

Mountaineer

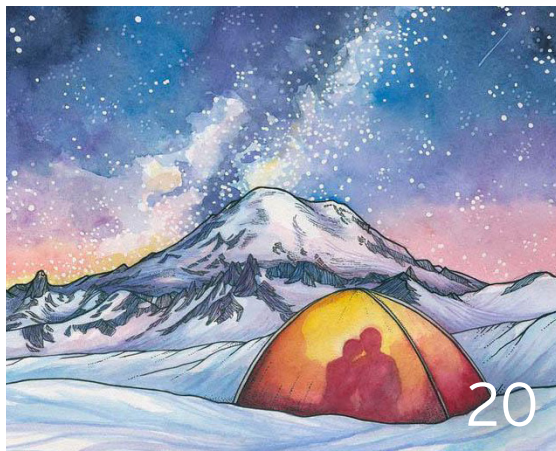
E X P L O R E • L E A R N • C O N S E R V E



in this issue:

Thirst To Belong
Climbing Through Anxiety
Appreciate Every Minute
Drawn To High Places
Active Academics

Fall 2019 » Volume 113 » Number 4
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.



Mountaineer uses:



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Discover The Mountaineers

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

On the cover: Annette Diggs at the Grand Canyon, where she hiked Rim to Rim. Photo by Rachel Jitabebe Robert.



This June, I had the opportunity to volunteer alongside a dozen other instructors who were teaching snow travel and glacier skills on an Intense Basic Alpine Climbing field trip. "June-uary" weather had its grip on the mountains, reducing visibility to near nothing, soaking our gear, and making for a cold Friday night of snow camping near Artist Point in Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Yet the cold, wet conditions and low-visibility didn't put a damper on our moods or those of our students. Like so

many Mountaineers instructors who volunteer their time and share their knowledge of the outdoors, we were motivated by the enthusiasm of our students.

On Saturday night, we happily retreated from Artist Point and enjoyed an evening at our very own Baker Lodge. The warmth and comfort of the lodge was only eclipsed by the warm welcome and hot meal prepared by our lodge hosts - also Mountaineers volunteers.

Like each and every one of our courses, this field trip and our wonderful stay at Baker Lodge was only made possible because of the skill and dedication of our volunteers and a willingness to share their passion for the special places of the Pacific Northwest with others. This spirit of generosity and commitment to volunteerism has been at the core of The Mountaineers since its inception in 1906. Thousands of Mountaineers volunteers give of their time and talent. In fact, in the last year, Mountaineers volunteers dedicated more than 200,000 hours to share their wisdom and love of the outdoors with others.

This is precisely why one of three Vision 2022 strategic priorities centers on supporting our volunteers and course participants by leading innovation in outdoor education. A great example of this commitment to innovating in outdoor education is the new Leadership Development Series, launched this year to offer high-quality, continuing education opportunities for our volunteer leaders. Participation in these sessions has been strong and feedback on the content has been excellent, covering a broad range of topics including instructional techniques, risk management, equity & inclusion, and effective communication.

Another example of innovation in outdoor education is our focus on eLearning courses. Courses such as Becoming a Mountaineers Leader, Public Lands 101, and Safe Travel at High Altitudes help build the skills of our volunteers and members and make it easier to get involved as a Mountaineers leader. New courses are in development, a direct investment in the quality of our courses and the capabilities of our volunteers.

And a final example of leading innovation in outdoor education is Alpine Ambassadors. This program, launched about 18 months ago, provides instruction, mentoring, and community-building for our top climbing instructors across all branches. It creates an opportunity for those who spend so much time mentoring students to continue to push their own abilities with elite climbers. To date, more than 50 Mountaineers climb leaders have participated in the Alpine Ambassadors program, and are bringing new, more advanced skills back to our students.

These investments reflect our deep appreciation for the profound commitment Mountaineers volunteers make to connect others with the outdoors, all while teaching the skills needed to be safe and responsible in our wild places. Thank you for everything you do.

Tom Vogl

Tom Vogl
Mountaineers CEO



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

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Photo by Tim Nair



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Photo by Mitch Pittman.

I've always been enchanted by fall. The changing colors, the moody weather, the brisk evening breeze. Each moment brings with it a palpable sense of change, a daily reminder of time moving forward.

In small town Montana where I grew up, giant ash trees line the main street going into town. On my daily ride to school, I watched as the leaves turned from green to yellow to orange and brown, finally detaching from their high perch to flutter slowly

to the ground, joining colorful friends in a mound where they waited hopefully for a gust of wind to ask for a dance. My dad liked to be that gust of wind, driving through the piles when no other cars were around. I lived for those moments in the car.

The first autumn after earning my driver's license, I hopped eagerly into Lola and headed for Willson Avenue. Lola was my 1970 VW Beetle with a 4-speed manual transmission powering an impressive 52 horsepower engine. She was the perfect car for a new driver, however completely impractical for cold Montana winters and the dry heat of summer. But that's what made our fall missions together so special. I'd drive the scenic route to get to school, searching for the perfect pile of crusty leaves. Once I set my sights, I'd gun the (underpowered) engine and drive my little yellow bug into the heart of the mound, giggling as the leaves engulfed us from every direction. My dad still calls me every year when the conditions are prime to tell me about Lola's annual disco with the leaves.

Memories like these help us appreciate a time or a place, and the changing season of autumn felt like an appropriate time for a magazine themed around "appreciation". In this edition of Mountaineer, you'll find many different takes on the concept, from practical tips to personal stories, all written to help you add more moments of gratitude to your life and gain a new perspective.

Our cover story, written by Mountaineer Annette Diggs, explores what it takes to not only find a sense of belonging, but to create it. The feature "Appreciate Every Minute" offers a look at the life of Super Volunteer Tom Eckhout, whose resilience in the face of adversity is an inspiration to all. "Climbing Through Anxiety", written by professional climber and coach Molly Mitchell, sends us through her struggle with an anxiety disorder, a daily battle that forces her to live in, and deeply appreciate, every moment. And we explore what it takes to steward the places we love so future generations can appreciate the same experiences we have enjoyed in "Lightly on the Land".

In three new mini-features, we have practical advice from an artist, a naturalist, and an over-scheduled student to slow down, fill your next outing with art, turn your commute into a commune with nature, and make time to cultivate the life balance you want.

In our regular columns, you can go on a quest for your own conservation persona to help you connect more deeply with the wild places that you love, and read about practical ways to care for your body before a big trip to avoid an overuse injury. And, as always, we hear from Mountaineers Books author Craig Romano about a recent TV appearance that had him reevaluating what he knows about nature, and what it means to appreciate the knowledge you have.

When I saw the final layout of this edition, memories from all parts of my life came flooding back. I hope you have a similar experience, and I encourage you to relish those moments as they come to you, enjoying the appreciation of saying hello to a new idea, or to an old place once again.

Kristina Ciari
Communications & Membership Director



In **"DIY Gear Room: From Garage to City Apartment"** [Summer 2019], Mountaineer Nate Brown outlined his gear storage solutions after moving from a house with a garage to a city apartment.

"This is an awesome, very useful article! I'm so inspired to re-do my gear storage thinking. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!"
-Carla Jonientz, 34-year member

"Love the new issue! Need to hire Nate Brown to ORGANIZE my whole HOUSE!!!"
-Kandy Hruby, guest member



In **"Did You Know?: Snafflehounds"** [Summer 2019], we took a deeper look at these adorable (and destructive) little creatures.

"Yea, 2 weeks ago one of those pack rats bit a chunk out of a climber's glove on Mt. Cruiser at a belay station when he reached behind the webbing. And another one that same trip destroyed our rope at camp after the climb, turned our new 60m rope into a 40m."
-Ian Lauder, 9-year member

"After reading this fun and informative article, I found myself wondering if we hadn't missed an opportunity to advise readers on effective methods of protection against these potentially destructive little creatures. For example, what is the current technology for lightweight meshes that are impervious to these guys?"
-Chris Richards, 29-year member

In **"Outside Insight: When Luck Runs Out"** [Summer 2019], climber and leadership coach Tracy Rekart told a personal story about how experience won't protect you from accidents.

"This article articulates so much more than just climbing, but an overall awareness of safety and care - thank you for publishing!"
-Erica Hilario, guest member



This year, we've introduced monthly Photo Caption Contests on social media, where the writer of the best caption scores gear from one of our partners. In July, we shared a photo of Dee and Lee Molenaar on Steamboat Prow on the north side of Mt. Rainier, a photo originally published in High Adventure and taken by Bob and Ira Spring. These were our favorites:

"This wasn't what I had in mind when you said you were taking me on a trip to Paradise."
-Jacob Lopilato, 4-year member

"I bet we could get our base weights under 5lbs if we ditched the bags too."
-Adam Greenbaum, 3-year member

"Do you think it will rain?"
-Larry Schultz, 5-year member



We're excited to see The Mountaineers community celebrating community! As we feature more members on our website, we see more folks posting supportive comments for one another:

"What a great article, Regina! Conservation and stewardship is such a great way to experience nature and give back to all those trails we use! Thanks for writing this and all the happy photos too!"
-Jennifer Fortin, 4-year member, responding to "The Personal Reward of being an Environmental Steward and Volunteer"

"Thank you, Charlie, for helping me do this! My kayak has been SO MUCH MORE comfortable since we installed these, and I'm sure when I learn how to roll that it will be a game-changer :)"
-Liana Robertshaw, 8-year member, responding to "How to Create Knee Bracing for Your Kayak"

"Awesome, Lonny! Thank you so much for your patience and guidance. I look forward to the Basic Plus ;) (working on it now!)"
-Tina Fox, 3-year member, responding to "Leader Spotlight: Lonny Moore"

member highlight



Name Janet Wall

Hometown Lakewood, Ohio

Member Since December 1969

Occupation Retired Fisheries Research Biologist

Favorite Activities Hiking, backpacking, raising native plants, and wildlife habitat restoration

How did you get involved with The Mountaineers?

I arrived in the Northwest in the fall of 1969 to earn my master's degree in fisheries. My brother was already here, and recommended I join The Mountaineers. We spent Thanksgiving at Baker Lodge, and after that I went on to take the Basic Alpine Climbing Course in 1970, and eventually Intermediate Climbing. I met my husband in that class - we had a one-man carry in our rescue practice, and I was able to carry him! He invited me on a climb of the Brothers south peak, and we went on a number of climbs together after that. He eventually asked me to marry him, and I said yes.

