks key phenomena across the seasons and demystifies celestial events visible to the naked eye yet enigmatic to most. He also delves into how climate change affects weather, forecasts, and other events, including wildfires and the hurricanes churning across the Atlantic Ocean.

Campfire Stories Deck For Kids!: Storytelling Games to Ignite Imagination

By Ilyssa Kyu and Dave Kyu

Kids ages five and up will love the *Campfire Stories Deck For Kids!* as they make camping memories that will last them a lifetime. Kids can play alone, or parents and siblings can join in on the laughs and build collaborative worlds as a family. Players pick one card from each set and use the images and descriptions to make up a story, with prompts that encourage them to look and learn from the natural world around them. Each of the 50 beautifully illustrated cards features furry friends, unique actions, and silly descriptors. With this deck in hand, kids of all ages will set their outdoor imaginations on fire.

Rebuilding Mountain Workshops

By Ethan Metzger, Associate Outreach Programs Manager

Mountain Workshop participants enjoying a day in the snow. Photo by Mountaineers staff.

Helping youth explore the outdoors is one of the key ways we foster a love of nature, a conservation mindset, and outdoor independence in future generations. Over the last decade, The Mountaineers has developed partnerships with school groups and youth-serving organizations across the greater Seattle, Tacoma, and Olympia areas to provide quality outdoor programs known as Mountain Workshops. With the goal of decreasing barriers to the outdoors, Mountain Workshops provide the expertise and gear needed to get kids outside.

In 2019, our Mountain Workshops program provided over 1,000 outdoor experiences for youth. Then in March of 2020, programs ground to an abrupt halt with the advent of COVID-19. With the support of The Mountaineers community, our youth team has been working tirelessly to find ways to continue our programming once Mountain Workshops came back online in October 2020.

Overcoming transportation and weather challenges

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, transportation remains a major barrier to the outdoors for many. While The Mountaineers continues to work with partner organizations to find transportation solutions on an ongoing basis, we are proud of some of the creative solutions we currently have in place.

In 2019, we were able to secure two new program vehicles – a Ford transit van and a Subaru. Our van carries 15 passengers, and our trusty Subaru often carries gear for programs. Since their acquisition, these vehicles have explored countless recreation areas in state parks, national forests, and urban areas. Moving forward, we're looking to utilize these vehicles to bring more programs directly to groups.

Another large challenge that Mountain Workshops has faced is inclement weather. With restrictions on indoor programming, we utilized our outdoor spaces as much as possible. It was an unusually windy and rainy fall in 2021, and with indoor programming restricted, we turned to our facilities team and Gear Library for help. The facilities team was able to rig a tarp on the roof of our Seattle Program Center to cover a large portion of our outdoor climbing wall, offering some reprieve from the elements. On days we couldn't set our tarp up due to wind, the Gear Library was there to offer warm layers and rain gear. It's never easy to recreate in challenging weather, but between these tools and the enthusiasm of our participants, we were successfully able to run outdoor programming in 2021.

Looking ahead

We were thrilled to welcome new partnerships in 2021, including the Seattle Waldorf School, Forest Ridge School of the Sacred Heart, The Nature Project, and more. From thrilling climbing days on our south plaza to learning how to navigate (in the rain!),

our youth participants showed us that with enough creativity and perseverance, any day can be a good day outside. With so many amazing opportunities and programs in the works, 2022 is shaping up to be a memorable year.

Partner with us

We are always looking to build new relationships. Our youth team is hard at work building out our schedule to get more kids outside. To learn more about Mountain Workshops and how you can get your youth group involved, visit mountaineers.org/mountainworkshops or contact the Outreach Program Manager in your area.

Volunteer

Our programs are made possible by our volunteer community. As a part of rebuilding Mountain Workshops, we are always looking to expand and grow our volunteer pool.

Step 1: Visit mountaineers.org/youth/volunteer-with-youth to see available programs, upcoming events, and more. All youth volunteers are thoroughly vetted and subject to background checks.

Step 2: Take our Qualified Youth Leader Training online at the link above. This simple online process gets you up-to date with all of our programs and safety guidelines.

Step 3: Contact the Outreach Program Manager in your area:
Seattle: Ethan Metzger, ethanm@mountaineers.org
Tacoma: Sarah Holt, sarahh@mountaineers.org
Olympia: Becky Nielsen, beckyn@mountaineers.org

Mountain Workshop participant climbing on the south wall at the Seattle Program Center. Photo by Mountaineers staff.

Keta Legacy Foundation Sues The Mountaineers

2021 year end update

By Tom Vogl, Mountaineers CEO

Photo by Travis Prescott.

This piece was originally published on our blog on December 3, 2021. Updates have been made throughout to reflect recent developments.

Two years ago, Keta Legacy Foundation (Keta) filed a lawsuit against The Mountaineers. Keta sued The Mountaineers, claiming they had superior rights in our name, which we had previously authorized Keta to use as the "Mountaineers Foundation." In addition to wanting to continue to trade on our name to capture donations, Keta also seeks to prevent us from using our own name – The Mountaineers – to raise funds for charitable purposes.

In the lawsuit, Keta has also sought to prevent The Mountaineers from accessing Kitsap Forest Theater through the Rhododendron Preserve, as we have since long before 1985 when we deeded the Preserve to Keta and signed a Conservancy Agreement with them. The transfer of the Preserve to Keta was made under the explicit agreement of continued access so we can operate the Theater. In addition to the legal maneuvering, in December 2021, Keta changed the locks, physically preventing The Mountaineers from using the road. This may ultimately prevent all handicap access to the theater.

We've been The Mountaineers since 1906 and are vigorously defending ourselves against these unfounded attacks. As we continue our journey in the new year, I wanted to share another update on the status of these critically important efforts.

Background

Since Keta first filed this lawsuit against The Mountaineers, we've provided periodic updates to our community. We've done so in the spirit of transparency and because it's such an important issue for both our donors and the well-being of The Mountaineers.

I encourage members to read previous blog posts to learn more about the background of Keta's lawsuit and efforts we've taken to resolve their claims amicably. We made a good faith offer to resolve this to Keta, and sought to meet with Keta's board to hash out our differences. Despite these efforts, Keta never responded with their own proposal to our settlement offer, and ultimately declined to meet with us. It is our goal to resolve this dispute and focus our organizational efforts on donor funds and meaningful projects, but we can't put this case behind us outside of court without a willing partner.

Current status

After months of exchanging documents and taking testimony, we have found nothing to suggest that Keta has any rights in the name beyond those granted by The Mountaineers. There is no evidence to suggest that a donor has ever mistakenly given money to The Mountaineers intending for it to go to Keta. But we have uncovered multiple prior instances where donors believed they were donating to The Mountaineers but mistakenly donated to Keta as a result of Keta's confusing marketing practices.

As the discovery process recently drew to a close, we are even more confident that Keta's meritless lawsuit will fail.

The path ahead

Despite our efforts to resolve the lawsuit by Keta amicably and without further legal expenses, we've resigned ourselves to the unfortunate reality that resolution will likely only come through additional legal action. In December, The Mountaineers filed a motion with the court to dismiss Keta's claims based on documents and written testimony we submitted that demonstrates The Mountaineers owns the trademarks and has a right to continued access to the Preserve in Kitsap. Keta, after having filed the lawsuit claiming the marks were protectable, has changed course and filed its own motion to dismiss our claims, arguing that The Mountaineers trademarks are generic and not protectable by anyone. On January 6, 2022, the magistrate judge assigned to this matter heard oral arguments from both parties. In the months ahead we will be preparing to defend ourselves should the Court rule that the case needs to be tried.

As we've shared all along, the heart of this dispute is about honoring the wishes of donors. We continue to urge donors who wish to make a gift to The Mountaineers to use our website (www.mountaineers.org) or send a gift directly to our Seattle mailing address (7700 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115). We also encourage donors to specify The Mountaineers tax ID number (27-3009280) when making gifts of securities, employer match contributions, and estate gifts, and to use this ID number when updating wills. Likewise, people who wish to make donations to Keta Legacy Foundation may do so on their website or by directing gifts to their mailing address in Bremerton, WA.

We will continue to honor our commitment to The Mountaineers community to provide ongoing updates about the Keta lawsuit and our efforts to defend the interests of the organization and our donors. As always, I encourage you to reach out to me directly with any questions or concerns: my email address is tomv@mountaineers.org and my direct phone number is 206-521-6009.

ENSURE YOUR GIFT SUPPORTS THE MOUNTAINEERS

Verify three key details: Organization Name, Tax ID, Address

- **Organization Name:** The Mountaineers
- **Tax ID:** 27-3009280
- **Address:** 7700 Sand Point Way NW, Seattle, WA 98115

Using our Tax ID is particularly important for companies with online-based verification systems. Some members have shared that confirming our Tax ID number can help avoid confusion with organizations or groups with similar names that may also be listed. By using our Tax ID, you ensure that your gift will be directed to The Mountaineers. To confirm your donation to our organization was successful, you are welcome to forward your email confirmation to development@mountaineers.org.

How do I know if The Mountaineers received my gift?

Every donation that arrives to The Mountaineers will receive an acknowledgment.

Online gifts will receive an immediate electronic confirmation.

All gifts over $100, and gifts made via check, will receive an additional tax acknowledgment letter directly from our development team. In alignment with our commitment to carbon footprint reduction, tax letters are now sent via email with an option to receive a hard copy if desired. If we do not have a valid email, a hard copy letter is sent to the address on file.

All donations received through employer matching programs or third party vendors will receive an email confirming your gift has arrived. Donations made through our signature fundraising events, like our annual Gala and Evening of Advocacy, will receive a final tax statement with a summary (including fair market value) within one week of the event. If you notice that you have not heard from us regarding your donation, we hope you'll reach out to any member of our team. We have been able to recover misdirected funds in the past when we were able to act quickly.

If you have planned for a future gift by naming The Mountaineers in your estate plans, we'd love to know how we can help you make an impact in a way that is most meaningful to you. Please contact Bri Vanderlinden at briv@mountaineers.org or call 206-521-6006.

Let's GoHike!

Creating an introductory hiking course

By Christina Buckman, Liz McNett Crowl, and Lori Heath, GoHike Leaders

Photo by Jenelle Barkley.

At 50, Liz McNett Crowl started hiking. She met Dave on a guided snowshoe trip of Mount Baker who, through a fateful invitation, would become her hiking mentor. They hiked together for years throughout the North Cascades, exploring places like Yellow Aster Butte and beautiful alpine ridges. Then, Dave moved out of state. That's when Liz discovered The Mountaineers, exploring longer-distance hiking in our Conditioning Hiking Series.

Christina Buckman remembers when she first started hiking. She was plagued by feelings that she wasn't fit enough or that she would be the one to slow the group down. Christina continued hitting the trail anyway, eventually finding an encouraging community within The Mountaineers. Compelled to give back, Christina became a hike leader with the goal of providing body positivity and inclusiveness on her hikes.

Liz and Christina have both been active Mountaineers leaders for years, and noticed a gap in education for those just beginning to hit the trail. They wanted to create a program to help more people, especially newcomers, feel belonging on the trail.

The origins of GoHike

In late 2019, after several conversations about the need for an introductory hiking program, Liz, Christina, and Cheryl Talbert, Foothills Branch Super Volunteer and backpack leader, put their heads together. The result was the GoHike: Beginning Hiking Series Course. Lori Heath, Foothills Branch Communications Committee member, later joined the team to provide support with registration coordination. Their intention was to create a gateway program to help participants break through the hurdles keeping them from realizing their hiking goals. These volunteer leaders wanted to offer a space for community, inclusiveness, diversity, and body positivity.

GoHike was launched in March 2021, and was met with enthusiasm. From April to September 2021, 13 hike leaders led a total of 92 hikes for the inaugural GoHike Course, rewarding 24 hikers with a GoHike Badge. An online orientation session set expectations and introduced students to the essentials of hiking, including preparation, safety, and general fitness tips. The course was designed to steadily increase distance, mileage, and knowledge for the GoHIke students. To graduate from the course and earn a GoHike Badge, students were required to complete at least one hike per month from April through September and complete the Low Impact Recreation Course. The first month's hike options ranged from 2-4 miles with less than 500 feet of elevation gain. Hikes with increasing distance and elevation were added each month, culminating in hikes of up to 8 miles and 2,000 feet of elevation gain. Although a steady progression of mileage and elevation was offered,

GoHike participants at Mount Erie State Park. Photo by Christie Aesquivel.

students could stick with easier hikes if they chose. The wide variety of hikes offered each month, including weekday and evening hikes, allowed the course to meet the personal goals, skills, and fitness level of each student.

Rediscovering a passion for the outdoors

Stuart Lutzenhiser was active in hiking clubs throughout high school and college until a climbing accident curtailed his outdoor pursuits. He spent the next 30 years living a sedentary life that focused on his family but neglected his own physical health. His father's death in 2019 was a harsh reminder that life is precious, and he felt called to make changes in his life so that he might enjoy more years with his own family. Stuart began looking for ways to become healthier and remembered how much he enjoyed hiking in his youth. His search for a new hiking community led him to The Mountaineers. He couldn't find Mountaineers hikes that seemed accessible for his fitness level, but his determination to get healthy motivated him to register for a hike along the Bullitt Fireplace Trail to Debbie's View. The hike was a tremendous struggle. Stuart only completed it thanks to the encouragement of his fellow hikers.

Stuart's search for a re-entry into hiking continued until he found the GoHike Course. He started the program with relatively short hikes before progressing to more challenging ones. One of the things that drew Stuart to GoHike is how it meets participants where they are. He continued hiking every weekend after graduating, and has lost over 100 pounds since enrolling in GoHike. While the goals of GoHike are not tied to weight loss, the high graduation rate of GoHike shows that students are finding a community centered around body-positivity where they feel belonging.

Stuart recently re-traced his first Mountaineers hike along Bullitt Fireplace but this time, instead of feeling completely exhausted once he reached Debbie's View, he decided to keep going. Stuart is setting new goals for himself and plans to hike Mount Pilchuck soon, and is looking forward to participating in the 2022 GoHike Course as a leader.

Carol Johnson grew up in Bishop, California, with Mount Whitney just 60 miles away. As a 17-year-old high school intern for the Forest Service, she hiked Mount Whitney and realized how much she loved being in nature. Today, she is grateful that her participation in the GoHike Course inspired her to bring that love of nature back into her life. Her daughter, a GoHike leader, was a source of encouragement as well. During her progression through the course, Carol remembers an "ah ha!" moment when her leader offered an easy conditioning tip on the trail. That tip opened a floodgate of possibilities. From inexpensive rain gear tips to trail safety, these little nuggets of shared knowledge encouraged her throughout the course to achieve her goals and become a GoHike graduate. Carol is now working to complete the final steps needed to become a leader in the 2022 course, alongside her daughter.

Welcoming to all

The secret to the success of this program is our volunteer leaders. GoHike leaders foster a welcoming and supportive community for beginner hikers, while also serving as an example through their own love of the outdoors. Our course also seeks to be self-sustaining, creating leaders for our program through the successful experiences of each year's cohort.

The GoHike Course seeks to provide a safe space for participants to grow, be part of a community, and build leadership skills to pay it forward. We aim to accomplish these goals by meeting participants where they are and emphasizing a sense of belonging. Participants join at their own pace and, coupled with wilderness safety, gear knowledge, and conditioning tips, they are supported by their peers and leaders as they achieve their outdoor goals.

As Christina, Liz, Stuart, and Carol can attest, being able to explore the outdoors and grow yourself in a fun, supportive environment can make all the difference. We are thrilled with the successes we found in 2021, and look forward to another year of community, support, and welcoming spaces in 2022.

JOIN GOHIKE IN 2022

Ready to kick-start your own hiking journey? Join us for our 2022 course, offering the information, support, and community needed for you to reach your outdoor goals. To learn more and register, visit mountaineers.org/gohike-2022.

BECOME A GOHIKE LEADER

Are you interested in volunteering as a hike leader for the GoHike Course? Contact Christina Buckman at christina.buckman.2011@gmail.com or Liz McNett Crowl at beactive30@earthlink.net for more information.

A Brighter Future for Washington's Forests

Why we must invest in the U.S. Forest Service

By Conor Marshall, Advocacy and Engagement Manager

Mt. Baker. Photo by Anita Elder.

For years, Mountaineers Super Volunteer Richard Babunovic loaded up his Subaru Outback and headed to Mt. Pilchuck - his favorite mountain.

"What's really great about Mt. Pilchuck are the scrambling opportunities, breathtaking views of Puget Sound, and the diversity of ecosystems. On a single hike, you pass through wet and alpine forests as well as boulder fields," said Richard.

However, on his last trip he found his well-loved peak nearly inaccessible. The massive potholes on the Forest Service road nearly damaged his car. "The condition of the road was so poor, it looked like continuous waves of dirt," said Richard. The lack of road maintenance caused Richard to stay away for the last year and a half, impacting both his hiking and his stewardship work helping to maintain the lookout stationed at the top.

Stories like Richard's are becoming increasingly common. The Forest Service and other agencies have been starved for funding for decades, while outdoor recreation continues to increase. The unfortunate reality is that land managers have been trying to do more with less for a long time.

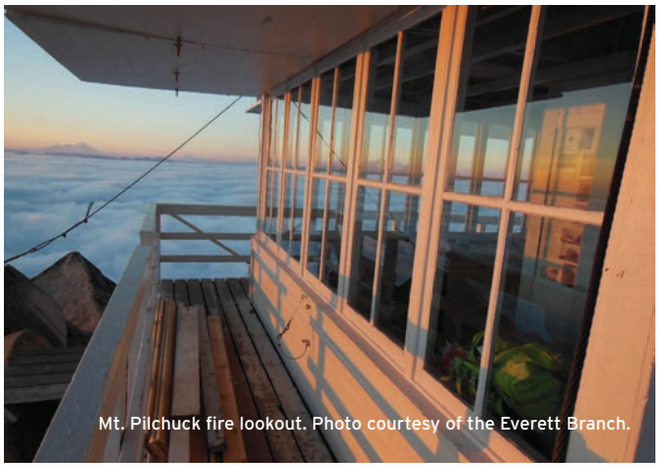
Funding challenges for National Forests

Since the 1990s, the Forest Service has seen funding and staff reduced across nearly every program. Across the country, we have 50% of the trail crews and forestry technicians we had in 1992, though use has increased by more than 800,000 visits per year. With half the staff and twice the responsibility, National Forests have been struggling, suffering from maintenance issues, increased litter, illegal parking, and more. Forest Service staff are burned out and demoralized.

These issues are largely the result of chronic underinvestment in the Forest Service by Congress. Each year more of its budget goes towards fighting wildfires, leaving little left to respond to, let alone proactively plan for, current challenges. The impacts of Forest Service understaffing also affect capacity to conduct the National Environmental Policy Act analyses and Tribal consultation necessary for recreation and environmental management planning. Climate change, intensifying wildfires, and increasing demand for recreation further underscore the need for bold investment and staff increases.

Impacts on local forests

The impacts of underfunding can be acutely felt in Washington. Since 2000, the population of central Puget Sound has grown by over one million people: the equivalent of adding another Seattle and Tacoma. As evidenced by a 2020 Earth Economics analysis, Washington residents love the outdoors. Outdoor recreation is a $26.5 billion industry in our state, and today many of us routinely experience busy trails, full parking lots, and heavy use of campgrounds and other recreational amenities.



Mt. Pilchuck fire lookout. Photo courtesy of the Everett Branch.

"We have had a hard enough time keeping up with regular maintenance for years given staffing levels," said Sarah Lange, Recreation Planner for the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. "Proactive planning for recreation in the face of climate change will require a lot more capacity and some major capital investments."

Recreation projects already take a long time to reach completion. After experiencing severe flood damage in 2006, the process of restoring and improving the Suiattle River Road in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest took about 10 years, leaving hikers without access to 120 miles of trails. With less funding for environmental analysis and planning, projects like this will only take longer in the future.

On the Olympic Peninsula, about half of the Olympic National Forest's employees fulfill the duties of more than one position, limiting their ability to keep up with increased demand, let alone proactively plan for the future.

With new recreationists on the trail across Washington, Forest Service interpretative rangers play a valuable role in ensuring everyone recreates safely and responsibly. Due to this lack of funding, it's rare to see a ranger out on the trail to answer questions and check permits.

Impacting The Mountaineers

From courses to youth clubs, Mountaineers programs are regularly affected by poor maintenance and closed lands and facilities. Our Everett Alpine Scrambling Course has used the Eightmile Campground in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest for a Rock Skills Course field trip each April since the 1980s. Unfortunately, campgrounds along Icicle Creek were closed to the public during spring last year.

"If underfunding in the local ranger district continues and those campgrounds remain closed in April, it will be difficult to continue offering our course and providing outdoor enthusiasts this opportunity to hone their off-trail mountain travel skills," said course leader Brian Booth.

The challenges that Mountaineers staff and volunteers often face for securing permits on National Forest lands are directly related to a lack of Forest Service staff capacity. Nationally, 70% of Forest Service staff responsible for administering permits have been assigned to those responsibilities as a secondary duty on top of another job.

Long-term solutions

In spring 2021, The Mountaineers, Winter Wildlands Alliance, and Outdoor Alliance delivered a report to the administration and Congress asking for significant investments in the Forest Service. The Mountaineers and Outdoor Alliance Washington - a network of human-powered outdoor advocacy groups in the state - have also recently stepped up our advocacy for increased Forest Service funding so the agency has the staff capacity they need to meet unique challenges. What we need are long-term increases in annual appropriations funding so that the agency can hire additional permanent staff to tackle long-standing issues.

Along with our report, we provided two key congressional committees with written testimony, asking for a 50% increase in funding for core Forest Service operations like recreation staffing, planning, research, and infrastructure needs. We're also looking into other solutions, such as allowing one-time funding for capital projects to be used to pay for staffing, and increasing the agency's ability to partner with nonprofit organizations.

Together with our partners, we'll continue to build relationships with Forest Service staff across Washington and Oregon to better understand their management challenges, needs, and opportunities. We're also working to build more champions for Forest Service funding among Washington's congressional delegation and the diverse group of recreationists in our state, so that we have a better likelihood of seeing increased funding for public lands through the federal appropriations process.

Advocates for forests

With many competing priorities for federal funding, it will likely take years of advocacy, timing, and a little luck to achieve a significant increase in resources for the Forest Service. Each action alert submitted, phone call made, and letter sent to your member of Congress brings us one step closer. The more congressional offices hear from their constituents on an issue, the sooner they'll be moved to act.

As recreationists and outdoor recreation leaders, your stories - stories like the car-damaging trip to a popular trail head - about how Forest Service funding shortfalls have affected wild places are critical to helping us build and deliver a compelling case for increased funding and staffing for the Forest Service.

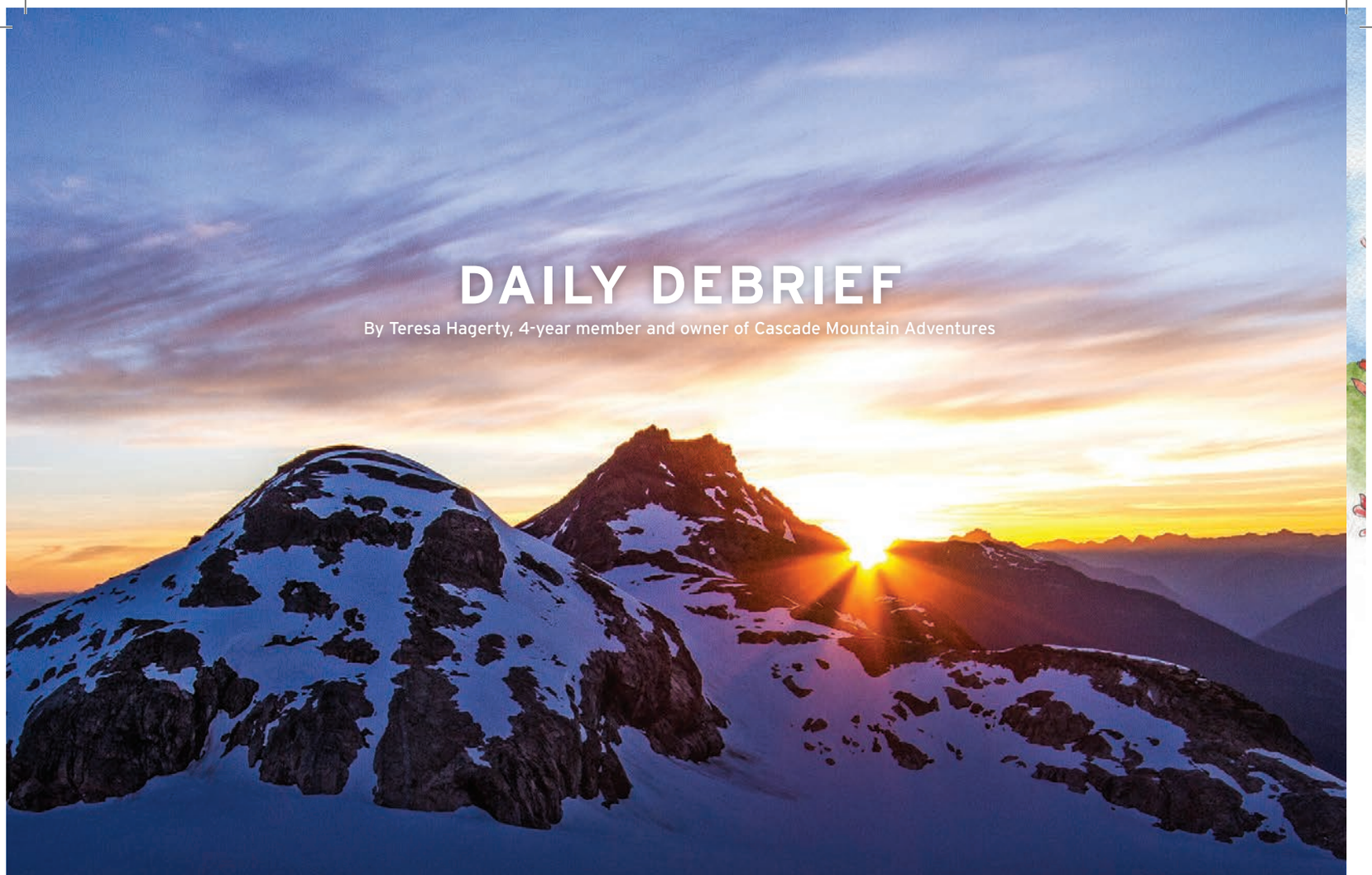
Together, we can help achieve a more sustainable future for this critical land management agency, the forests they manage, and the life-changing recreational opportunities they provide.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Write to your member of Congress about the importance of increased Forest Service funding.
- Report what you're seeing in Washington's forests by emailing conservation@mountaineers.org.
- Receive updates and advocacy opportunities related to Forest Service funding by signing up for Conservation Currents on your Mountaineers profile, or on the footer of our website.