Joining The Mountaineers is one of the best things I've ever done. I was always a bit shy, and The Mountaineers gave me confidence that I could keep up with the men, which came in handy in the field of fisheries. As a woman it was tough getting a job, and at meetings I was often the only woman in a room of 50+ men. There weren't a lot of women in the climbing courses, but being able to learn a new skill is empowering - even being lowered into a crevasse, which was certainly a memorable experience! I see much of my career success as the result of the confidence I gained through The Mountaineers.

What's your favorite Mountaineers memory?

I've got so many! When I was an intermediate student, I became an instructor for basic field trips, and led crevasse rescue and several skills portions. I eventually finished intermediate and went on to complete many memorable climbs, including a few in South America and Africa. I love glacier travel, and had the opportunity to climb Mt. Rainier twice and Kilimanjaro once. I very much enjoyed a Mountaineers outing in which we backpacked the length of Hells Canyon. I've gone on many climbs, including a trip to Nepal where I backpacked around Annapurna with my friend Karyl Winn. Recently I backpacked a good portion of the John Muir Trail and climbed Mt. Whitney as part of an overland trip.



What motivates you to be a part of our community?

I enjoy going to The Mountaineers presentations. I remember Helen Thayer coming to speak, and bringing her dog that accompanied her to the North Pole! Meeting new people and enjoying my friends has inspired me to stay - I've met many traveling companions through The Mountaineers.

Who/what inspires you?

A lot of The Mountaineers leaders were inspiring, including John Stout, Norm Winn, and Frank King. I also love what nature has to offer us. With fellow Mountaineers I went to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to hike for two weeks. The area is just beautiful, and unusual because the sunlight stays so long in the summer. You can really wear yourself out because you don't want to go to bed and want to keep climbing and hiking into the night! We saw a couple of bears, a lot of caribou, Dall sheep, and wildflowers. Lands like these need to be protected in perpetuity.

Lightning round

Sunrise or sunset? They both can be stunning, but I'm more of a night owl so I tend to see more sunsets.

Mountains or ocean? The mountains!

What's your favorite outdoor smell? The fragrance of alpine flowers.

What's your happy place? Out on some trail somewhere, up in the mountains. Preferably with some flowers in sight - alpine meadows can be just gorgeous.

What's your favorite Mountaineers Books title? Freedom of the Hills - I have several different editions.

Time-Tested Tapering

By Courtenay Schurman, MS, CSCS, PN2

Climbers "appreciating" in Gothic Basic. Photo by Luke Helgeson.

As a big trip approaches, it's understandable that you might worry about whether you've done enough to prepare. For some people, this means throwing everything at a training regimen at the last minute under the mistaken idea that more is better. Unfortunately, such thinking can lead to overtraining, resulting in a strain or injury that can lead to a cancelled trip before you even get started. The focus of this quarter's issue is "appreciation", and it brings to mind the need to recognize all the hard work you've put in by allowing your body the rest and recovery it needs before a trip. To fully understand what it means to taper and how to include it in your training program, read on.

Taper defined

You cannot train hard right up until the day before or morning of a trip and expect to be fully recovered. If you remember nothing else, remember this: fitness improves with rest. What you are trying to do when you taper is recover from a season of hard training so that you are rested and ready to put your training to the test. When you have trained and "peaked" properly, you should feel like you have plenty of "pop" or "spring" in your muscles. You should almost feel antsy, as though you cannot wait to get moving again.

How long to taper

The length of your taper is in direct proportion to the length of your event and how fit you are going into it. Someone embarking on a three-week climb or week-long backpack will taper longer than someone doing a one-day hike or a 5K foot race. If you have reached a high level of fitness, you may need a shorter taper than someone who has struggled to get to a certain fitness level. If you are in the middle of a season with several "big climbs" planned, you may need a maintenance

program during the month before, with mini-peaks and mini-tapers of several days before each event.

Load taper

Using a multi-day backpack as our example, a taper might start two weeks before your trip starts. Your last back-to-back weekend (i.e. pack carries on successive days with no rest between hikes) should be no closer than two weeks before your trip. You might do a final single-day pack hike the weekend before your trip (seven days out), with a short strength workout not closer than five days out. This enables the muscle glycogen (energy stored in your cells) to replenish and provides a mental and physical break before you need your full capacities to excel at your climb or race.

Cardio taper

Aerobic workouts should also decrease in duration and intensity the week leading up to your trip, although it's okay to keep the frequency. You might choose to include an easy hike with half the target pack weight you intend to carry, with half the distance or elevation you normally do, in order to "stretch out." Instead of an hour of hills or stairs, you might only do thirty minutes. Two days before your trip, use the day for active recovery (flat biking, swimming, yoga, or gardening). The day before, go for a brisk walk or a short easy jog for twenty minutes. Trust that the rest will have your body raring to go. Happy peaking and tapering! ▲▲

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.



Become A Commuter Naturalist

By Heidi Walker, Mountaineers Hike, Backpack, and Photography Leader

The white heads of Bald Eagles make identifying them easy, even at a distance. Photo by Heidi Walker.

A shadow darkens the window - a heartbeat of dim sunlight. I look up to see a large bird, a raptor, glide against the sky, wings stretched wide to catch a breeze. Squinting against the light, I catch the distinctive white head and tail before the eagle flicks a few feathers, banks right, and disappears. The train continues racing north to home while my gaze falls back to the shoreline looking for birds and animals, my little time with nature on my commute.

Like many Mountaineers, my time spent in nature is limited to what I can squeeze out between workdays sitting at a desk staring at a computer. Home is in Edmonds, work is in Pioneer Square, and the easiest, most convenient transportation back and forth is the Sounder north line commuter train running along the shore of Puget Sound. While it would be easy to become engrossed in a book or a conversation during the commute, I've found it more captivating to watch the scenery roll by and try to identify the various birds that migrate through or live in the Sound.

The world slips by as the train rumbles down the track at 60 miles per hour and bird identification seems near impossible. Birders are generally quiet folk, sitting still to wait for their quarry to come within view. But there are also 50-mile-an-hour birds. These are birds whose markings and shapes are so distinctive that you can identify them as you drive through the country at highway speeds. Our friend the Bald Eagle is one such bird, with its great wingspan and definitive white head and tail. Either flying or roosting, their white feathers are like a beacon signaling their presence. As the train speeds north, other distinctive birds are checked off my list: Great Blue Heron standing regal and tall at water's edge,

Cormorants resting on top of old pilings, wings outstretched to dry their feathers, Canada Geese, their necks ringed with white, bobbing in the waves.

I'll also watch for interesting behaviors. How are the birds acting, or interacting with each other? Watching a gull wrestle with a flounder it had caught had me wondering who would win - the flounder's tail flapped with enough strength to shake the gull's head. A Bald Eagle standing on the beach in a circle of crows looked as if it was giving a pep talk to a Corvid sports team. Seeing flotillas of various wintering ducks undulating in the waves, I look for distinguishing marks only to find several breeds swimming along the shore in friendly comradery. Peering more closely at a gull swimming around a rock, I realize that the rock is a seal. Could they be playing? Or are they vying for a delectable tidbit in the water?


Yes, seals play in the water close to shore, and I can usually spot a dog-shaped head peering out of the water to watch the train go by at least once a week. Then there are the lucky days where I can spot several along the route home - six has been my record. I'm still looking for an otter though. And always searching the space between the shore and the distant Olympic Mountains for a breaching whale. Now that would be cool.

Becoming a commuter naturalist is quite easy. It's all about engaging with the passing world through your window. Look in the sky for birds soaring on breezes and note their shape. Look into greenery along the route and note the textures of the trees and ferns. A connection with nature can happen in the long days between adventures, even if it's just noting the change of seasons in the color of the leaves. ▲▲

Hilleberg Red Label tents: All Season All-rounders.



An Unna in the North Cascades, Washington, USA.
Daniel Rainwater



A Kaitum GT in Rondane National Park, Norway
Martin Hülle/martin-huelle.de

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Every Image Has a Story Q&A With Corey Rich

By Doug Canfield, Marketing and Innovation Director

Corey Rich shoots Dane Jackson taking a dive. Photo by Rex Lint.

Corey Rich's images are among the most recognized in adventure sports photography. His career began in the '90s when, as a college kid, he traveled the country in a beat-up Honda Civic, photographing rock climbers. As his skills and reputation grew along with the popularity of climbing and other adventure sports, Corey was there to tell the stories of some of the world's best athletes. His new book is *Stories Behind the Images: Lessons from a Life in Adventure Photography* (available in late September), and we recently caught up with him to ask Corey about his career and his new book.

Your career has spanned most of the modern era in adventure sports. What are the biggest things that have changed for photographers since you started out?

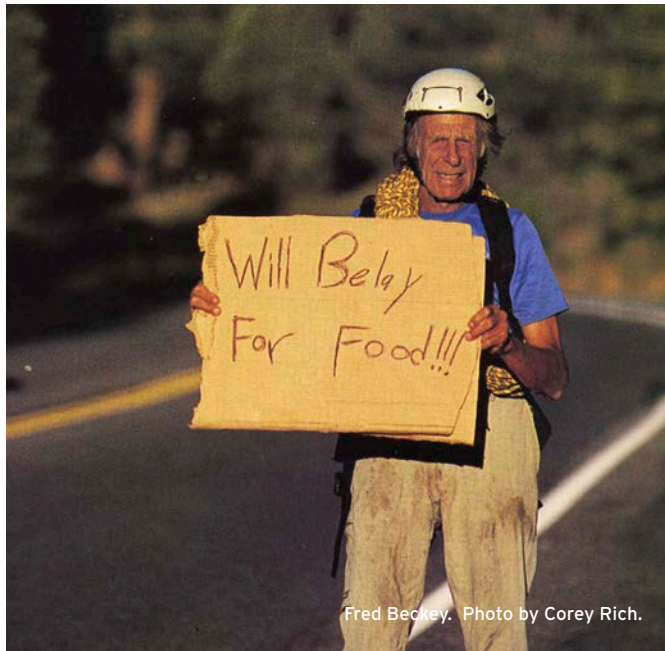
I've seen so many changes from a technology perspective, as cameras have transitioned from film to digital, DSLR to mirrorless, and to cameras that can shoot incredibly high quality still and motion files in tandem. But despite all of those advances, what remains is that old adage that content is king. If you're not consciously telling a good story with

your camera, all of the technology in the world won't help you. One of the biggest changes, however, is the way our content is shared. Magazines used to be how careers were made. Now, for better and worse, it's done through an ability to build a social media audience. At the end of the day, in my view the opportunities have only increased and gotten better for photographers and filmmakers.

When we think of the typical photography book it's usually a display of images, but your book has lots of narrative. What are you trying to accomplish with this project?

I wanted this book to be approachable, and give readers the sense that they were sitting next to me at a campfire, hearing some stories about my life and career. I wrote the chapters to stand alone, more or less, so that you can jump around and read a chapter, be entertained, and hopefully come away with something new to think about. But taken all together, this book really is a memoir of my life and career thus far. I hope it's a unique, interesting way of approaching this genre.

Lots of people see an amazing photo of an athlete in action



Fred Beckey. Photo by Corey Rich.

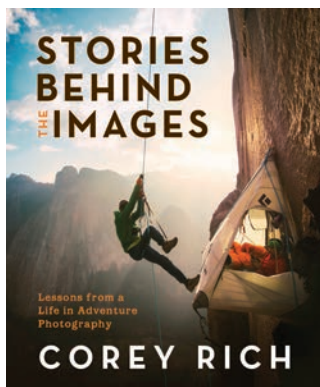
and wonder, where the hell was the photographer that he or she could get that image? Is that actually the secret sauce to your job?

The secret is that there is no secret. It takes a lot of hard work to get into any position that's unique and compelling. The reason that climbing photography is often so striking is that it offers a perspective most people never get to see. And there's a reason for that: getting into that position – say, 2,000 feet up the side of El Capitan – isn't very easy. You have to understand the ropes, and be willing to take a bit of risk. But the reward is hopefully an arresting photograph.

For many fans you appear to have a “dream job.” What gives you the most job satisfaction?

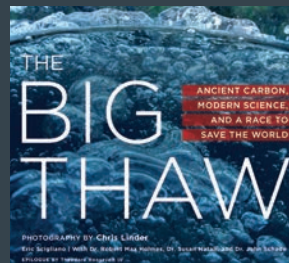
Two things come to mind. The first are the relationships that I form with the people I photograph. I get to create stories and content surrounding amazing athletes with incredible drive. The fact that some of that ambition and drive rubs off on me is one of the best perks. But the real reward is that many of these people have become my lifelong friends.

The other satisfying part of my job is that I get to pay it forward, and give back to fellow photographers. Teaching and mentorship is a big part of what I do. I've made this a priority in part because my dad was a teacher, but also because I've had so many wonderful mentors over the years. Sharing information, whether that's through lectures or clinics or online videos and courses, and providing opportunities to up-and-coming photographers is immensely satisfying. ▲▲



Braided River Plants Trees to Reduce Carbon Footprint

By Erika Lundahl, Conservation Campaigns Associate



Planting trees—which store carbon in their trunks—is one of the most powerful ways we can tackle the climate crisis. Scientists say it would take **1 trillion trees** to reverse the carbon footprint from the last 25 years of pollution. Wowza!

Mountaineers Books recognizes that printing, making, and shipping books generates carbon emissions, just like driving a car or flying contributes to an individual's carbon footprint. That's why we're working with Washington nonprofit Forterra to lower the carbon footprint of our two new Braided River books *The Big Thaw* and *We Are Puget Sound* (coming October 2019) by planting tree seedlings in Puget Sound.

Forterra's **Evergreen Carbon Capture (ECC)** program helps organizations and individuals lower their carbon footprint by planting trees in the Puget Sound region, restoring resilient, forested parks and natural areas for future generations. Our conservation publishing division Braided River has long published books that educate and inspire conservation actions. *The Big Thaw: Ancient Carbon, Modern Science, and a Race to Save the World* explores the alarming impacts to our planet from thawing permafrost. *We Are Puget Sound: Discovering and Recovering a Wilder Salish Sea* promotes awareness and everyday actions we can take to protect regional marine wildlife. With Forterra's help we are learning how we can better lead by example and be accountable for our carbon footprint.

Calculate your carbon impact and reduce your footprint at Forterra.org. Learn more about Braided River, an imprint of Mountaineers Books, at BraidedRiver.org.



Forterra Carbon Capture Event. Photo by Hannah Letinich.

Happy Birthday To The Mountaineers Gear Library!

Hannah Piatok, Gear Library Coordinator



A quick break near Baker Lodge. Photo courtesy of the Nepal Seattle Hiking Community.

The Mountaineers Gear Library recently turned one, and looking back it's hard to believe a full year has passed since we started gearing up with youth organizations. Our hope with the library was to work with youth-serving organizations to reduce barriers to outdoor access. Since launching in August 2018, we've outfitted over 350 young people to explore and recreate in the Pacific Northwest, enjoying activities like hiking, snowshoeing, backpacking, and camping. Notably, we had an especially active winter season, sending out the most snowshoes in youth program history. We're so lucky to be able to share our love of adventure with the future leaders of tomorrow.

Reflecting on how many outdoor experiences we've shared, we feel exceptionally grateful for all our volunteers and partner organizations who gave so much to make the Gear Library a success. King County and REI provided the initial funding to build the library from concept to reality. Washington Trails Association (WTA) shared endless guidance to help create systems and infrastructure, and partnered in facilitating training workshops for youth-serving organizations. Our volunteers donated time to label each piece of gear and keep everything organized. Our partner organizations dedicated time and talent to getting more youth into the wild spaces all around us. This resource is a labor of love, impacted by everyone who has so generously offered funds, time, and expertise. Thank you.

To celebrate this collective milestone, we reached out to our partners to hear more about their experiences with our Gear Library. From Discovery Park to Mount Rainier to Mount Baker, new and seasoned youth recreationists were outfitted with technical layers, boots, snowshoes, tents, sleeping bags, cookwear, and more as they explored all around us. Here's what they had to say about those experiences:

Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA) | Snoqualmie Snowshoe

"When we first told our youth that we were going to the mountains to go snowshoeing, many of them asked if we were going to the peak they could see from their Seattle neighborhood of Rainier Vista. They didn't know its name, but this is what they thought of when they thought of "mountains." Before our bus even arrived at Lake Easton State Park, children marveled at the peaks seen from the bus. They asked what the names of those mountains were, and when we could go climb to the tops of those mountains. For almost all of the 24 youth and four parent chaperones who attended, this was the first time they had ventured out of Seattle to enjoy the outdoors.

"When we arrived at Lake Easton State Park, we met rangers who guided us through the snowy terrain on snowshoes. Youth learned about animal adaptations for winter, similar to the snowshoes they wore on their feet. They were able to experiment with trekking through wooded areas and up and



The author at our Gear Library Launch Party.



Snowshoeing at Gold Creek. Photo courtesy of Soccer Without Borders.

down hills with snowshoes, and of course lots of play time!

"This field trip expanded their view of what mountains are, from a singular far-away peak they can see from their neighborhood in Seattle to an expansive piece of their world. A nine-year-old summarized the day as 'it's lit.'"

"The Mountaineers Gear Library had small sizes for our young explorers to wear while trekking in the snow, which removed a huge barrier. When we first discussed the field trip with families, the first concern named by many parents was that their children didn't have the right clothes or shoes to go play in the snow. Being able to provide all of our trip participants with appropriately sized gear for free removed a huge barrier for our youth and families being able to participate fully in this outing."

- Sophie Hoover, ReWA's Elementary Program Coordinator

Nepal Seattle Hiking Community (NSHC) | Mount Baker Exploration

"Thank you, because without the snowshoes the trip wouldn't be complete. Our community members had the best time. Saturday, part of the group went to Heather Meadows to snowshoe. Sunday, another group went up to Artist Point to snowshoe and to celebrate Holi, the festival of colors. In total 65 people played in the snow. See you again next year!"

- Nil Tilija, NSHC Group Leader

Soccer Without Borders | Gold Creek Snowshoe

"Being a Wisconsin native myself, I naturally had crafted a nice snowball to give a toss to. Once one participant saw this, it had made its way through the whole group! Even though we had had record snow in Seattle, most students weren't interacting with it outside."

"After our 'organized' snowball fight the group had really relaxed and got comfortable navigating the snow. It was really nice to watch these participants experience snow in new ways!"

You could tell they were having a great time shaking tree limbs to cause falling snow, snow angels and falling into piles of powdery snow!

"It was great to see the shift of the 20 participants' mentality before signing up for the trip and after. Many thought it was too cold or lacked interest to play in the snow but once they were out there, you could tell that they were comfortable and excited to enjoy the outdoors. One of our five rules is "Try Everything" and I could tell that participants were worried or intimidated by the cold. It was great to see such a large turnout for an event that was clearly new and slightly intimidating for participants. They really stepped up and enjoyed themselves, thanks to the help of The Mountaineers!"

- Zeke Kelderman, coach and master snowball builder ▲▲

The gear library would not be possible without the generous support from: Adidas TERREX, Adventure Medical Kits, Bogs, Cascade Designs, Cocoon, Deuter, Helly Hansen, Jansport, King Country, Kovea USA, Outdoor Research, Petzl, Rab USA, REI, Salomon, Sea to Summit, The North Face, Vasque, Washington Trails Association, and Wise Owl Outfitters. Thank you for believing in and supporting our vision. You made the smiles pictured here possible.

Want to use the Gear Library?

We work with a variety of organizations to help get youth in the Puget Sound area outside. The first step is attending a Gear Library Orientation to learn more about this program and process for checking out, caring for, and using this gear. We have two coming up on September 16 and October 21. For more information please visit www.mountaineers.org/youth/gear-library or email our Outreach Manager at daniellel@mountaineers.org.

How Scholarships Strengthen Community

By Tyler Dunning, Development Manager



Basic Climbing field trip to Mt. Erie. Photo by Steve McClure.

When Ekaterina Sukhanova first moved to the Pacific Northwest from Sweden, she was looking to stay engaged. She was already an avid outdoorswoman, spending her time hiking, skiing, camping, and backpacking, but she wanted to expand her horizons to alpine climbing as well. She set a life goal to summit several notable peaks, including Mount Rainier. It was this dream that sparked her interest in The Mountaineers, and soon she was researching our course offerings.