DAILY DEBRIEF

By Teresa Hagerty, 4-year member and owner of Cascade Mountain Adventures



The last two years have been a challenge for us all. We have shared the emotional roller coaster of lockdowns, public land closures, and losses big and small. Yet, this crucible has also created space for self-reflection, realignment of values, and tremendous growth.

Our shared outdoor experiences and education continue to be sources of connection, inspiration, and resilience. These resources transcend the outdoor space to offer structure, grounding, and navigational tools to chart our life path. I am honored to share one of my favorite transcending tools with the Mountaineers community.

I adopted a daily practice in March of 2020, translated from outdoor AIARE training (American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education), to reflect on what I could control, acknowledge what I could not, and honor my reactions and feelings. The AIARE debrief practice, familiar to many of you, provides a reflection structure following each outdoor adventure. These questions prompt you to review the outcome of the day, celebrate the things that went well, acknowledge sources of challenge, and identify opportunities for improvement moving forward. This exercise is applicable well beyond the outdoor forum.

These questions create a structure to reflect on current goals, emotional triggers, and future growth areas. More importantly, this also creates space to identify and celebrate moments of joy. Building on the familiar outdoor adventure-oriented improvement cycle, this daily practice has been invaluable to keep me focused, grounded, and (mostly) sane.

I am sharing this practice to offer you the same space, grace, and support to move through this time of transition. Or, if this does not serve you, the encouragement to seek out an approach that does. May you too regain your breath, dust yourself off, and move forward into the brighter future ahead. I look forward to seeing you there.

Daily debrief in challenging times

1. What was my objective for the day?
2. What did I do that served it?
3. What did I do that didn't serve it?
4. What made me sad or anxious?
5. What was beautiful or gave me hope?
6. At any time did I feel unsafe for myself or others?
7. What do I commit to improving on for tomorrow?

Photo by Ida Vincent.

STOP AND PAINT THE WILDFLOWERS

By Claire Giordano, watercolor artist

You are cobalt blue mixed with just a little bit of rose. And you are my yellow straight out of the palette, no mixing required! What is your name, little friend? Ohhh, and you are scarlet and ultramarine blue with a hint of white.

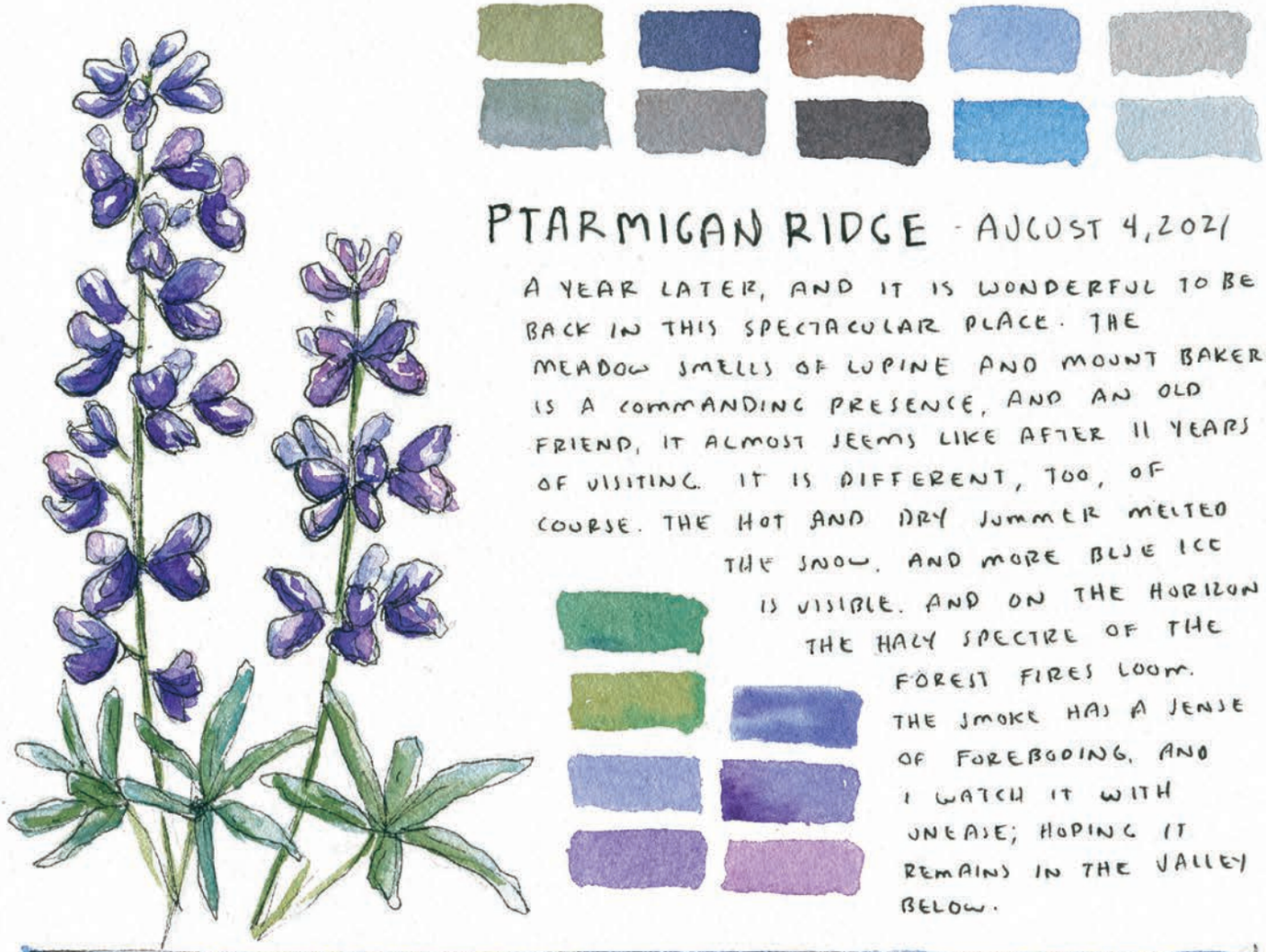
As an artist and outdoor painter, the wildflowers of spring and summer are a joyous conversation told in the language of rioting color, delicate lines, and careful observation. When I am hiking, I entertain myself on the trail by trying to identify all the flowers I see and imagining the mixtures of paint I will use to illustrate their many hues. Often, I'm so distracted by the flowers that I trip over a rocky step or slide on a lingering snowfield while my nose follows the smell of lupine in the mountain breeze.

Wildflowers are magical and ephemeral. I love learning about them and their alpine homes before heading out for hikes. And, as an environmental artist, I follow the wildflowers for their beauty and for the story they tell of our warming world.

From the celebration of the first buds of spring to the stampedes of people who travel to witness meadows brimming with blooms, wildflowers are part of the vast ecological cycles driven by the seasons. These cyclic patterns are studied by a branch of science called phenology, which explores the connections between climate and the timing of annual natural events like wildflower blooms, animal migrations, and many other phenomena over time.

I first learned how phenology told the story of climate change while hiking in the Alps with scientists from the Research Center for Alpine Ecosystems in Chamonix, France (CREA Mont Blanc). The researchers showed me ponds full of tadpoles beneath snow-capped peaks. The baby frogs were hatching earlier as snow melted faster, and the ponds sat beside meadows full of wildflowers that were seen blooming earlier and appearing at higher elevations on the mountains.

Now, when I hike at home in Washington, I paint the flowers and take note of when I see them to increase my awareness of how my favorite alpine meadows are changing over time. Knowing about these patterns makes the blooms even more precious and beautiful to witness.



PTARMIGAN RIDGE - AUGUST 4, 2021

A YEAR LATER, AND IT IS WONDERFUL TO BE BACK IN THIS SPECTACULAR PLACE. THE MEADOW SMELLS OF LUPINE AND MOUNT BAKER IS A COMMANDING PRESENCE, AND AN OLD FRIEND, IT ALMOST SEEMS LIKE AFTER 11 YEARS OF VISITING. IT IS DIFFERENT, TOO, OF COURSE. THE HOT AND DRY SUMMER MELTED THE SNOW. AND MORE BLUE ICE IS VISIBLE. AND ON THE HORIZON THE HAZY SPECTRE OF THE FOREST FIRES LOOM. THE SMOKE HAS A SENSE OF FOREBODING. AND I WATCH IT WITH UNEASE; HOPING IT REMAINS IN THE VALLEY BELOW.

MT. BAKER - VIEW FROM CAMP. MUCH LESS SNOW THIS YEAR. AND MANY MORE BUGS. THE WHINE OF THE MOSQUITOS IS CONSTANT.

All art by Claire Giordano.

Claire's tips for enjoying wildflower season

You don't need to be an expert botanist or even an amateur flower lover to enjoy our alpine wildflowers. Opportunities abound! Mount Rainier, Mount Saint Helens, and the Teanaway Mountains are all home to incredible alpine meadows, many easily accessible. Here are my favorite tricks for enjoying wildflower season:

- Before you go, get a guidebook. Make it a goal to learn a few types of flowers you might see. Identifying flowers enriches my understanding of the landscape and is a fun game to play with friends and kids.
- Arrive at popular trails early, and go on days when the weather is bad. While I can't always paint in a soaking mist, I do love how the flowers look with beads of water amplifying and reflecting their colors. The trails are also much less crowded on grey or rainy days, so I can really take my time to see the flowers.
- If you're stopping to photograph, paint, or otherwise enjoy the flowers, don't step on them! Or any other green happy growing things off the trail for that matter, as those green things will likely make more flowers if they aren't squished by excited hikers. Alpine environments are really fragile (think of how many months the plants survive under the snow) and we can support them by staying on-trail. And, of course, don't pick the flowers either.
- Stop at every amazing group of flowers and whoop with joy and encourage your group to admire them.

In Washington you can get involved in citizen science projects that collect data on flowers and other species. MeadoWatch is based at Mount Rainier and monitors flowers, and you can also look for marmots in the Olympics and butterflies in the North Cascades and Rainier with the Butterfly Project. Washington Trails Association (WTA) also has great articles on flowers, and the trip reports are a fantastic resource for monitoring when and where flowers appear.

Claire Giordano is an environmental artist, writer, and teacher following the interwoven patterns of people, place, and climate change. See more of her work at claireswanderings.com and learn to paint with her at adventureartacademy.com.

How to sketch a wildflower

Sketching or painting while on a wildflower adventure requires a bit of planning before you go. Be sure to bring a writing tool, sketchbook, and some paint. I also plan to be out for an extra hour, so I bring more food, a few more layers, and a sit pad.

Once I'm hiking, I find a non-vegetated trailside pull-out to sit for a few minutes (or sometimes a few hours!) to draw some flowers. I love how much I learn by spending time carefully looking at each new flower I find.

Take your time. Really look at the flowers and the environment around them. Notice what kind of soil or rock they grow in. What kind of plants surround them? What do you see, smell, and hear? Write down your observations – and any questions! – alongside your sketches or in a notebook.

Step 1

Start with a quick pencil sketch to define the basic arrangement of the flowers. I try to break each flower into the simplest shapes (for example, a single lupine flower is often a group of overlapping ovals).

Step 2

Add ink and the first layer of watercolor paint. I like to work fast, so I try to paint with as few layers as possible to minimize drying time.

Step 3

Add the second layer of paint and identify details like dots, stripes, or additional colors. I also focus on painting shadows on each petal to heighten the feeling of depth.

THE OLYMPIC MOUNTAIN PROJECT, PART II

By Nate Brown, 7-year member and U.S. army veteran

Nate at Goat Lake below North Petunia Peak.
All photos courtesy of Nate Brown.