However, those goals come with a price tag - even in a volunteer-run organization like The Mountaineers. Financial barriers to the outdoors, especially in specialized sports that require high-quality gear, often hinder progress, possibilities, and confidence. Luckily, Ekaterina spotted the scholarship application link on each course listing. From there she was able to receive scholarships and enroll in both Alpine Scrambling and Basic Alpine Climbing, bringing her several steps closer to her alpine goals.

"This scholarship program has impacted my life enormously," Ekaterina said. "I've been able to increase my climbing and mountaineering skills while becoming closer to nature and learning more about conservation."

Ekaterina received these scholarships through The Mountaineers Access Program (MAP) which provides scholarships to those who otherwise could not afford to participate in our programs and courses. This fund exists thanks to the generosity of our community and donors, and comes out of our commitment to provide access to outdoor recreation, education, and conservation opportunities to all.

The MAP scholarship fund offers course scholarships as well as membership assistance. From youth programming to family memberships, everyone in our community can utilize this resource, and we're excited that the MAP program has been so successful. This year alone, donors have given over \$59,300



Happy place. Photo by Ekaterina Sukhanova.

in scholarships, making it possible for 123 youth and adults to experience the wonders of the great outdoors - many for the first time. This funding comes from a variety of sources, including our annual fundraising gala and our year-end appeal. Additional scholarship support comes from gifts given throughout the year, like the recent \$10,000 donation two long-time members made to the Tacoma Branch to support new climbers.

Scholarships got people outside this year:

- **\$59,301** awarded
- to **123** youth & adults
- covering **30%-70%** of course costs for scholarship recipients
- made possible by **159** donors

Congratulations to our new graduates from Alpine Scrambling, Basic Alpine Climbing, Sea Kayaking, Waterfall Canyoning, Wilderness First Aid, and Wilderness Navigation across all branches!

For some, scholarships are a meaningful way to honor community members who are no longer with us. In 2019, John and Julie Waldhausen established the Liesl Waldhausen Basic Alpine Scholarship, in honor of their daughter Liesl, who passed away unexpectedly before her Basic Alpine Climbing Course began. This gift will award one basic alpine climbing student a full scholarship each year to learn to climb, grow their community, and deepen their connection to the outdoors.

John and Julie understand the importance of these opportunities, saying, "We hope to help foster an appreciation of the outdoors and an understanding of why preservation of our wild spaces is so important to people in general, but especially in young people. We're honored to offer this opportunity to a student who may not otherwise be able to take the course without financial support."

Scholarship opportunities like these embody the ethos of The Mountaineers and reflect our desire to come together to learn, grow, and enjoy incredible transformations in the outdoors.

As Ekaterina puts it, "I feel lucky to have found such a supportive community filled with incredible people who are passionate about the outdoors."

And that's the crux of it all: by providing opportunities for all people, we're creating a diverse and inclusive outdoors to inspire unity, respect, and passion for places we love. ▲▲

Scholarship FAQ

- **Anyone may apply for a scholarship** for any course or membership with any branch. The Mountaineers uses a combination of total household income, number of dependents, student status, and special circumstances to determine eligibility and awards.
- **Apply for financial assistance** on our website at www.mountaineers.org/scholarships.
- **Allow two weeks for processing.** Be sure to apply at least two weeks before you wish to register for the course or activate your membership. We are unable to refund fees paid if you receive a scholarship after paying for the course or your membership.
- **We award financial assistance up to four times per person, per year** in order to serve as many people as possible.
- **Questions?** Email info@mountaineers.org or call 206-521-6001 to speak to one of our member services representatives.
- **Donate!** To support the MAP fund, visit www.mountaineers.org/donate and make a gift today.

Outdoor Leadership

Everyone Has A Place in the Mountains

By Nick Block, Volunteer Collaborations Manager

Forest on the first free ascent of Shot Tower, Arrigetch Peaks, Alaska. Photo by David Moskowitz.

Forest McBrian is an IFMGA Mountain Guide with over 15 years of experience in the mountains. Among his many notable achievements, in 2017, Forest and his partner Trevor Kostanich embarked on a 34-day ski traverse from Snoqualmie Pass to Canada. Forest instructs for the American Mountain Guide Association, and guides throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Forest has dedicated himself to the premise that everyone belongs in the mountains, and has focused his guiding career around education and empowerment. Forest is a co-author of Mountaineers Books title *Backcountry Ski and Snowboard Routes: Washington*, and has played an important role as a volunteer in the development of the Progressive Climbing Education Initiative. Forest sat down with us to discuss his path to becoming a mountain educator, and his experiences working with The Mountaineers.

How did growing up in the Pacific Northwest influence your decision to pursue a career in the mountains?

I spent my childhood in Oregon, and I went backpacking with brother for the first time at age 16. Soon after, some high school friends who had taken a climbing class from the Mazamas took me climbing at Rocky Butte, a little crag inside of the Portland city limits full of graffiti. Around this time, I also read a book about the North Cascades, and the idea that these mountains and their rivers of ice were just a few hours away simply astounded me. I became drawn to the mountains because of the way I felt there; I appreciate the silence, as I'm something of an introvert.

In the late 1990s, when I was a teen, Oregon was also the center of a lot of activism in defense of the region's ancient forests. I became interested in the politics and philosophy of these movements, and became involved myself. Looking back on it all, it's tough for me to imagine that I ever could have ended up

doing something that didn't connect me directly to the land.

When did you start working as a professional guide?

In college I studied French and English, and envisioned a career as a classroom teacher. I enjoyed school and my teachers really helped shaped who I am. I taught in the French public school system for two years, but I quickly began to envision a career that combined my interests in education and the mountain environment.

I'd also spent my first summer after college as an instructor for Outward Bound in the North Cascades. The small teams typical of mountain work suited me really well, and I enjoyed the combination of hands-on problem solving, leadership, and teaching. That solid foundation from Outward Bound, gave me the skills to begin guiding.

How has your guiding career evolved over time?

Like most guides, I spend the majority of my time teaching, coaching, and supporting the people I work with. After a decade of spending 200 plus days a year in the mountains, I decided to deepen my learning and completed 110 days of training to achieve my International Federation of Mountain Guides Association (IFMGA) certification. As an IFMGA guide, I am even better equipped to take people into these incredible mountain environments - I teach new skills as a part of an intentional progression, and manage risk in a way that empowers everyone in the team.

I work from the premise that everyone belongs in the mountains. At different points in our growth as climbers, we need people with more experience or technical skill to help us take on new terrain and new challenges, to help us grow. This is why I became a guide in the first place: to provide the mentorship that was so critical for my own development. I imagine this is also why people instruct for The Mountaineers!

How did you first get involved with The Mountaineers?

I first worked with The Mountaineers as an author in 2013. We tackled a project (Backcountry Ski and Snowboard Routes: Washington) that was slightly ahead of its time in the sense that backcountry skiing and snowboarding are still maturing as sports in our region. Mountaineers Books gave me a formative editorial experience and totally supported and believed in our team of guide-authors. A couple of years later, Lowell Skoog mentored me through a history project that included a bunch of digging in The Mountaineers archives; the project ended up teaching me a lot about the role of the organization in the early days of North Cascades climbing.

I also contributed to the early Progressive Climbing Education meetings, and more recently consulted with The Mountaineers and other mountain clubs on behalf of the American Alpine Club (AAC), which felt momentous and exciting. I plan to stay involved, and to keep advocating for unity among mountain people.

How have you seen our organization grow since then?

With its shift toward serving youth and its Progressive Climbing Education initiative, The Mountaineers has been striving for greater positive impact in the wider community, as well as continuing to lead in mountain education for the recreational public. I've been fortunate to work with Mountaineers instructors pursuing professional-level training through both the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) and the American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education (AIARE), and I'm excited to see that kind of cross-pollination increase across the mountain safety landscape.

As a professional mountain guide, what value do you see in volunteer-led outdoor clubs?

Clubs offer a fun, social, financially-accessible way to gain outdoor skills and partners. They unite around regional and national conservation issues, steward our history, and create community.

Clubs also reduce barriers to access. I believe the story of climbing and mountain sports is overwhelmingly one in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; clubs help a diverse community share unique resources and talents in a way that creates more possibility for everyone involved. Volunteerism is impressive when deployed on the scale of The Mountaineers. The organization has done a lot for the outdoor community, and there is still so much more to come!

Do you have any memorable moments or interactions with our members?

I skied the Patrol Race with two guide friends in 2018. We had a blast! I think the event does a great job of inviting non-members into a Mountaineers experience, and of putting participants in touch with the history of the region, the organization, and the sport of backcountry skiing. Piling onto the diesel snow cat with 40 other racers at Meany Lodge was outrageous fun.

What is your favorite part about teaching in the mountains?

I really enjoy opening up new possibilities for people - new understandings, new confidence, new experiences. That new experience might be a first hike off-trail, a first glaciated ski tour, or a first big alpine climb. It's all relative to the individual. One

privilege of my work is long, unhurried conversations with my guests, and I'm really interested in how we give meaning to our mountain experiences. What is the practical and social value of the magic we experience there? Guiding lets me work with all kinds of people on public lands and to learn more about how each of them experiences the mountains, and how they relate those experiences to other dimensions of their lives.

What are your proudest achievements as a climber and skier?

I am biased toward wild, remote mountains that retain some mystery. That is why I love living near the North Cascades - the topography has worked in concert with the Wilderness Act to dramatically slow the rate at which this range has been explored, mapped, and catalogued. Skiing from Snoqualmie Pass to the Canadian border in 2017 felt like a dissertation of sorts for me and my partner Trevor. It was the perfect way to express our craft and our love for our home range.

If you had the ability to instantly change one thing about the outdoor industry, what would it be?

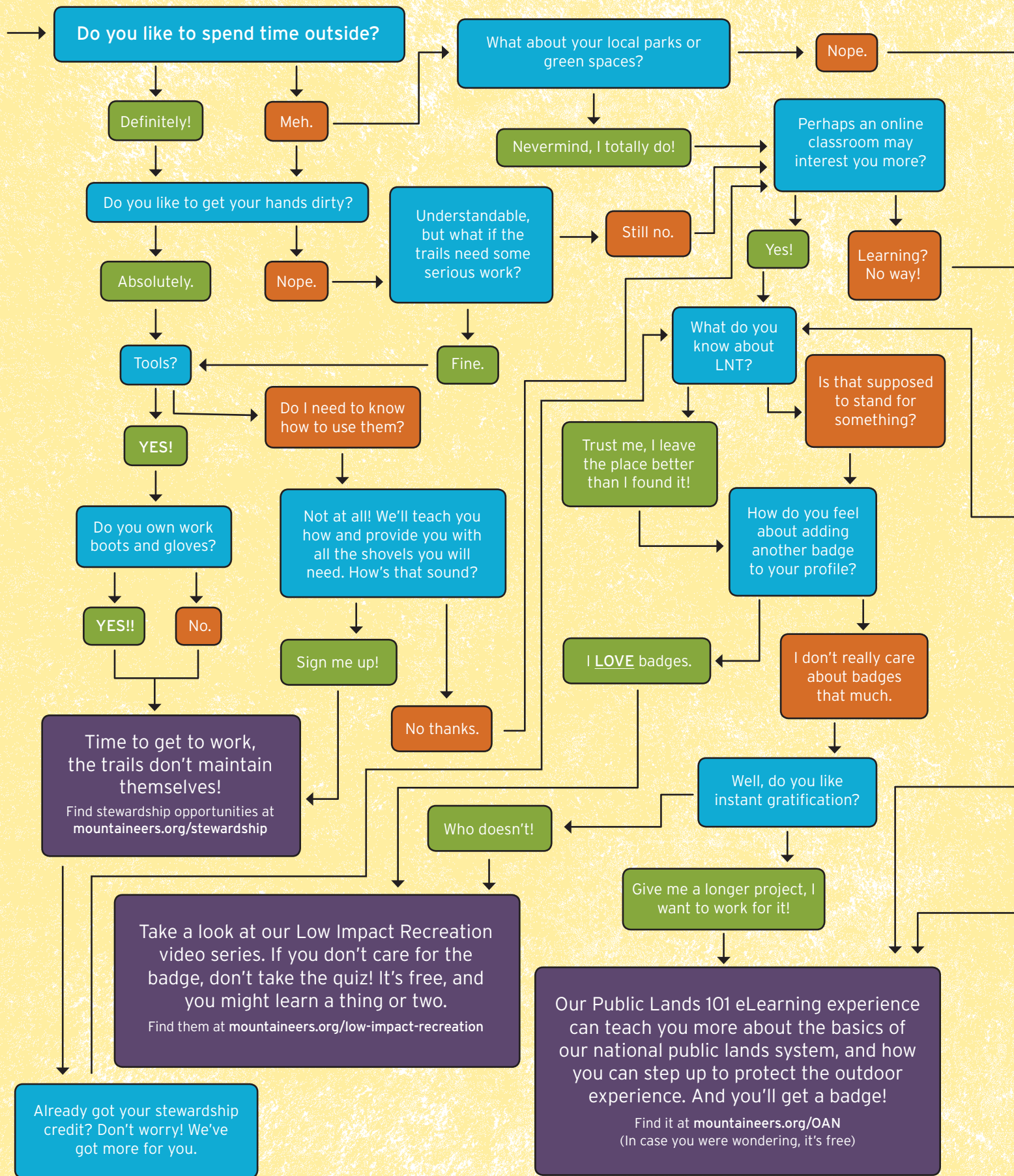
I would put social justice and climate change at the core of every outdoor organization's mission statement. If we proclaim the benefits of recreation on public lands and of spending time in contact with nature, then we have to work to see those benefits shared more widely and to protect the rights of the vulnerable, including the non-human world.

Like many climbers and skiers today, I am wrestling with the role of travel and resource consumption in my recreational activities. Deep down, I believe that the best way to show that I truly love the earth is to be gentle. This has given me renewed enthusiasm for the wild Cascades, and for all the exciting movements converging here. I see climbers extending the notion of "good style" beyond the climb itself - from carpooling to the mountain, to selling and buying used equipment, to calling our local mountains by their pre-colonial names. These actions may seem small, but for me, they make it easier to believe in and work toward a more just and sustainable world.

How do you see clubs and guides working together in the future? Is there a way we can use our shared experiences to make outdoor adventures better for everyone?

I think the opportunity for guides and clubs to work together is tremendous, and it begins with recognizing our unique strengths as well as our common ground. The long-format, cohort-based model developed by clubs has unique educational advantages, and it also builds community brilliantly. Guides offer low-ratio, intensive instruction that can keep club curricula and instruction fresh and cutting edge, and guides also bring depth and diversity of practice to recreational outdoors people. The common ground of both clubs and guides is quite literal: the belief that everyone has a place in the mountains. We have all dedicated a lot of our lives to helping others grow in capacity and confidence, in large part because we believe that our world badly needs the lessons that can come from mountain experiences. If we can collaborate to produce more effective and sustainable mountain education, then we will see a new generation of climbers and citizens emerge from our collaborative community, ready to bring those lessons to the world. ▲▲

conservationcurrents





Painted from camp as the sun set over McClellan Butte. The painting froze as it was created, leaving beautiful ice textures across the sky. Photos courtesy of Nikki Frumkin.

DRAWN TO HIGH PLACES: An Interview with Nikki Frumkin

By Elaine Kelly, Member Services Manager

Nikki Frumkin is a local alpinist and the artist behind Drawn to High Places. Through her whimsical watercolor and ink paintings, Nikki creates magical and inspiring portrayals of our local outdoor playgrounds. I have long admired her works for the way they transport the viewer to our beloved northwest peaks, and remind us why these places capture our collective imaginations.

Nikki is also a Mountaineers member and supporter of our mission, having donated an original piece to our annual Gala for several years. As a budding alpinist and watercolorist myself, I was excited to interview Nikki about her art, inspirations, and techniques. Nikki's humble and playful attitude about painting was inspiring, and I hope to incorporate that lightness into my own paintings the next time I head to the hills.

What's the story of your outdoor experience?

My mom has a huge appreciation for nature and is passionate about animal rescue. Growing up we had a million dogs that needed to be walked, so we spent a lot of time in the woods near our house.

I moved to Seattle spontaneously about seven years ago, after ending a cross-country road trip here. When I arrived, I looked at Mount Rainier, the North Cascades, and the Olympics, and thought, "I'm never going back!" I've been here ever since. I started getting into mountaineering right away. There was a lot of learning those first two years! At first, even just hiking was so overwhelming.

Friends, mentors, and people from the Pacific Northwest Outdoor Women's (PNWOW) group on Facebook took me in and taught me new skills. There is no way I'd be able to do what I'm doing now if it hadn't been for all those people who took me under their wing. Because of that, being a mentor has become important to me as a way of giving back to people just getting started.

When did you start incorporating art into your outings?

I think it was five or six years ago. Shawn, my partner, and I did my first snow camping trip at Artist's Point on Mount Baker on a super socked in weekend. Shawn suggested I bring my watercolors and it was a great idea! I don't think I used them that trip, but I did make a little sketch of Shuksan. It was such a fun way to capture all those huge, overwhelming feelings of sleeping in the cold for

the first time and seeing the beautiful sunrise.

From then on, every trip I brought the watercolors with me. That first one was in a little sketchbook, but I soon switched to bits of paper that were lighter. For a while I just brought palm-sized pieces of paper, and now I use paper up to the size of a twin bed that I roll up and strap to my backpack. My pieces keep getting bigger and bigger!

What do you find special about using watercolors and ink to depict natural landscapes?

From a practical perspective, watercolors are super portable, easy to use, and dry quickly. The simpler the medium is to clean up, the better. What makes watercolors truly magical is their translucency, where you can layer them and see the colors and the light that's underneath. They do a beautiful job of capturing light, movement, and weather. When I think about being in the mountains, I think about feeling the wind and the weather changing around me and spending a lot of time looking towards the sky and thinking about what's coming in next. Putting that on paper with watercolors is easy because they have movement to them.

My grandmother is a watercolor artist and she gave me my first set of watercolors when I moved here. That was a really special way to get into it. Before I moved to Seattle, I was an oil painter and was doing huge landscapes of the Hudson Valley. I definitely came to Seattle with a sense of how to put paint on paper, but when I started using watercolors, it was a totally different story. They're much more chaotic, which I like.

How has art enriched your outdoor experience?

It takes time to paint. Even when you're quick, you have to sit and really look. You get to experience the landscape over time in a way that you might not if you were just passing through. You see things you might have missed. Painting is an extra little reason to stay for sunrise or sunset or be awake at night to see the stars. Painting highlights the relationship between me and the landscape, because I really see and feel what's around me.

Additionally, I've made so many friends with people who have enjoyed the same places I've painted. It's cool to inspire people to paint, and sometimes we go out and paint together.

It's also special when someone sees one of my paintings and realizes, "I know that feeling too." That's been one of my favorite things about painting in Washington, connecting with people who see themselves in my paintings. One of my favorite messages that I've received on my website came from someone who bought a print of my painting of Mount Rainier and a little red tent with a couple inside. She told me she saw this painting and fell in love because it was how her child was conceived, in a tent outside of Mount Rainier. It made me so happy!

What are some ways folks can begin incorporating art into their outings?

Put a little notebook and any pen you have in your backpack and just try it to see what happens. We tell ourselves that we're not going to be good at something, and that there's no point in trying it, but with art you just have to say, "I might be terrible at it, it might be hilarious, and nobody will ever see it, but I'm



A bed-sized painting of Prusik Peak, painted on a 5-day backpacking trip in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness.