Standing on the edge of the water in my camp sandals, boots and pants stowed safely inside my pack, I look longingly across the river. I wish I could teleport myself instead of wading through the bitterly-cold, swift-moving water. It's June 2021, and the Pacific Northwest's unseasonable heatwave is melting the snowpack, sending it rushing down the mountain river valleys in record volume.

When I take my first step, my toes cry out. I know a steady pace is the best way to cross, and I do my best to block out the pain as I wade deeper and deeper into the river. The river is maybe 30 feet across, but I can't see the bottom. The water gets deeper, first chilling my kneecaps, then the bottom of my merino wool boxer-briefs.

"Damnit, this is my only pair of underwear!" I think to myself, knowing this is just the second day in a 5-day trip into the Olympics.

I'm nearly halfway across the river when the water jumps above my belly button.

"Oh, hell no! Nope, nope, nope!" I say, this time out loud. I turn abruptly and head back toward the shore. This trip will have to wait. The water is too deep.

Welcome back to the Olympics

In the fall 2020 edition of *Mountaineer* magazine, I shared an article on my Olympic Mountain Project, a quest to climb 30 peaks in the Olympics. I designed the list based on which peaks I felt best highlighted the diversity of the range while covering the most ground. The project supported the goal I set as an Army Non-Commissioned Officer when I was first transferred to Joint Base Lewis-McChord: to spend more time in the mountains.

I'd completed 10 climbs at the time of publication, which coincided with the end of climbing season. Then Olympic National Park (ONP) closed in early 2020 due to the pandemic, and my project went on indefinite hold. Stuck indoors, I looked at ways I could make up for lost time. I poured over topographic maps, looking for ways to link ridgelines and valleys together. I wanted to have steady access to water, bail out points, and potential campsites mapped out. To move faster, I obsessively weighed and scrutinized my gear to lighten my pack as much as possible. I had 20 peaks to go, and I wanted to be ready.

Once ONP opened in July 2020, I hit the ground running.

My first mission took me to three mountain objectives over

Nate in the Olympics in fall.

three days in the north: Moose Peak, high above the popular Grand Valley; McCartney Peak, towering over the now-extinct Lillian Glacier; and Mount Cameron, the crown jewel of the northern Olympics.

Starting at Obstruction Point with a friend, we quickly racked up miles, gaining the summit of Moose in just a few hours. Then the real work began. We left the trail and started our bushwhacking descent into the Lillian River valley. We found a safe river crossing and continued to bushwhack, this time uphill into the basin below McCartney. The progress was slow and frustrating. Finally, we gained enough elevation to make it above treeline to enjoy wonderful views of the high alpine meadows and ridgelines below the summit.

We found a great campsite near Lake Lillian, set up our tent, and began eyeing the summit for the final push of the day. Despite my body's objections, we weren't done yet. I could've sat in silence by the lake all evening, enjoying being back in a place that always feels like home; especially on a day when I was feeling particularly gassed. But mountains don't climb themselves, so off we went, ascending the snow finger leading to the rocky summit pinnacle 1,500 feet above. Atop McCartney, number 12, I could not wait to get back to camp for a well-earned night's rest.

That was the plan anyway.

Arriving safely at camp, we set about to the usual camp chores. I grabbed our food bags and bear hang kit for safekeeping overnight. I tossed the rock bag attached to the bear line into some branches, and it promptly got stuck. I tugged gently to loosen the line, but it wouldn't budge. Clearly needing more force, I pulled harder. The line released suddenly, and that little bag filled with rocks came hurtling toward my face.

WHACK!! I saw stars, and not from the gorgeous night sky.

Blood started pouring from my face. I immediately applied pressure and ran back to the tent to grab my first aid kit. Thanks to a lot of pressure (and some Tylenol), the bleeding eventually subsided, and we were able to look at the damage. I had a deep cut, about an inch and a half long, right in between my eyebrows. I'm lucky – an inch to the left or right would've been truly awful. We resolved to check in the morning and make the call on whether to return to the car or continue onward. I hold the dubious honor of multiple head injuries from my


"No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn."
-Hal Borland

Sunset over the Olympics from Lake Beauty on the Skyline Trail. Photo by Nate Brown.

Nate and Collin on the summit of Mount Deception. Photo by Collin Blunk (@thewildoutsiders).

deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, so pushing through the pain is at least familiar territory.

Onward and upward

I awoke to a dull ache and minor swelling, and we made the decision to continue toward Mount Cameron. After spending most of the day traversing a ridgeline, we made it to the base of Cameron. We began our usual routine of setting camp while eyeing our objective, before beginning the summit push in the evening. True to form, several hours later we stood on stunning number 13, looking across the valleys to Mount Deception, Sentinel Peak, and Mount Olympus, and down at the incredible and aptly-named Thousand Acre Meadow. We scrambled down the rocky ridge to camp in the fading light.

On the morning of the third day, my head injury decided to punish me for previous decisions. I woke to a thumping headache, which only increased when I looked at the map to see what stood between us and the car: three mountain passes to climb up, over, and down. This was going to be rough.

The hike back to the car took its toll, and by the time I struggle-bussed up the final mountain pass, I was physically and mentally spent. The combination of 32+ miles of mostly off-trail travel, 12,000 feet of elevation gain, and a head injury (not to mention a low level of physical activity the previous four months) all crashed over me like a tsunami. But we'd done it.

Game on.

Winter is coming

With the late start to the 2020 climbing season, I had only a few months until winter arrived. I began knocking out as many summits as I could. After the three-peak start, I climbed Mount Deception, the second-highest peak in the Olympics. Then in early September, I successfully climbed Mount Stone, high above the Lake of the Angels. I squeezed in one last summit with North Petunia Peak, number 16, before the heavy snows blanketed the mountains.

When I began the project in the summer of 2019, I originally envisioned 10 peaks each year to finish in three years. If I wanted to complete the project in that same timeframe, I'd have to go back to the drawing board.

I used the winter months to plan and take care of all the behind-the-scenes logistics that often go overlooked. Things like purchasing backcountry permits, coordinating with climbing partners, gear maintenance, etc. But I didn't spend the whole winter thinking about the mountains; I also strapped on my alpine touring skis and went into them.

Thanks to my skis, I climbed peak number 17, Colonel Bob Peak, in the middle of winter. I also explored places I'd already been, like Mount Deception, North Petunia Peak, and Mount Stone. Getting to these places in winter is infinitely more work, and more dangerous, but with the proper equipment and training, seeing a popular place like the Royal Basin completely empty and filled with snow is absolutely stunning.

Pushing forward

In May 2021, the forest valleys had mostly thawed and it was time to go for the remaining 13 peaks. I planned to reduce the number of individual trips needed to save time and overall effort. Four of the peaks needed to be completed individually due to their location and difficulty, which left eight peaks that could be completed four-at-a-time, in two very long trips. My plan was certainly ambitious, but felt doable… assuming weather, conditions, and climbing partner availability all aligned.

I got to work right away, knocking out several big peaks in quick order. Mount Constance was the first up, where the theme of that climb is just yelling "rock!" repeatedly. A few weeks later, I attempted to complete the Skyline Traverse, but was forced to turn around due to the aforementioned dangerous river ford. Instead, I changed plans and summited Mount Anderson, which required 40 miles of travel for one peak. For the Fourth of July weekend, I had my eye on the crown jewel and namesake of the Olympic range: Mount Olympus.

I first climbed Olympus in 2016, the year I took the Basic Climbing Course, and that trip helped me fall in love with the range. This climb has no shortcuts. Mount Olympus makes you earn the summit with over 40 miles of hiking, glacier travel, and rock climbing up the summit pinnacle. Even so, it might be my favorite climb in the entire state, one I am always happy to return to.

The race to the finish

With 21 peaks completed by August 2021, I still had the toughest part ahead. I would attempt the remaining nine summits in just three trips: four peaks in a loop totaling over 60 miles, including the Skyline Traverse; a loop of the Bailey Traverse for another four peaks in 42 miles; and the final summit: Mount Steel.

I thought the last crux would be the effort needed to complete the two huge pushes. In reality, finding climbing partners proved most difficult. My usual partners either didn't have the vacation time or just weren't interested in a 5-day, 60 mile sufferfest through the Olympics (understandably so). With the pressure of scheduled time off, and the end of climbing season looming, I made the decision to do the two big trips solo.

Before the Skyline Traverse, the most time I had spent alone in the wilderness was two days.

With a detailed itinerary at home and with the Olympic Park Rangers, and armed with a satellite communicator with an SOS button, bear spray, and many podcasts downloaded onto my phone, I headed out for the Skyline Traverse. I would be lying if I said I didn't get bored or lonely over the five days, but I did enjoy the wonderful stillness and soul-cleansing of being alone with my thoughts. I questioned my sanity on more than one occasion (one particularly desperate evening I carried on a full conversation with a chatty Douglas Squirrel), but when I finally walked out of the wilderness, I had summits of Kimta Peak, Mount Zindorf, Mount Seattle, and Mount Christie under my belt.

Mount Olympus seen from the Skyline Trail.

Two black bears in the Enchanted Valley.

I spent a week recovering, then geared back up for my second solo adventure to the Bailey Range. I had originally planned the Bailey as a thru-hike loop, starting in one location and finishing in a different one. As I was solo this was no longer an option. It became an out and back, increasing the distance from 42 to 50 miles.

I departed with sunny August weather, warm temperatures, and a solid week of good-looking weather. But as we all know, the mountains make their own weather, and this phrase goes double for the Olympics. Day one would be the only sunny, warm day of the trip. The first night at camp below Cat Peak, a wave of clouds rolled in from the west, bringing rain, wind, and cold temperatures. I wore every piece of clothing I packed for most of the trip. Thankfully, route finding was never much of an

Nate on the final summit of the project, Mount Steel.

issue, even in whiteout conditions. Because I was so cold, and there were no views most of the time, I moved much faster than normal. As an unexpected silver-lining, I completed the trip in just four days instead of five. As a solo hiker who grossly under-packed for the conditions (my ultralight 40-degree quilt would have been fine if the weather forecast had been accurate), I welcomed the opportunity to hike a whopping 18 miles out on the fourth day. Less than ideal conditions aside, Bogachiel Peak, Cat Peak, Mount Carrie, and Mount Ferry were complete.

I was so spent after that trip that all I could muster on social media was six words: "29 peaks down, one to go."

The Olympic send off

Mount Steel seemed simple in comparison to the 4-peak trips. Two days to cover 26 miles and 6,600 feet was easy on paper, but a huge part of me was bracing for impact. What if I didn't make the summit? I had come so close, and having to turn around would be a huge morale crusher. With equal parts dread and excitement, a friend and I began our trek up the trail.

After cruising up the trail, then bushwhacking, traversing, and clawing our way up steep talus, we arrived at the base of the summit pinnacle. A straight-forward class II scramble stood between us and the top, and finally it hit me. After two years and five months, more than 500 miles, and over 160,000 feet of elevation gain, I was only a few hundred feet from completing my Olympic Mountain Project. I was vibrating with excitement.

I had planned to whoop a giant "whooohooo!" as soon as I reached the summit, but instead I stood there silently, unable to speak. A simple exclamation didn't seem like enough; I wanted to hear the wind and let it speak for me.

We set up camp, having planned to sleep on the summit in our bivy sacks. The sunset created a spectacular show as we were enjoying dinner. Hearing my regret at not bringing a celebratory drink, my friend smiled and pulled two mini bottles of champagne from his pack. We cheered to the completion of my project and watched the sun go down.

In the early pre-dawn, I unzipped my bivy to find one of the most extraordinary scenes every mountaineer hopes for: the entire world below blanketed in an incredible cloud inversion layer. Only the peaks of the Olympics were visible, like massive mountaintop fortresses in a sea of clouds. I got out of my bivy and stood on the summit, eye-to-eye with each of the peaks I had climbed for my project. I could name each one without a map. On this quiet, final morning, it felt as though the peaks were standing in silent unison, giving me a final chance to behold them and reflect. One last morning where, for a moment, nothing else existed - just me and my Olympic Mountains.

HALF MOON BOULDERING

Cultivating a new kind of climbing community

By Gloria Man, community partner and co-owner of Half Moon Bouldering

Gloria Man in Half Moon Bouldering. All photos courtesy of Gloria and Daniel Man.

Streaks of glue are glistening in our hair and work overalls from another late night working on the bouldering gym's construction. My life partner Daniel is putting up wall paneling while I assist, a wet rag in my hands to wipe away residue from the installation. We're exhausted and elated at the same time. It seems surreal to be putting the finishing touches on a project that has absorbed the last five years of our lives. In building Half Moon Bouldering, our family start-up and the first bouldering gym in Greenwood, we feel like we've been aiming for the moon, and now it seems we're actually close to landing.

I have to smile as Daniel mutters about the irregular corners of our mid-20th century building. Small details like this are charming, until you have to deal with construction and straight lines. Like many small businesses before us, we're doing pretty much everything ourselves – from strategic planning to construction work – and I reflect on the many skills we have yet to hone. Our gym is in the space that belonged to Top Ten Toys, one of Seattle's iconic family-owned businesses whose owners recently retired. I am keenly aware that we are stepping into big shoes, and we hope to become as much a part of the community as our predecessors had been.