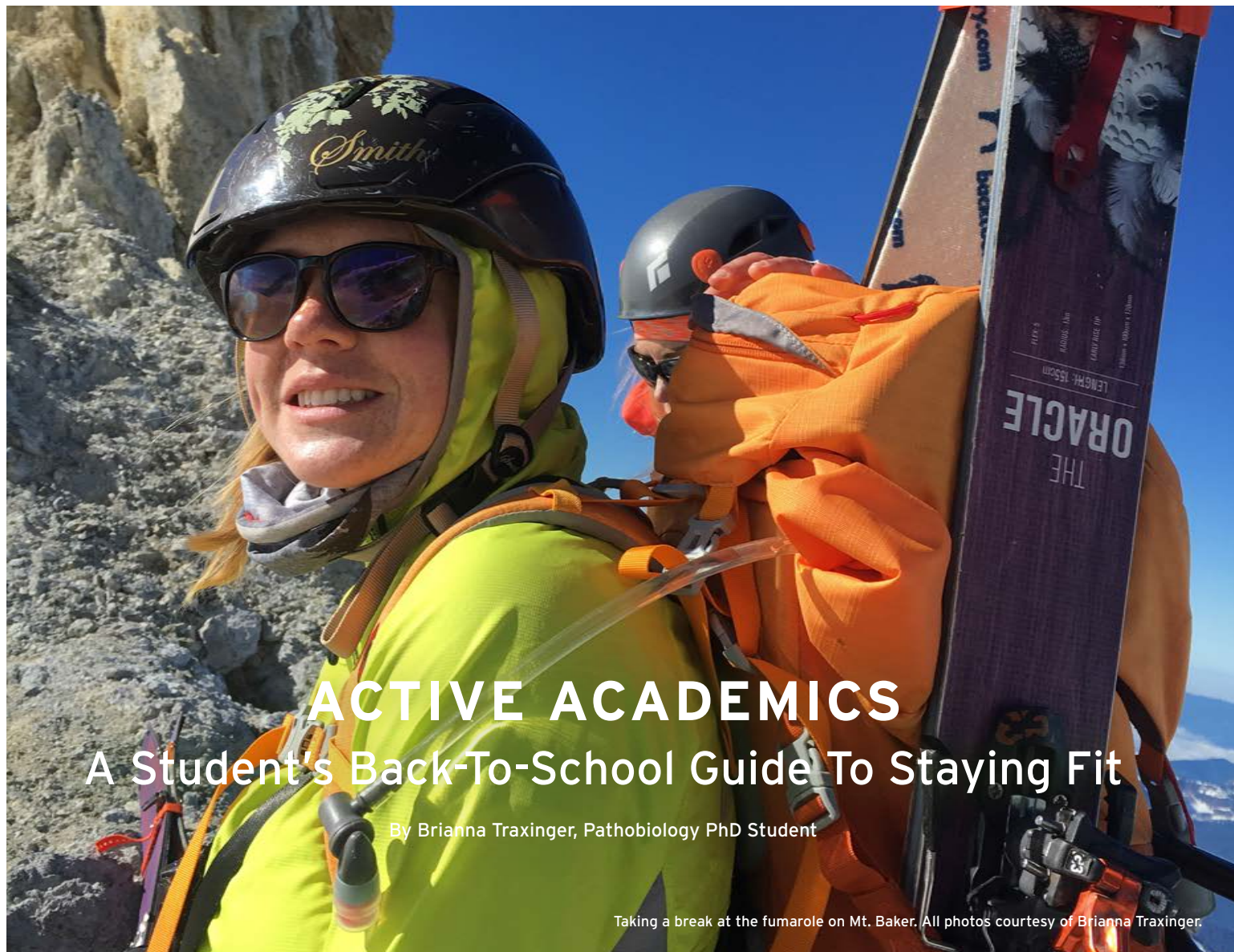
just going to do it because it's fun." One of my favorite Picasso quotes is, "All children are born artists; the problem is to remain an artist as we grow up."

For many adults, it's challenging to reserve self judgement while creating. What are your suggestions for breaking down that barrier?

As an adult, you get taught that you shouldn't make mistakes. In the outdoor world, we have more appreciation for the importance of risk taking. Risk taking doesn't mean jumping off a cliff and hoping for the best. We can prepare to take risks. It's similar with art.

Just give it a shot and know that it's okay to make mistakes and it's okay to be a bit of a fool. You learn and grow through your mistakes. If you don't try it and make mistakes, you're closing yourself off from all the good things that could come as a result. I try to bring that into my practice every day. As soon as I notice myself thinking, "this is the best painting I've ever made," or when I really like where something is going, that's when I have to take a little step back from my attachment. Sometimes I even paint over my favorite part. One of my high school painting teachers taught me that. If you're too attached, you'll try to make everything as good as that one part. You want to give yourself as much of a chance to try new things as possible. Including painting for the first time in years! ▲▲

Nikki's work is inspired by time spent outdoors hiking, climbing, and mountaineering. She finds magic in capturing the light, energy, and movement of a place. She hopes her work inspires pride and connection to our wild places, and in turn encourages action to care for them. To check out her work, or to sign up for a watercolor workshop, visit www.drawntohighplaces.com.



ACTIVE ACADEMICS

A Student's Back-To-School Guide To Staying Fit

By Brianna Traxinger, Pathobiology PhD Student

Taking a break at the fumarole on Mt. Baker. All photos courtesy of Brianna Traxinger.

As a nearly 30-year-old PhD student, I've become a master at balancing academics – and their drain on finances and time – with a life outdoors, a lifestyle that often demands a large amount of temporal and monetary privilege. I've found that with some prioritization and mental reframing, it's always possible to play outdoors, regardless of your budget or schedule. So as we head back to school this fall, I'm sharing what I've learned so that my fellow students (or anyone who is just plain busy) can spend more time outside.

Reframe your fitness as a priority, not an extravagance

When I began graduate school, I was forced to prioritize my life. I decided I would focus energy on four fundamentals: school, relationships, my dog, and fitness in the outdoors. I've found that exercise, particularly in the mountains, keeps me sane, combats anxiety, and increases my studiousness. In giving myself permission to prioritize workouts and the outdoors, I found that trading an hour of study time for a climb or run

resulted in a net gain, not loss. In my productivity hierarchy, that makes me a better student. If the outdoors are important to you, I encourage you to write out your priorities and rank your fitness at the top without feeling guilty!

Embrace a (morning) routine

I'm not sure if I'm naturally a morning person or if many years of 6:30am jazz band in high school forced me to become one, but give me an obscenely early workout and a strong coffee and I'm ready to crush my day. I'm able to better focus on work when I exercise beforehand, and sweating in the morning frees up my evenings for other things. Additionally, following a rigid wakeup schedule holds me accountable to a reasonable bedtime, something that inevitably suffers when I know I don't have to wake up at five. While I love to preach the morning workout gospel and suggest that you try it, I know they aren't accessible for everyone. You can reap the same benefits by reserving a consistent part of the day for your fitness, which helps you treat exercise as non-negotiable instead of an indulgence.

Join a training group or schedule standing workouts

If your looming 50k isn't enough to scare you into training, the fear of disappointing your friends will! The Pacific Northwest is ripe with free and inclusive training groups that meet weekly or daily, often before or just after work. My personal favorite are the Territory Run Co. sunrise runs, monthly runs to the Discovery Park beach timed with sunrise! If large group workouts aren't your vibe, schedule a standing training session with a friend. Maintaining even just one weekly session you can't skip will bolster your training momentum. You can even cut out the headache of coordinating schedules by convincing a few colleagues to join you for workday lunch runs, rides, or walks.

Commute by bike or on foot

Almost everyone has a twice-daily commute, so why not merge it with your workout? A daily bike ride may seem daunting, especially during the rainier months, but commuting by bike (or by running/walking) every day for a few weeks will cement a habit you soon won't be able to forego. I always get off my saddle happier than when I got on, even when it's pouring or I'm lacking motivation. Although I don't rely on commuting to completely maintain my fitness, my rides still contribute extra cardio while whisking me to work without the carbon emissions, gas expenses, or bus fares! If you prefer to run, save yourself the awkwardness of shuffling down the street wearing a giant backpack and bring double lunch and a change of clothes the day prior. Unfortunately, not everyone is in a position to bike to work, but incorporating a little biking into your commute – say to your carpool spot or the train – really adds up. You can also replace a regular trek to the gym or grocery store with a ride and build in a few minutes of daily outside time. You'll feel better, and be fitter, guaranteed.

Prioritize frequent, local trips over “exotic” vacations

Everyone fantasizes about the dream vacation to the Alps or the beach, but in Washington you don't have to travel far for an amazing getaway. As a student on a budget, I recently took my first international, multi-week trip in four years, yet I never feel vacation-deprived because I get out to our local mountains almost every weekend! It's always exciting to save up time and money for an exotic holiday, but I challenge everyone to reframe their idea of a “vacation” and enjoy more frequent, less expensive, and shorter local trips. In the PNW you won't sacrifice quality for quantity: we're fortunate to live amongst some of the world's greatest outdoor treasures, and vacationing locally drastically reduces your carbon footprint. Washington is home to many beautiful urban parks, so your weekend getaway could simply consist of a satisfying trail excursion within city limits!

Become an outdoor advocate

It's now alarmingly clear that if we're making time to play in the outdoors, we must make time to protect the places we love. A great way to stay connected to the outdoors is to

become an outdoor advocate. This may mean volunteering with a local nonprofit or regularly calling and emailing your district representatives to urge them to support environmental initiatives. Don't forget to thank them when they do! Likewise, volunteering with The Mountaineers, Washington Climber's Coalition, Washington Environmental Council, or Washington Trails Association as an advocate or for a stewardship day is a free and low-commitment way to connect with the outdoor community, get into the mountains, and reinforce that our local gems will be here when we have the time to enjoy them.

For those of us in school, parenting, or just working the grind, getting outside can present a serious strain on our finances and schedule, but it doesn't need to. I hope that these tips will show you that you can spend time in nature and stay fit, regardless of your income, career, or work load. From one mountain-loving nerd to the rest, stay in school, get your sleep, and play hard in our beautiful backyard! ▲▲



Cross-country ski-commuting during Snowmageddon 2019.



Lobbying at Washington Environmental Lobby Day 2019.



Breaking trail at Kendall Peak. All photos courtesy of Annette Diggs.

THIRST TO BELONG

By Annette Diggs, Mountaineer, Scientist, and Humanitarian

My thirst to belong outdoors started early. I was just in elementary school and I was being bussed across town from one district to another. I didn't know why at the time, but I did notice that few students looked like me. My new school was awesome. It had everything I could hope for: musical instruments, better playgrounds, rad field tips, and cool teachers. We even had periodic visits from Mr. McFeely from Mr. Roger's Neighborhood. My old school paled in comparison.

Year after year, teachers would begin our first day back in class with the question, "Does anyone want to share their

experiences over the break?" The students at my new school would eagerly wave their hands and launch into fantastic tales of outdoor adventures, stories of epic road trips to national parks like the Red Rocks or Yellowstone. Some of my friends would come back from break with weird tan lines around their eyes or skin peeling from sunburns. I wondered where they came from.

As they talked, I remember feeling an overwhelming sense of awe and wonderment. Speechless in my seat, these stories permeated my mind and transported me to faraway places that I had never heard of such as Glacier National Park. My imagination

was on fire, and I wanted to know more. But what I really wanted to know was, how were these adventures attainable for them and not for others? Specifically, others like me?

Looking for my place

I frequently visited local libraries, spending hours looking at outdoor magazines. I can still picture those vivid images of people climbing and skiing on mountain faces, hiking in faraway places, landing helicopters on mountain tops, paragliding above the clouds, and hanging off rock from their fingertips. It was amazing. I couldn't get enough.

But the more I looked at these magazines and heard my classmates' stories, the more I started to think of the outdoors as exclusive. Even as young kid, I noticed a common thread that bonded each adventurer and storyteller: their whiteness. It seemed to be a prerequisite to access these faraway places, and that idea was reinforced by virtually every form of media I encountered. No matter how hard I looked, I never found people I could authentically identify with.

I started to think I didn't belong in the outdoors. I had no one to look up to. No one in my family did such things. Activities like hiking, skiing, and mountaineering seemed far out of reach - I knew I came from a disadvantaged background. I was a young black girl and I didn't see any black people or very many women represented in the outdoors, much less someone who was both. I was sad and despondent as a kid because I felt like the world was saying "No" to the one thing I desired most. The lack of representation reinforced that I didn't belong.

Fortunately, I wasn't content with this reality. I did not accept the picture that was presented to me - I knew that I belonged outdoors, not stuck within the confines of the house wearing a dress. I remember my mom telling me that I could be anything, and I believed her. Growing up, I went on adventures with my

brother where we would climb trees, wade in creeks, look for cicada shells, and hunt for lightning bugs. Through these outings I rejected what the world was telling me and found my own sense of belonging in the outdoors. I refused to let someone else define me, but as a kid I had no idea what I was up against. I did not know that in the future I would have to climb over mountains of systemic racism and overcome cultural norms to gain the opportunity to take space that was mine.

Embodying change

Eventually, these childhood dreams of adventuring were suspended, replaced with the competing priorities of adulthood. I supported myself through college, becoming the second college graduate and first scientist in my family, and established a livelihood in a new world, one of relative flatness in Memphis, TN. My weekends in Memphis frequently involved frolicking to neighborhood cookouts, eating melt-in-your-mouth barbecue, and dancing the night away at Paula and Raiford's. In the peak of summer, you could always find me enjoying indoor amenities while seeking refuge from the suffocating heat and humidity of the South. I often reminisced about my outdoor adventures as a kid, but I rarely thought about getting out as an adult - the outdoors had become alien to me. Experiencing racism while adventuring in the South caused me to develop anxieties, and I avoided outdoor recreation as a way to protect myself from intolerance.

Change happened when I was given an opportunity to explore a new career in Seattle as a regulatory microbiologist. When I arrived six years ago, I had the false impression that all Seattle had to offer was the Space Needle and Seahawks. It was not until my second year that a coworker convinced me otherwise by taking me on a hike near Mt. Rainier. The experience completely shifted my view of the area and resurrected dreams of belonging in the outdoors. Our tick-list grew, and



The author on the summit of Mt. Adams. If you look closely you can see the ziplock baggies on her feet.



Elementary school.

"Never be limited by other people's limited imaginations."

- Dr. Mae Jemison, first African-American female astronaut





The author posing with Anita Musevenzo of South Africa, the only other black woman on the mountain that day, and the second black woman Annette has met on a mountain since she started climbing. Annette cherishes these rare and special moments and always takes time to capture them.



Celebrating after crossing one of five glacial rivers in Iceland's wilderness.



Waiting for team members with Guide Yahoo before exiting the final gate of Kilimanjaro, Mweka. Photo by Ross Conklin.

in short order we enjoyed the scenery around Mowich Lake, Eagle's Nest, Spray Falls, and many other trails.

My mind was completely blown by the beauty of our trips. A cascade of joyfulness and excitement erupted from within, and I chose to follow it. I joined Seattle Outdoor Adventurers (SOA), an online meet-up group that brings people together to celebrate nature through exploration of the Pacific Northwest. I found my place of belonging with SOA, and for the first time in 30+ years I felt welcomed into the outdoors. My anxieties and fears around hiking while black were diminishing. I felt safe. I could finally let go and focus on my dreams of becoming an adventurer.

Awakening the intrepid spirit

My journey as a mountaineer started with a SOA climb of Mt. St. Helens. I prepared for the climb by taking a free self-arrest course from SOA and hiking exactly three trails: Thrope Mountain, Mt. Si, and Mailbox Peak. I did zero cardio. It was not enough training, but I was new to the game and felt enthusiastic, confident, and determined. I honestly believed that if I could make it to the top of Mt. Si and Mailbox Peak, even if only once, I was ready. If I had known the challenges in store for me, I would have trained harder.

Our team chose to do the Worm Flows route, which involves 5,699 feet of elevation gain over six miles to reach the summit at 8,364 feet. At 5am on May 9, 2015 - summit day - we had just passed beyond Chocolate Falls when the dim glow of the morning light arrived. I looked up to see the mountain reveal herself. My eyes fell upon what seemed to be a never-ending spread of exposed steep bouldering lava fields lined with coarse ash and loose pumice stones. Although it was a majestic sight to see, I was struck by the sheer enormity.

I felt both excited and terrified. We may have made it to

the tree line, but so many more steps remained, rolled out in front of me as a punishing carpet of steep boulders and relentless snow fields.

As we trudged along, I could feel my brown skin burning in the sun and my lips cracking from exposure. I took a seat along a ridge to strip down to my base layers to keep from overheating. I was beat, and could feel self-doubt setting in. "What I am doing?" I thought. "What if I fail? What if I don't have what it takes to make it through this?"

My pace slowed, gradually separating me from the majority of my team, until I was organically matched with a team member who was enduring the same struggle. We found ourselves taking break after break to catch our breath. We swapped leads back and forth, each taking a turn in front as we found our way up the mountain.

I climbed, and with each planted step and hand reach, I inched closer to the top. Stopping to adjust my gear, I looked up to realize that I had made it through the trenches of the boulder field only to be confronted by a steep, unsympathetic snow field. My confidence crumbled. I was so fatigued. I knew it was time to reach inside myself for the will to succeed. I needed to make this summit in honor of my mom, who was hiking in the environs below.

Exhausted and with an aching back, I leaned on my trekking poles and mentally negotiated the number of steps I could take in each push. The terrain went on forever, tormenting me with every seemingly insignificant foot forward. I dug deep, committing to the struggle. Focused on my own little world of step-breath, step-breath, I was surprised to look up and see faces peering down on me. They erupted into cheers, and with a few more steps I made it to the summit! I won the unmerciful mental and physical battle inside myself.

Standing on the summit, I felt the highest levels of happiness and serenity in my life. I could feel an intense connection with my body and consciousness. My mind was free of all internal and societal noise. An inner transformation had erupted and was surging through me. I stood soaking in the most beautiful landscape I have ever seen and cried at the realization that, against all odds, I was becoming the manifestation of my dreams.

Leaning in

The struggle to the summit of Mt. St. Helens was monumental for me. This achievement shattered the ceiling on how I perceived my own physical ability and mental strength. This summit unveiled what my curvy body, atypical for a mountaineer, could do with very little training. It inspired me to see what else my body could do (this time, with training), and, because imposter syndrome is pervasive, I needed to confirm to myself and prove to my team that this summit wasn't a one-time fluke. I also wanted to pave the way for others who look like me.

Shortly after my initial summit, I joined The Mountaineers. I took a leadership course to learn more about trip planning and group dynamics. During that course I got to know other Mountaineers members, and my outdoor community expanded. I bought Freedom of the Hills and taught myself the basics. Fellow Mountaineers were incredibly supportive in helping me refine mountaineering techniques and evaluate risk. They became another part of my outdoor family, offering mentorship and inspiration for my journey. My belonging in the outdoors grew.

The following year, after investing nearly a thousand dollars in outdoor gear and equipment, my friend and I decided to tackle Mt. Adams, the second tallest peak in Washington. As we prepared for our summit over Labor Day weekend, we realized that neither one of us could afford the \$400-\$600 price tag for mountaineering boots. After deep trip assessment we decided to use what we had: trail runners. We waterproofed them with Ziploc bags and secured them with microspikes while going over snow fields. That's how we reached the summit, bumping Beyoncé the entire way. That day was my friend's first mountain summit, my second, and the beginning of a yearly Mt. Adams climbing tradition between close friends. It was truly a magical experience.

Changing the picture

After Mt. Adams I began to understand how strong I was. I became bolder, braver, and more courageous. I summited Mt. Rainier. I invested hundreds of dollars to try skiing and fell in love with it, so I worked hard to become a ski instructor at Stevens Pass, to provide representation for youth, and I discovered that representation works both ways. I have students who look at me with awe and inspiration, while some students can't believe they have a black ski instructor. I had one student that kept saying in amazement, "You're black, you're black!" His blue eyes were as big as silver dollars. I laughed and said, "Yes, I am black." I knew he was trying to process an image he had never seen.

I grew as an adventurer and explorer by going outside my comfort zone on treks through Patagonia and the Andes

Mountains. While in Chile, I missed my connection back to the states and scored extra time in Pucón. I used that time to summit Villarrica Volcano - Chile's most active volcano. Wanting to see what else I was capable of, I went on a solo trip through Iceland's wilderness and found it liberating. My curiosity transported me to Africa, where I summited Kilimanjaro but left brokenhearted by the porters' working conditions. Inspired to make a change, my friends and I are now working to provide new boots for 32 porters.

Today, my passion for the outdoors runs deeper than ever. I have a tick-list and the desire to achieve things I once thought impossible. I've proven myself on countless trails and summited Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Adams multiple times, with Mt. St. Helens now an annual Mother's Day tradition to honor my mom. My family and friends are astonished by what I have accomplished, and in turn they've been inspired to explore the outdoors, take solo trips abroad, and try new sports like skiing, snowboarding, and mountaineering. Words can't explain how much this means to me.

I still face adversity, but I don't let it stop me from re-defining the outdoors for myself and others like me. I use my presence as an opportunity to confront and educate others on their implicit or unconscious bias. I admit, I get frustrated when I hear the African American plight being minimized to a stereotype. But I know that the root cause is either historical amnesia, racism, supremacy, or perhaps a combination of all three. Overcoming the mindset of others is my Everest.

Not seeing a lot of minorities in the outdoors is a product of our history. My great grandmother was "the help", her mom a sharecropper, and her grandmother was born a slave. This family history is filled with traumatic experiences in an oppressive outdoors. It's an ugly reality and it humbles me. I want to reclaim the greater outdoors on my own terms and heal people of the past and present while encouraging others like me to do the same.