Filling a need

In December 2020, after five years of planning, we reached the final stretch of building Half Moon Bouldering (our official opening was delayed until March of 2021 due to the pandemic). We wanted to create an inclusive, intergenerational gym, welcoming people of all skill levels and ages. Hiring our first staff felt like a miracle at the end of an unprecedented year. The two of us were betting all we had by opening an indoor bouldering crag in the middle of uncertain times.

In pre-pandemic days, our plan looked solid; the market practically begged for a new climbing gym. Though Seattle has a wide-spread climbing culture, in 2019 there weren't any commercial climbing gyms in the city's northern neighborhoods. The sport's popularity continues to rise today as climbing and bouldering become mainstream activities, with many people first learning about climbing as an indoor sport. Half Moon Bouldering was created to fill a gap in access based on the sport's demand.

Roots

While it made sense from an economic perspective to build in the heart of Greenwood, we were also driven by a fundamental desire to spread roots in this green city that we came to love as our adoptive home. Daniel and I grew up behind the Iron Curtain during the worst years of the communist dictatorship in Romania. We learned early in life the importance of escaping the drab city with its gray buildings, unkempt muddy roads, empty grocery stores, electricity shortages, and communist propaganda. We turned to the outdoors. Happy snapshots from our youth show us traveling on long, snail-paced trains to the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains; hitchhiking on

horse-drawn carts stacked high with hay; backpacking for days on end, with heavy hand-me-down packs and not-quite waterproof tents.

We spent our days soaking in the beauty of ancient Transylvanian forests and the wild Carpathians, and we loved every minute of it.

Our dirtbag habits served us well throughout early adulthood, during the 1990s and early 2000s when the Romanian economy was desperately struggling. Yet, these happy memories carry with them the somber backdrop of the time and place in which they originated. For us, as for many others coming from an environment of economic disadvantage due to political or social circumstances, escaping to nature's wonderland was inherently tinged with the melancholic realization that we could not afford traveling far and wide. One of my most poignant childhood memories, which would have a profound impact on Half Moon Bouldering's vision, is from my World Geography class in middle school. I saw pictures of Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Redwoods National Park. My exuberant 11-year-old imagination quickly transported me there, among the sky-high trees and limitless plains. It dawned on me that as a subject of a totalitarian regime, traveling to the West would be almost impossible. At the time, I did not know I would be among the lucky few who were able to emigrate and establish a comfortable middle-class existence in their adoptive countries.

Discovering climbing

Daniel and I discovered climbing only after coming to the United States. First at Planet Rock in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and then, after moving to Seattle in the late 2000s, at Husky Rock and Stone Gardens. Enveloped in college culture and displaying an aura of carefree bravado, some of the climbers we encountered in these places were both fascinating and intimidating. People coming to the climbing gym seemed fairly well off, if not in their immediate financial situation (as is typical among the college crowd), at least in their consciousness of being rooted in the middle class. To two immigrants from an economically-disadvantaged country, it was quite apparent that most of the gym-goers belonged to a social class with access to education and maybe a touch of entitlement. There also seemed to be an unspoken barrier, a certain lack of approachability to those who looked the part of the "regular." We felt a nagging suspicion that most climbers were trapped under some unhealthy pressure that they were putting on themselves. Many missed the opportunity to engage with others, Daniel and I included.

This environment presented a vague invitation to carve out a space where climbers would thrive in each other's company if they'd just let their guard down a bit. This nagging thought would feed into Half Moon Bouldering's emergence as a place that would aim to lower the threshold of access to the gym and welcome visitors the way they were.

After a few trips to outdoor crags like Exit 38, Frenchman Coulee (back in the days before it had a toilet), or Squamish, we got to take in a wider view of local climbing culture. It was refreshing to see families and different generations climb together. A more open, more relaxed atmosphere dotted with moments of joyful interaction. We would join in conversations around the campfire, sharing the day's impressions with other climbers. Or witness the community pitching in for maintenance or stewardship. We also had the opportunity to see organizations like The Mountaineers play a crucial role in protecting the outdoor places in which we thrive as individuals and as a community (and put in a toilet at Frenchman Coulee!). Experiences like these have crystalized for us how important it is for indoor climbing gyms to partner with nonprofits and be actively engaged in outdoor stewardship and education.

Taking the leap

During the gym's build-out, the two of us faced sharp career and life changes. I had given up my 10-year long teaching position and was bracing for the difficult transition of putting my private German-language school on hold to focus exclusively on the gym. Daniel was keeping his full-time job as a software developer to feed our family and the ravenous financial appetite of a fledgling business. Meanwhile Clara, our 7-year-old, was seeing her parents fully absorbed in the build-out project. The gym was starting to seriously infringe on our quality time. On the other hand, we were always together, with Clara and our 11-year-old German shepherd Ol' Man Zack in charge of keeping spirits high. This included playing catch in the empty hall, bouncing around joyfully, and making sure treats and breaks were plentiful.

Gloria in the Parang Mountains in Transylvania, Romania, August 2003. Photo by Daniel Man.

Clockwise from top left: Rural Romania; Gloria and Daniel on the Sahale Arm, North Cascades; Climbers enjoying the new space; Daniel officially opening Half Moon Bouldering.

By opening Half Moon Bouldering, we were fulfilling a life-long dream, building a bridge between our daily urban existence and our love for the outdoors. We envisioned a climbing gym that went beyond a space to stay fit in winter - a business engaged in outdoor stewardship and education, a gathering spot to host the next generation of climbers. Even before it opened, we set aside a portion of Half Moon Bouldering's sales for free gym passes. In its first nine months, the gym raised funds for and created partnerships with local nonprofit organizations such as Climbers of Color (via The Mountaineers), the Washington Climbers Coalition, Treehouse for Kids, She Rocks, and more. By our second year we hope to offer scholarships for under-resourced youths. Increasing gym access to those who need it is important to us, not only because it feels like the right thing to do, but because we know how meaningful an escape to the outdoors can be.

A space for everyone

Today, indoor climbing is moving into the mainstream. It's a moment of opening up. During the pandemic, the Seattle area grew by three bouldering gyms, including Half Moon Bouldering. Indoor bouldering, with its short walls and lack of equipment, acts as a gateway to the sport. At the same time, its demand for technical skills and an analytical approach proves attractive to seasoned climbers of all backgrounds. Moreover, with its inherent sociability, bouldering bridges the gap between skills, age, and identity.

As many would agree, one of the best experiences at Half Moon Bouldering - or perhaps any indoor bouldering space - emerges when onlookers create spontaneous groups to encourage a climber on the wall. Under the collective task of solving a problem, there's always the potential of a burgeoning friendship. You never know who your next bouldering session will bring into your orbit. What if it's (tongue in cheek) an immigrant couple from Romania, or (in earnest) a kid from a neighborhood you've never visited, or (outlandishly) someone who sat around the campfire with Lynn Hill?

With the growing number of indoor climbing venues in the Seattle area, there is a huge opportunity for climbing to become more inclusive and equitable. Groups like Climbers of Color are partnering with commercial climbing gyms to host climb nights and to offer scholarships to historically marginalized communities, an instrumental part of this change. As newcomers on the climbing map, we are honored to take part in this moment in time. It's inspiring to know that we're part of a larger movement.

The next time you come into our climbing gym, we hope you'll be glad to know that you are contributing to these efforts by allowing us to set aside a portion of our income for inclusivity efforts and outdoor stewardship. We encourage you to join a women's, BIPOC, or family climbing event. Above all, we hope you'll be inspired to engage with the people around you and remain open to the potential of a unique experience as we climb together.

ZIPPERS 101

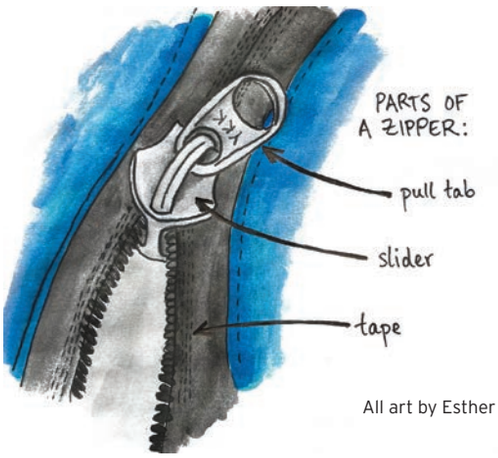
Get the most out of your gear

By Esther Andrews, Seattle Explorers and Junior MAC parent

We were driving back from the mountains, and the guy at the wheel was ranting. About zippers. Worst invention ever. Absolutely hated them.

Taking a quick glance at what I was wearing, it was clear: I would not be giving up my zippers. However, I could absolutely identify with the experience of having that particular invention let me down. Including in the mountains, when it mattered.

But then, is blaming zippers themselves really fair? They're everywhere, and most of the time we take them for granted while they quietly do their jobs and take all kinds of abuse, until one day they've had enough and start screaming for attention. Sound familiar? I thought so. If your relationship with your zippers could use a little rehabilitation, here are some approaches that might help.



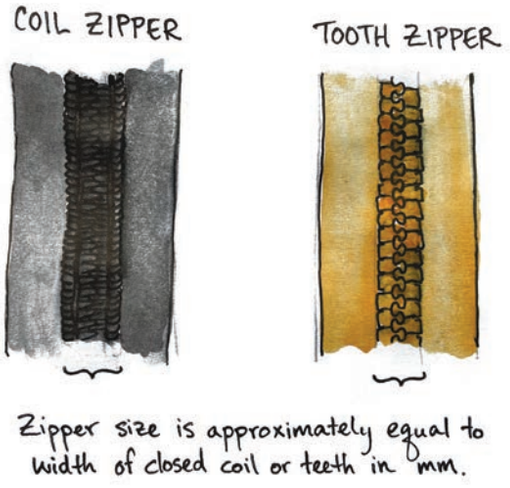
All art by Esther Andrews.

Anatomy of a zipper

First, let's be clear on what we're dealing with. Every zipper has three parts: the tape, slider, and pull. All of these parts need to be compatible with each other, and each part is subject to wear and possible failure. YKK brand zippers are the industry standard for outdoor equipment and come in two basic styles: tooth (Vislon) and coil.

Realistic expectations

Zipper sizes are roughly equivalent to the width of the teeth or coils when the zipper is closed, measured in millimeters. Size standards have changed in recent years. For example, virtually all sleeping bag zippers used to be 8C (8mm-wide coil zipper), but most manufacturers are now using 5C zippers. Likewise, tooth zippers are fantastic for shell jackets because of their



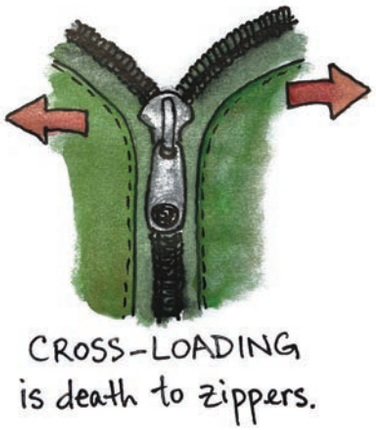
greater resistance to abrasion while the jacket is open, but many high-end shells are now constructed with lighter-weight waterproof coil zippers. It's a sleeker look and eliminates the need for a cover flap, but it's less durable.

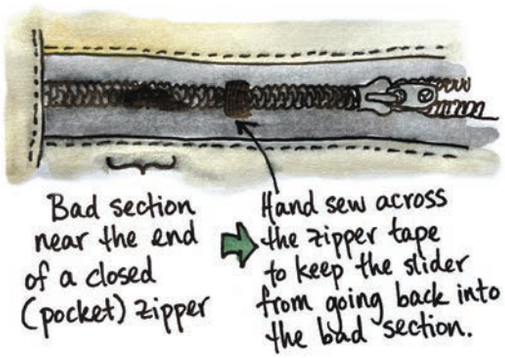
Everyone counts grams, and manufacturers are under pressure to decrease weight without cutting features. As a result, zippers, buckles, webbing, and fabrics are all being downsized to make them lighter, and oftentimes weaker. It's nice to have less weight to carry in the backcountry, but we also need to be much more careful if we want our equipment to last and not disappoint us. And we might consider using our purchasing power to reward companies that design and build gear that lasts, even if it ends up slightly heavier or with a shorter list of bells and whistles.

Care and maintenance

For all zippers, basic care and maintenance begins with keeping them clean! Protect zippers from dirt, rinse them when needed (right there in in the field if possible), and don't force them, especially when they are dirty or iced up. Standard metal sliders are subject to corrosion, so rinse them well after contact with salt. Dirt, ice, and salt all put extra wear on both the zipper's slider and tape.

Be gentle and avoid excessive force. Cross-loading is particularly hard on on zippers, so avoid any sideways pull when the zipper is not fully closed. In other words, hold bags and packs closed before zipping, unzip tent doors fully before squeezing through them, use snaps and buckles that help protect zippers from sideways forces, and close zippers completely before laundering.





Most zippers do not need to be lubricated. In fact, attempting to do so can be counterproductive if the lubricant attracts dirt. However, follow the manufacturer's instructions as some special cases (such as drysuit zippers) do benefit from regular lubrication with an appropriate product.

Repairs

I keep my clothing and equipment around for a long time, and I hate to throw things away if there is any way to repair and get more use out of them. I also have two growing kids and am a sucker for cheap or free gear that needs a bit of work. In my experience, it's rarely the case that a zipper failure consigns a piece of equipment to the landfill. While some zipper repairs can be seriously complex, in many cases a quick and easy fix can get your gear back in action.

Problem: bad section. Having a small section turn sour is common in coil tent and jacket zippers, and is a serious inconvenience for obvious reasons. Often the problem slowly-onsets from wear to the coil or the slider (usually both), possibly aggravated by dirt and/or excessive force. In the early stages, cleaning the zipper or using a bit of extra finesse may be enough. In the longer term, the slider or tape will need to be replaced. Changing out the slider is a fairly easy hand-sewing job and often does the trick. There is a fair bit of variation in styles within the same zipper sizes, so read the fine print (number and letters) on the existing slider and/or visit your local outdoor fabric store to find the appropriate replacement.

Note: many people like to use pliers to squeeze the slider tighter against the coils. I do not recommend this method! It may work briefly as a temporary fix, but it hastens the demise of the zipper tape, which is much more difficult to replace than changing out a slider. Once you're dealing with worn coils, your options are much more limited and usually involve the use of a sewing machine.

Problem: rodents. This happened most recently in my living room with my daughter's school backpack and one of our pet rats, but if you've ever left your pack at the base of a multipitch climb, you may know exactly what I'm talking about. If the bad section is near one end, isolate it by hand-sewing around the coils or teeth to prevent the slider from going into the bad section. Otherwise, you're in for a full replacement.

Problem: broken-off pull tab. An easy and satisfying fix, try using an ordinary paper clip with a bit of duct tape or heat shrink tubing to keep it from rotating out of place. It is also possible to buy replacement zipper pull tabs or replace the entire slider if you're looking for a more professional result.

Problem: zipper is beyond repair. Time for a replacement. If you have access to a sewing machine, replacing a zipper is not such a difficult thing to do and may put your favorite piece of gear back in action for another decade or so. Go ahead and use a seam ripper to remove the old zipper, then find yourself a replacement. It's worth considering whether to size up a little for more durability next time – and don't even think about putting in anything other than a genuine YKK zipper; it's not worth your time! Pay a visit to your local specialty outdoor fabrics store to get the real thing. For zippers that will be sewn in on both ends, you can buy zipper tape by the yard and select the appropriate slider to go with it. Separating zippers come in specific lengths, but you can always shorten the top ends by sewing them into the garment.

THE MOUNTAINS ARE CALLING… OR WAS THAT A PIKA?

Help study pikas in a warming world

By Derek Stinson and Alex Biswas, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Photo by Scott Fitkin, WDFW.

Pikas, those fuzzy rabbit relatives calling from rocky talus, have received attention in recent years due to the looming threat of climate change. They are generally found at high elevations, and with shrinking alpine zones becoming ever more common, their resilience on a warming planet is something many are questioning.

Pika behavior and potential habitat loss

Pikas eat a variety of plants, including grasses, ferns, wildflowers, and more. Unlike many mountain critters, they don't hibernate. Instead, they gather hay piles that they feed on throughout the winter. Pikas use snow to insulate themselves in winter, and can freeze if there's little or no snowpack. Some populations in smaller, relatively low elevation sites across Nevada, Idaho, and southeastern Oregon have disappeared, and populations in southern Nevada went extinct in the prehistoric era during the post-glacial warming. A 2007 petition to list the pika under the U.S. Endangered Species Act was based on these population extinctions in the Great Basin, the pika's microclimate needs, and predictions of future climate scenarios. Subsequent surveys of over 3,000 sites found that pikas were present at most of them, and they appeared to be secure in the core of their range. Based on these studies, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined in 2010 that the status of pikas did not warrant listing them under the Endangered Species Act at that time. However, recent studies suggest that their future may now depend on international action to survive the growing threats posed by climate change.

Unanswered questions

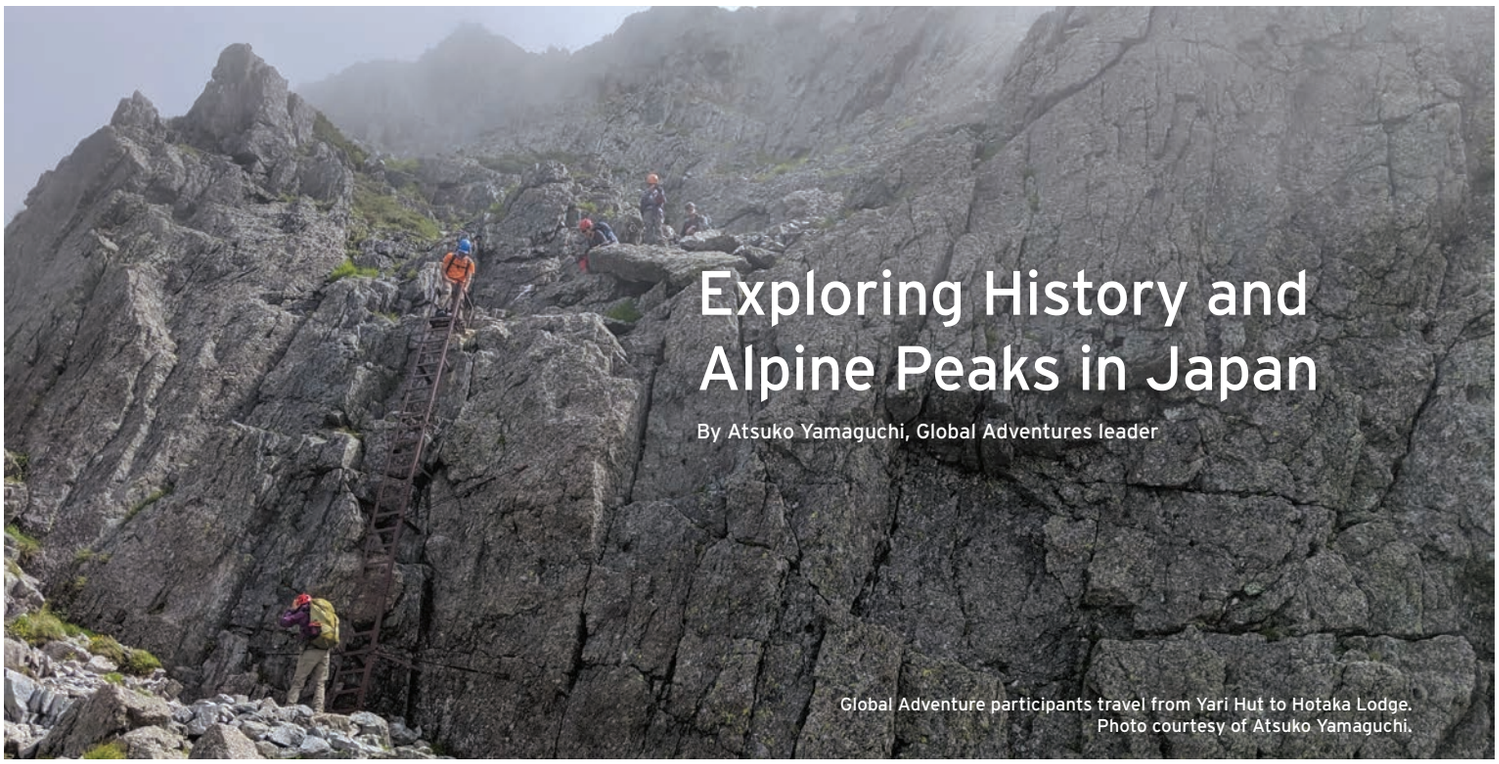
We still have a lot to learn about these little ball-shaped creatures, in particular where they could live and thrive when faced with a warming climate. Pikas are found at some surprisingly low elevations in western Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia, and we're not sure why they live in places where they get little or no snow cover and don't create their typical hay piles for the winter. They have also been found in human-created talus such as roadcuts and quarries in western Washington and Oregon. The cool, moist conditions west of the Cascade Crest may enable pikas to forage year-round and augment their diet with moss. These conditions make travel easier between sites, which has likely aided their colonization of human-created rock piles.

Many questions arise from these adaptive behaviors. Will populations at the lower, rainy "west-side" sites prove to be more secure in the long run than those in high-elevation sites that may eventually receive less snow? Are low-elevation pika sites lost when the rock is used for road-building? And are pikas still present in Washington locations reported 10 or 20 years ago? To help complete the picture, we are asking recreationists to record their observations of pikas in Washington.

RECORD YOUR PIKA OBSERVATIONS

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has created a tool for you to record your pika observations. All observations are welcome, but we are particularly interested in those from low elevation sites (<2,000 ft), very high elevation sites (above the timberline), man-made habitats, or less-traveled trails. If you can, we ask that you include a photo or an audio recording to upload. In our Pika Observation Survey instructions, we've also included resources to help you make sure what you observe is a pika: a tail-less, eared, fuzzy, baked potato-sized critter.

Download the ArcGIS Survey 123 app to submit your observations. The survey and instructions can be found at wdfw.medium.com/hike-to-help-pikas-7e7bf8756c82



Exploring History and Alpine Peaks in Japan

By Atsuko Yamaguchi, Global Adventures leader

Global Adventure participants travel from Yari Hut to Hotaka Lodge.
Photo courtesy of Atsuko Yamaguchi.

It was 2019 and I had just arrived in Tokyo. Looking for the hotel where I was to meet our group of Mountaineers, I felt like a lost child. Maneuvering to avoid people with my big suitcase, my senses were in overload as I paused to take a picture of the tight flow of humanity passing me in every direction. A visit to Japan combines modern life with ancient traditions and incredible outdoor opportunities. The juxtaposition was jarring and thrilling.

Early the next day, when we disembarked from our train in Kanagawa Prefecture, modern technology met ancient tradition head-on. The historic Kamakura area is home to 22 historic sites, all clustered in a fairly small area. We visited the Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine, built in 1063 and surrounded by nature (we saw a traditional wedding ceremony while there!); the Hase Dera Temple, built in 686 and famous for its statue of the eleven-headed Kannon, the goddess of mercy, surrounded by beautiful gardens, ponds, and views of the ocean; and the Kamakura Buddha, a 44-foot-tall bronze statue dating to 1252, an icon in Japan. A lunch of regional cuisine topped off the experience.

Our mountain adventure started the next morning. We boarded our bus with multi-day packs and scrambling gear, taking a 5-hour ride into the spectacular mountains of Kamikochi, located in the country's Northern Alps. We spent the next 5 days scrambling rugged peaks. Though a popular tourist area, within a few hours we were mostly hiking by ourselves. We followed the beautiful Azusa River to the rustic Tokusawa Lodge, its warm light welcoming us through the thick forest. A traditional dinner, a Japanese bath, and a pre-dawn departure with a packed breakfast and lunch set the perfect tone for our next hiking day. We had views of Mount Yari in the distance and wild monkeys watching from the trees. Fog moved in and out, creating a dream-like atmosphere. The hike to the Yari Mountain Hut was long, and still we took advantage of the nice evening to scramble to the summit of Mount Yari, a jagged spear-shaped mountain with fixed chains and vertical ladders to the top. A miniature wooden shrine at the summit encouraged prayers of thanks.

Back at the hut, we cozied up and slept our first night in the mountains, rising early in the chilly morning to see the sunrise. The traverse from Yari Mountain Hut to Hotaka Lodge was mentally and physically challenging as we navigated steep climbs and drops on exposed terrain often without the help of fixed chains and ladders, taking us eight hours to complete. But the scenery gave us new energy and, after organizing our packs, our group scrambled up Mount Okuho, Japan's third-highest peak at 10,470 ft. Finally, back at the hut, another hearty meal and good conversation prepared us for sleep in a shared room on comfy futons. We all appreciated a good night's rest.

On our last day, we descended and exited our rigorous route in the Northern Alps, sad to leave the peaks but excited for a relaxing soak in a traditional hot spring before the long ride back to civilization. We began planning our return on the bus ride back to Shinjuku – looking for something even more ambitious for our next visit!

JOIN US IN JAPAN - JULY 2022

Join us for our upcoming scrambling trip to Japan.
Trips may be cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19.
Learn more at mountaineers.org/globaladventures.com.

Reemerging on the Trail

By Craig Romano, Mountaineers Books guidebook author

Spring wildflowers in Wenatchee's Sage Hills. All photos by Craig Romano.

It's been two long years now since COVID-19 emerged on the world and turned it upside-down. As we begin year three it looks like the virus won't be going away for good, although we can all hope that it at least fades in prominence and influence. As the current wave is ebbing, I am trying to remain optimistic in the face of new potential variants. But while the pandemic has had many negative and disruptive effects, it has also been a game-changer for many of us on how we view our world, our relationship with others, and how we want to approach life moving forward.

I have lived through other crises, ranging in scale from 9/11 to deeply personal events like the death of loved ones, depression, and health challenges. In those times as well as this one, the natural world and staying physically active in it have been a godsend for my preservation. And like the cursed virus that has usurped our ways of life and continues to reemerge, I have learned to accept this disruption and reemerge as well.

The timing of the pandemic overlapped with big milestones for me: turning 60 and my acquiring an auto immune disease. This trifecta of events led to me to reexamine my life and how I want to live. It was also the lynchpin in realizing that my remaining time here on planet earth is growing short. Life is precious, and I cannot waste time by living anything less than a full life.

Seeking clarity

In the last two years, I have spent many long days on the trail hiking and running and thinking hard about what it all means. I am no closer now to realizing an answer than I was when I first began asking that question many decades ago. But I do feel validated in my choices, and I want to continue to spend as much time as possible on the trail and in the natural world. I want to continue hiking, running, pushing myself, and really feeling alive for as long as I can.

Long ago I realized that I could not live a normal life. I was cursed and blessed with an insatiable desire to experience as much of the natural world as possible. I crafted my entire career around it, and it has given me amazing satisfaction. Satisfying not only in that I get to do what I love to pay the bills that are necessary in our modern life, but also satisfied in being able to share my love for hiking, running, and the natural world with so many others.

Rediscovering passions

As restrictions have begun to wane, I have once again been able to participate in both trail running and road running races. I absolutely love racing. Not for the competition, but for the camaraderie. It is synergistic to be out on a challenging trail run or road race with so many others. Not being able to race

for a year and a half made me realize how much I missed socializing with others who shared my passion for running. Now I am determined to race more and to seek out runs I haven't done before. I qualified for and ran the Boston Marathon when I was 29. I thought it was a one-time event for me. Now I realize how much I enjoy the process of training and working hard to qualify, and I have made it a goal to try to qualify and run that race again. Whether I am successful is not important. It's the passion, focus, and process of living my life to the fullest that matters.

I have hiked many wonderful places throughout the world, but in the last two decades my work has kept me closer to home. I have no complaints as I absolutely love hiking in Washington, but I have begun to realize how much I miss other areas. It's time to go back to many of my favorites and to visit some of the places I've always wanted to experience. Time is running out.

Prioritizing family

I also have a young son who I want to take to these places. I love my work, but I work a lot. Even as an outdoor writer I spend too much time in front of the computer dealing with deadlines. I'm making an effort now to work less, and hike, run, and travel more.

As I work on this piece I am packing for a trip back to Joshua Tree National Park. I was last there when my son was two, and we're going to have so much more fun now that he's seven. I also planned to visit the Gulf Coast later this spring. I haven't been there since the 80s and I can't wait to introduce it to my son. We are going to kayak with Atlantic bottle-nosed dolphins in Mobile Bay, hike the Barrier Islands in Mississippi and Florida, and look for birds and plants we have never seen before. I'm planning a trip later in the summer to Arizona, a state I haven't been to since 1993. I've always wanted to hike the San Francisco Peaks, and now I'm finally going to do it.

It's ironic that I've spent most of my life hiking and running, and yet I feel as though I haven't done enough and find myself in a mad scramble to do so much more. I know I will never be able to do everything I want to do, but when I lie on my deathbed I want to be satisfied knowing that I took every opportunity I could to experience the world. To have hiked as many trails as I could and to have run as far and long as I could endure.

A new day

As COVID appears to abate and we all begin to slowly resume our old ways of life, I have vowed to spend as much time with my loved ones as I can, to share experiences and make memories together. I also have vowed to be the best person I can be. I hope to eschew negativity, to be more understanding and empathetic, and to spread positive thoughts and kindness.

It's too easy to get wrapped up in our own thoughts, both when we are down and when we are doing well. But seeing beyond ourselves, acknowledging others, and making a positive difference in their lives pays great dividends for our lives as well. Time is running out, yet I have a lot of life left to live. You do too, and I hope that you too reemerge this spring as a more complete hiker, outdoorsperson, or family member. We may actually even realize that the last two years were not the drag we thought. That instead they were necessary for our development, and we are better off because of it.

Craig Romano is an award-winning guidebook author who has written more than 25 books, including Backpacking Washington 2nd edition, Urban Trails Vancouver WA, *and* 100 Classic Hikes Washington *(Mountaineers Books). Purchase his titles at our Seattle Program Center bookstore, online at mountaineersbooks.org, and everywhere books are sold.*

Craig enjoying a trail run among the flowers in the Sage Hills.

Craig and his son atop Chelan Butte.

The Hansen Family Legacy at Stevens Lodge

By Issy Steckel, Communications Associate

John Hansen skiing powder in the Selkirk Mountains in 1982.
All photos courtesy of Tom Hansen.

A sloping lot in the crook of a mountain pass at 4,200 feet caught the eye of Mountaineers volunteers 75 years ago. A lease from the U.S. Forest Service was signed, and construction began on a rustic ski in/ski out cabin. As the June 1946 *Mountaineer* bulletin stated, "All sites will be developed as cheaply as possible, with maximum accommodations for minimum cost."

Walter Little, the Chair of The Mountaineers Construction Committee, was a driving force behind this new lodge just west of the Stevens Pass ski area. Under his direction, construction began in the summer of 1946. Without electricity, the building was constructed entirely with hand tools. Establishing and developing both the structure and community at Stevens Lodge, like all of our mountain retreats, proved to be a grand exercise in volunteerism.

In 1948, Stevens Ski Cabin opened its doors. The cabin was four stories high, with a basement, main floor, and ladders leading to two dormitories nestled under the steep roof. It boasted 33 bunks and had outdoor toilets. Rumor has it the early hosts were able to squeeze up to 40 bunks to meet the demand of outdoor enthusiasts flocking to stay.

Expansions began just five years later in 1953. A new foundation for the larger building was poured, power lines were extended to reach the building, and a fireplace was installed. The cabin's official designation was upgraded to "lodge."

It wasn't long before Stevens Lodge developed its own special atmosphere. The 1960 *Mountaineer* bulletin reported that, "skiers arriving after skiing Saturday will find a bowl of popcorn being passed around the stone fireplace... In the basement, the ping-pong players hold forth while the wax artists compare notes on the best wax for tomorrow's powder."

Throughout the lodge's history, work parties, dinners, and planning sessions frequently included one individual: John Hansen. John was a fixture at Stevens Lodge for nearly 40 years, helping to build the original cabin in 1948, leading the expansion project, and working on its maintenance and improvements until 1986. He also served as a member of our Board of Directors and was the 1963 recipient of the organization's coveted annual volunteer honor, the Service Award.

John Hansen passed away in the fall of 2021 at the age of 95. His son, Tom, continues to carry on his father's legacy.

Skiing his way to The Mountaineers

From an early age, John was a talented skier and an industrious worker. Growing up in Minnesota, he earned the money to buy his first pair of skis by shoveling snow. After his family moved to Seattle in 1938, he spent hours on the slopes of Snoqualmie Pass, idolizing the skiers who had metal-edged skis with bear trap bindings rather than the leather straps that were on his. As an engineering student at the University of Washington, he balanced school with frequent trips to the mountains. It wasn't long before he taught his first ski lessons with Husky Winter Sports, one of UW's oldest clubs.

At the time, Husky Winter Sports owned a cabin at Stampede Pass, located across the railroad tracks from The Mountaineers Meany Ski Hut. John's outings often led him near the Meany Ski Hut, where he first learned of The Mountaineers. Through this skiing community, John decided to join The Mountaineers and was quickly recruited to lend a hand to the big project at Stevens Pass. At just 21, John spent weekends building the original structure alongside other avid skiers, carpenters, engineers, plumbers, and more.

A rewarding expansion

In true Mountaineers fashion, John's volunteer spirit was unflagging. He spent the following winters up at the cabin, manning the rope tows at Stevens Pass. His wife, Helen, would regularly join him to ski and stay at the cabin.

Starting in 1953, John steered the effort to expand the cabin to its present-day footprint. At the time, John was 27, employed at Seattle City Light, and had a two-year old at home, but he took the opportunity in stride. In 1954, he devoted every weekend from the fourth of July until December (except the weekend Tom was born) to lead the expansion project. "I don't know how my mom put up with it," said Tom.

Clockwise, from top left: The Hansen Family in front of Stevens Lodge in 1971, a good snow year; John standing in the doorway of his ski school in 1974; the original Stevens Ski Cabin before the expansion; John on top of Glacier Peak in 1957.

John modeled the role of servant leader. "He was a great believer in the individual and treated everyone with respect," said Tom. John was famous for saying: "Everybody who walked in the front door of the cabin was a potential committee member. If they stayed for more than three nights, they were asked to join." Whether it was nailing shingles on the roof or cleaning up dinner, everyone was (and still is) expected to pitch in.

Raising a family at Stevens Lodge

John was all about "getting outside, having fun, and doing things away from the city," according to Tom. In addition to skiing, John loved sailing, climbing, hiking, camping, and photography. He climbed all six of Washington's major volcanoes, earning the Seattle Branch Six Majors peak pin (available only to those who climbed Mt. St. Helens before she blew her top).

Radiating admiration for the outdoors, John taught his four children the rewards of a life spent outside. Tom fondly joked, "It was not even an option. We were going skiing. Come November first, the snow would fall. The next time we were home for a weekend, it was either raining or it was May." When his boys were young, John led their Boy Scout troop on multi-day hikes, through the Olympics, across the North Cascades, and even on a trek from Stevens Pass to north of Glacier Peak.

By the time they were teenagers, Stevens Lodge had become the Hansen kids' home away from home. Many of the skills they cultivated at the lodge went far beyond outdoor recreation. Under John's guidance, teenagers – including his own – were treated like adults. Tom became one of the first teens to operate the lodge, and he learned carpentry and electrical skills that benefitted his own career as an engineer. At the lodge, John's daughter, Theresa, learned to cook meals for 60 guests at age 12, and five years later, she took on duties as head cook. "And it worked," Tom said. "It kept the adults young, and it helped those teenagers learn a lot about life from somebody other than their parents."

Carrying on John's legacy

As a 21-year-old volunteer helping build the cabin, John couldn't have predicted that his children and grandchildren would enjoy the fruits of his labor and eventually take over some of his duties. And yet Tom followed in his father's footsteps, becoming the committee chair, sharing this special place with his own kids (who later joined the committee), and making lifelong friends. Together, the father-son duo have volunteered at Stevens Lodge for over 60 years. "I look at the thousands of people that have been to that cabin and all of them have benefited, whether they know it or not, from my dad's efforts," Tom said.

John was happiest on the slopes. He skied for 80 years, logging more than a 100 days a season for many years. He taught ski lessons for almost 50 years, sharing his passion for the sport with hundreds. When people learned of his long skiing career, they would ask, "Don't you get tired of skiing?" He always answered, "I'm trying to."

To thank the Hansen family for their multi-generational impact, The Mountaineers named the lodge's dining room Hansen Hall in 2016. John's legacy is helping others do what he loved most: play in the outdoors.

Between his outdoor pursuits and his time at Stevens Lodge, John succeeded in that which many of us are still trying to master: finding a place to put your passion, where hard work feels like fun, and the possibility of something new is just around the next bend in the mountainside.

Virtual Education Center and Calendar

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


Conservation & Advocacy


Fitness & Performance


Gear Tips


Leadership Skills


Preparedness & Planning


Technical Skills

How to Get Involved

Step 1: Visit mountaineers.org/courses/virtual-education-center

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

Step 2: Choose what you want to learn

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

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

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

What You'll Find

14
Online Courses

100+
Educational Blogs

29
Virtual Events & Activities

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

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

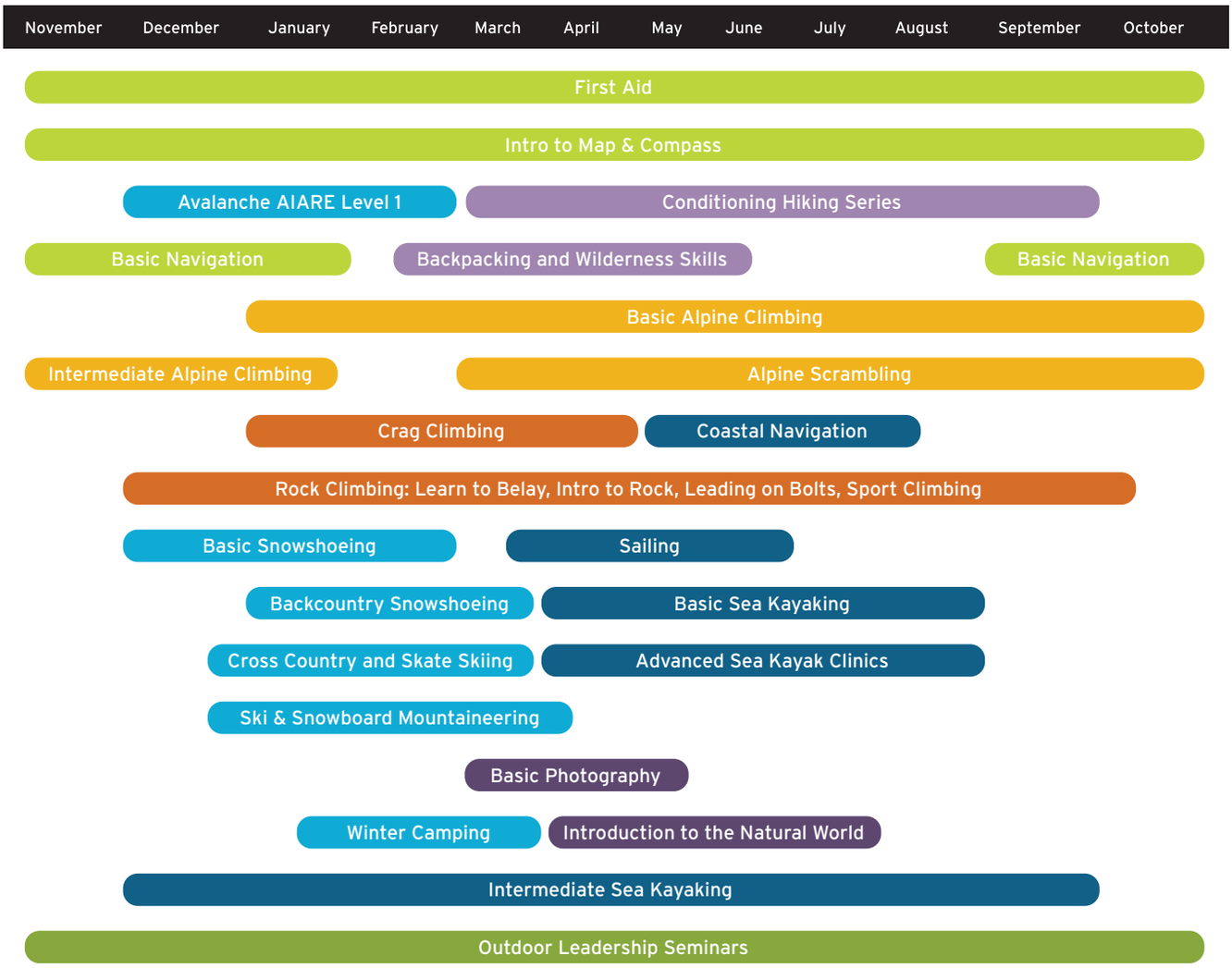
Why do some activities say 'Leader Permission Required'? All of our Mountaineers activities are led by volunteers. To assure everyone on a trip has a set of specific skills, some volunteers require you to contact them in advance to participate. Before signing up for a trip that requires leader permission, 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!

Due to COVID-19 risks activities, courses, and events may be cancelled or postponed. Please visit mountaineers.org/covid19 for more details.

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

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

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

Baker Lodge

mountaineers.org/bakerlodge

Our rustic Mt. Baker Lodge is nestled in the spectacular North Cascades and is a beautiful getaway year-round. The lodge is located within walking distance of the Mt. Baker Ski Area and numerous summer and fall hiking trails. The lodge is currently open at a limited capacity for fully vaccinated guests. Please direct inquiries to mtbakerlodge@gmail.com or lodge chairs.

Meany Lodge

mountaineers.org/meanylodge

Meany Lodge operates a rope-tow on our ski hill for ski lessons, cross-country skiing, and snowshoe excursions. The lodge is currently open at a limited capacity for fully vaccinated guests. Visit our webpage to sign up for an upcoming work party.

Stevens Lodge

mountaineers.org/stevenslodge

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

Kitsap Forest Theater

foresttheater.com

Theater inspired by a magical place! Stroll down the forested trail to our breathtaking theater and create a treasured family tradition. Our 2022 shows are uplifting musicals that appeal to everyone – treat yourself to a day away in the forest. Tickets make great gifts and are available online, save on our two-show package.

Disney's Beauty and the Beast (May-Jun 2022): Step into the enchanted world of this "tale as old as time" and "be our guest" for this heartwarming tale of true love and transformation, perfect for the entire family.

Bend in the Road, The Anne of Green Gables Musical (Late Jul-Aug 2022): This Northwest premier show is a high-energy, family musical based on the beloved classic, *Anne of Green Gables*. This warm, funny musical retains the heart of the original story, and is perfect for all ages.

Help wanted: Seeking help with set building, and cooks for weekend rehearsals and performances.

Due to COVID-19 risks activities, courses, and events may be cancelled or postponed. Please visit mountaineers.org/covid19 for more details.

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

BELLINGHAM

Chair: Brian McNitt, brian@trendmedia.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: Gretchen Ta, gretchen.ta@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 February, May, August, and November. Our annual branch celebration is in October, please join us! Visit our branch calendar for details.

SEATTLE

Chair: Tess Wendel, tesswendel@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 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 and reach out to the branch chair if you are interested in organizing activities for members based in greater South Seattle.

FOOTHILLS
(I-90/I-405 CORRIDORS)

Chair: Benjamin Morse, benjamin.morse14@gmail.com

Website: mountaineers.org/foothills

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

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

Our branch is growing rapidly, and we are actively seeking people to support our community – no prior experience required. We invite you to get involved in branch leadership and committees to get our communities outside. Contact the branch chair if you might be interested.

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

TACOMA

Chair: Curtis Stock curtis@tacomamountaineers.org

Website: mountaineers.org/tacoma

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

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

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

OLYMPIA

Chair: Scott Carlson, snarlson@hotmail.com

Website: mountaineers.org/olympia

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

THE ADVENTURE SPEAKER SERIES has returned! Check the branch calendar for location and to RSVP.

BRANCH COUNCIL MEETINGS are held on the second Wednesday of the month. Members are encouraged to attend. Contact the branch chair for more information.

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.*

**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.*

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

The High Country Bumble Bee

By Issy Steckel, Communications Associate

The high country bumble bee (Bombus kirbiellus) on red paintbrush. Photo by Rich Hatfield, courtesy of Xerces Society.

After a long winter, there's nothing more wonderful than seeing the mountains in bloom. It's that time of year when hikers are returning to the trails, hoping to admire the petals popping up to color our landscapes. Of course, wildflowers wouldn't be possible without pollinators. But did you know that out of the 28 species of bumble bees found in the Northwest, one in particular is largely responsible for our alpine blooms?

The high country bumble bee

As its name suggests, the high country bumble bee is especially well-suited to mountainous environments. Though most commonly found in Alaska and down the spine of the Rocky Mountains, there are also a few alpine areas in Washington, like the high-elevation plateaus of the Pasayten Wilderness, with the needed resources for these bumble bees to thrive.

Undeterred by rain or snow, the high country bumble bee is one of the first pollinators to kick off spring. Thanks to their large body size and dense, insulating fur, these bees are more equipped to fly at cooler temperatures than many other insects. And on those especially frigid mornings above the tree line, they can even flex their muscles to raise their body temperature by several degrees, the bee equivalent of shivering.

Anticipating spring

The transition from winter to spring initiates a new life cycle for these bees. The majority of last year's colony will not have survived, but a few fertilized queen bees are preparing to leave hibernation. As the snowline recedes and the alpine wildflowers begin to blossom, the queens emerge to find new nest sites, typically seeking holes in the ground or other pre-existing cavities in the landscape rather than building new hives. Here, they will lay their eggs to produce the upcoming season's colony.

Alpine adaptations

High country bumble bees have several adaptations that allow them to pollinate a variety of flowers in alpine systems, where the flowering season is short, and the weather can be extreme. With their robust bodies, high country bumble bees are strong enough to carry pollen across far distances – an essential skill when flowers are few and far between in the early season. These bumble bees are also known affectionately as "generalists," because their tongues have evolved to extract pollen and nectar from many types of flowering plants, not just one species.

Perhaps their most unique adaptation is that these bumble bees can "buzz pollinate." They are able to vigorously shake a plant until the pollen locked within its flower explodes onto the bee, something only a few types of bees can do. This technique makes it easier to maximize each flower visit so that more nutritious pollen can be brought back to stock the nest. At the same time, some extra pollen will stick to the bee's furry legs to be deposited at the next stop.

Role in the ecosystem

Most flowering plants rely on pollinators for successful reproduction. Bumble bees are therefore keystone species in many alpine ecosystems across Washington State, meaning that other species in these systems depend on the bees' success for their survival. Further up the food chain, plant-feeding animals including bears, goats, and elk reap the rewards of the bumble bees' hard work.

As you delight in the mountains speckled with lupine, aster, and red paintbrush, pause and listen for the buzz of the high country bumble bee. Though hard to spot, they are there every spring, ensuring that nature's cycle carries on.

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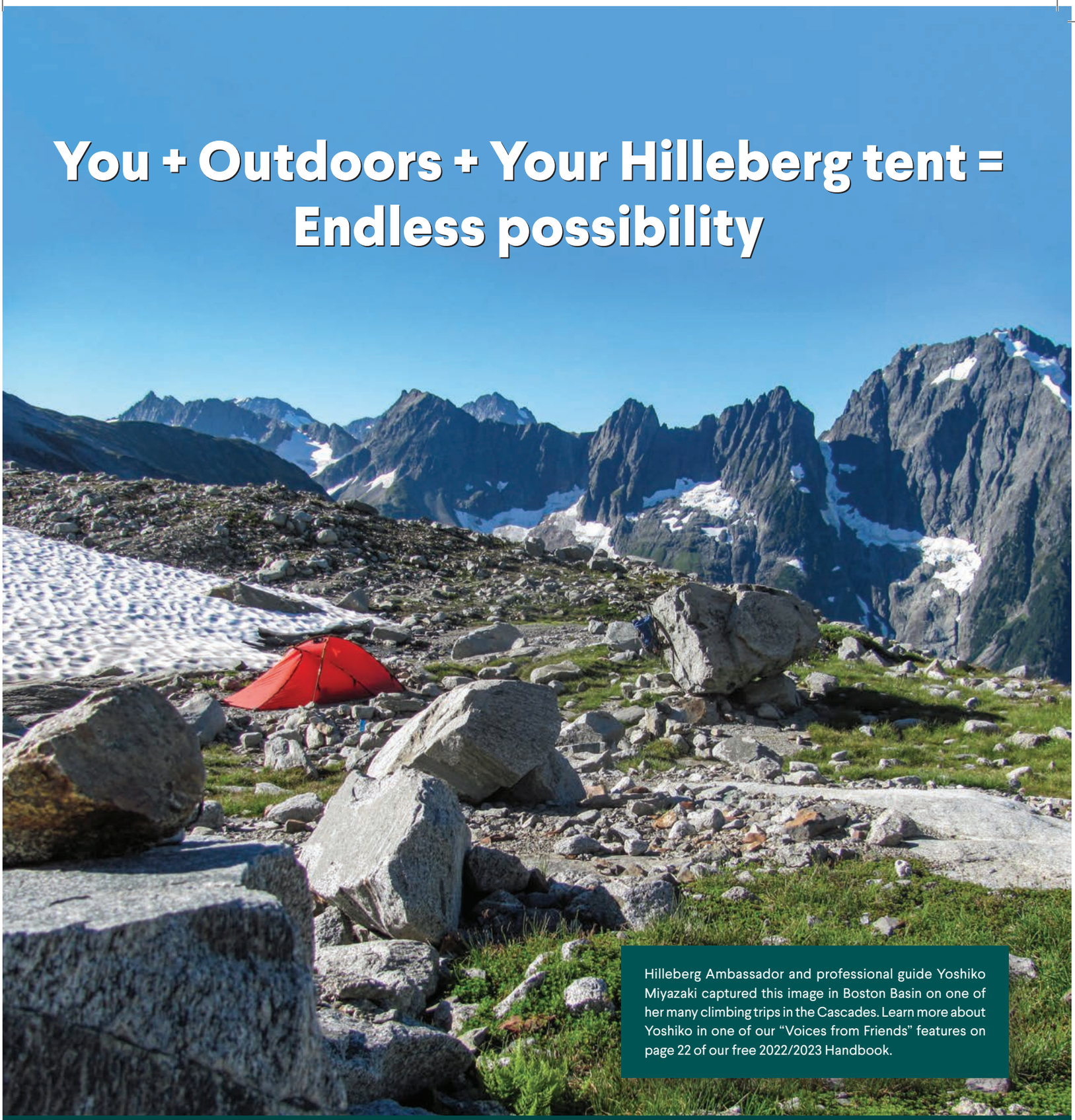

Hilleberg Ambassador and professional guide Yoshiko Miyazaki captured this image in Boston Basin on one of her many climbing trips in the Cascades. Learn more about Yoshiko in one of our "Voices from Friends" features on page 22 of our free 2022/2023 Handbook.

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