True adventure is discovering who you are. I feel that knowing what I have achieved with my body gives me the ability to see a person's potential before they can, and I have grown obsessed with unlocking the intrepid spirit in others. I am not the most athletic person, and I think that seeing someone like me being active outdoors lets others know they don't have to fit a mold or archetype to achieve a goal. I take joy in giving advice about gear and trip planning as it helps me realize and appreciate how much I've learned and how far I've come.

I will keep pushing for change and awareness in outdoor recreation. I understand the importance of safe spaces and have created my own outdoors where marginalized people can thrive and not have their uniqueness or any mistakes be attributed to their skin color, age, gender, beliefs, or sexuality. This space is nothing short of extraordinary, and I'm grateful I can be an example to others.

As I continue to walk through challenging spaces, as the only black woman, I am proud. Standing behind me is the strength of my ancestors and the support of my community.

I belong. ▲▲

APPRECIATE EVERY MINUTE

By Trevor Dickie, Content Associate



Tom on the summit of Foss Peak. Photo by Riley Shiery

Known as the “widow maker” heart attack, a blockage in the left anterior descending artery (LAD) is almost always fatal. Symptoms include shortness of breath, left shoulder and arm pain, nausea, cold sweats, and the debilitating sensation of an elephant sitting on your chest. Had these signs appeared a few hours earlier while Tom Eckhout was skiing on Mount Rainier, the outcome might have been very different.

Thankfully, Tom was at home resting on the couch when his shoulder and arm pain, which had been present all day, began to progress. He checked his blood pressure and it was elevated. “I returned to the living room and tried to get comfortable. As the chest pain increased, I made my wife aware of my concerns, and she came in to take a look. By now I had the infamous elephant on my chest and she called 911.” Soon, Tom was hooked up to an EKG and rushed to the hospital where he underwent emergency surgery to put a stent in his LAD artery.

“Had I collapsed on Mount Rainier, I might not be talking to you today.”

Choosing family

Tom grew up in Michigan, where he fell in love with outdoor adventure and recreation. “As soon as I was old enough to start making my own decisions, I was out sleeping under the stars next to the campfire.” He studied electronics at the Ohio Institute of Technology and, after working for a few years in the area, Tom was given the choice between a job in Seattle or San Francisco. “I opted for Seattle just because I didn’t know anything about it.”

Tom joined The Mountaineers the year after he arrived, 1981. He promptly took our Winter Travel, Basic Scrambling, and Basic Climbing courses, and in short order became a trip leader. Today Tom’s volunteer profile with The Mountaineers reads like the lines of a phone book, consistent and seemingly



Tom, Linelle, and Jarrod. Photo courtesy of the Eckhout Family.

endless. His contributions to the Olympia Branch and the organization as a whole are innumerable, noted by his being awarded the Super Volunteer and Key Leader badges every year since their creation. Tom also received the coveted Olympia Branch Service Award in 2017, given to one individual a year for going above and beyond the call of duty.

In truth, Tom is a self-proclaimed serial volunteer, always donating his time to one organization or another. Outdoors for All, Boy Scouts of America, and The Mountaineers are just a few of the organizations he's worked with. He's been offering his time his entire life, starting with filling sandbags to help with rising water levels at Lake St. Clair in Michigan when he was young, and raising money in high school for those with muscular dystrophy. As a father he worked with the Boy Scouts during his son's time with their troop. Volunteerism is in his blood, so much so that his wife Linelle nicknamed him her "professional volunteer."

When Tom and Linelle welcomed a son, Jarrod, in 1985, Tom took a step back from the mountains. "At that time I enjoyed the climbing and I really was exhilarated by it. But when I would get home and reflect, I started realizing that I was kind of hanging out there," he said. "I have a family to feed. That's when I backed off of technical climbing and became a scrambler."

As a young family of three, the Eckhouts would head into the outdoors with their hard-top camper, and together they spent the next few years exploring the Cascades and eastern Washington. "During Jarrod's early years, we did a lot of car camping. My wife wasn't really into the backcountry stuff, so I bought the hard-top camper. I started backpacking with Jarrod when he was six or seven years old."

Even when Tom largely stepped away from his responsibilities leading trips and courses within The Mountaineers, he came back to teach Mountaineering Oriented First Aid (MOFA) every



Darren Boyd, Amy Wilson, and Tom on their way to the summit of Foss Peak. Photo by Riley Shiery.

year, one of his favorite programs.

The Eckhout family moved to Olympia in 2006, partially as a result of the dot-com bubble burst, which forced Tom into a different line of work. He pursued carpentry as a handyman, skills he had always enjoyed. Around the same time, Tom also returned to The Mountaineers, where he found the Olympia Branch's size and nature suited him. Today he calls the Olympia Mountaineers family.

Facing mortality

Lessons of acceptance seem to follow when you face your own mortality, and Tom, unfortunately, has had to learn to accept more than his fair share of hardships. In 2001 he was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia, a form of leukemia that often isn't treated until it starts to cause problems for the patient. This may take years, or even decades. It's monitored through markers of certain enzymes in the blood. If those markers present positive, then everything is alright, like in Tom's situation. The caveat is that at any time, those markers can morph into something negative.

When he was first diagnosed, Tom struggled with the idea of the disease's chronic nature. "I've been told I have this disease, but with most cancers you can go in and cut it out. When you've got leukemia, and it's a chronic type of leukemia, it's coming from your bone marrow. There's nothing they can do to stop it. You just watch and monitor. There is no way to get past it."

One concept that helped him cope with the ambiguous diagnosis was an idea he learned in his early days at The Mountaineers: PMA. It stands for Positive Mental Attitude, and it's something he learned on scrambling trips and kept as his own mantra. To regain his PMA after the leukemia diagnosis, Tom leaned on the advice of one of his doctors, who helped put it in perspective: "She said, 'you know Tom, every one of us is a ticking time bomb. The only difference between you and the



Tom Eckhout, Olympia Service Award Winner, Super Volunteer, and Key Leader. Photo by Riley Shiery.

next guy is that you know your fuse has been lit.' It was simple wisdom, but it helped me get my head around it."

Tom eventually found the Leukemia Lymphoma Society, a group working to fund more research into those diseases, and started volunteering with their Hike for Discovery program. He worked on weekend hikes to raise money for research, with a secondary goal of raising money for trips to scenic areas for the participants. The community and the purpose of the program helped Tom come to terms with the disease. He volunteered as a hiker his first year, but spent the next couple years coaching participants.

Throughout this time, Tom and his son Jarrod continued to go on trips together, but as Jarrod grew into his teenage years he became a proficient sport climber separate from dear old dad. "By then, he was doing things with his friends instead of wanting to do stuff with me, so we didn't get back into mountaineering [together]", Tom said. "We'd go on the occasional hike or backpack though."

In 2007, Jarrod passed away at the age of 22. It brought a startling halt to Tom and Linelle's lives. "I was lost when that happened," said Tom, the weakness in his voice revealing the depth of the pain that comes with losing a child. "We only had one child and he was gone. When he passed, we were looking for our own meaning of life again."

Grief and healing

Everyone grieves differently, and Tom went back to doing what was comfortable: volunteering his time. After Jarrod's passing, Tom dove back into volunteering with The Mountaineers, seeking an outlet for his grief and a road to recovery. "It was a way for me to focus. It became a very big part of my grieving process and helping me through it." He started working with most of the Olympia branch committees, including scrambling, Nordic & backcountry skiing, navigation, first aid, winter travel, snowshoeing, and climbing.

"I think it saved me," he said in earnest, with a tear in his eye.

Three seasons ago, Tom had a breakthrough. "I like to talk. So when I was leading students out on a scramble or on a field trip, I often brought up what I called 'Jarrod stories.' I had a group of students and I'm leading them, many of them on the very first mountain peak they've ever achieved, as far as a climb. And I was telling a Jarrod story as we were approaching the summit. Most of these stories are anecdotal and they're comical. And this particular one was emotional. I'm telling the story and I'm tearing up, crying as we get to the summit. I look around and almost everybody is crying with me. It wound up being good and everybody had a good time, but after that trip, I started thinking about it and I felt a little guilty for utilizing them as my crutch."

Stepping back, Tom realized that he could be impacting the students on their trips. Concerned about his effect on them, he interviewed a few of his participants and came to understand that maybe he didn't need to share so much. "It helped me realize that I am moving through this grieving process and I am progressing. The fact that I can think about it from a different



Linelle and Tom near Narada Falls in Mount Rainier National Park. Photo courtesy of the Eckhout Family.

perspective rather than just my own... I thought that was important."

A resilient spirit

Eleven years after his son's passing, Tom faced mortality again on November 24, 2018, this time his own. The heart attack shook loose thoughts from his cancer diagnosis and from his son's passing.

"It has really made me again appreciate everything, I mean, you have a near death experience and it changes your thinking a bit. In my case I've been dealing with my own mortality for quite a while."

Luckily, the blockage wasn't severe and recovery was remarkably light. "Two days after the procedure there was no physical evidence that I'd had a heart attack," he said. Less than three weeks later, Tom was scuba diving in Mexico (though not too deep, per the doctor's orders).

Tom said he's learned to appreciate the fragility of life in more ways than one, and that having the understanding of what we have to lose and how that makes you extra appreciative for what you have now, has become a big part of who he is.

Tom's positive outlook is as remarkable as the amount of time he's donated throughout his life. Any one of these three life-defining experiences with death would be enough to rattle someone's worldview and leave them worse for it. Tom's continued optimism is inspiring, and his willingness to help others is no different. "All of my life experiences have kind of added up into understanding that life is very fragile. You really have to appreciate every minute that you've got and just go for it." ▲▲



SILENCING THE NOISE

Climbing Through an Anxiety Disorder

By Molly Mitchell, Professional Rock Climber & Coach

You're climbing on a busy day at the crag, surrounded by incessant chatter and constant commotion. Sometimes you find this noise pleasantly engaging, but today you just want to tell everyone to be still - be quiet. The voices follow as you start your climb, continuing to echo in your brain even as you climb higher. They seem to be demanding your attention, and suddenly it feels like your mind is fighting between listening to the voices and trying to block them out. But the problem is that both options leave you unable to focus on the present moment. The "what-ifs" start to seep into your head, and before you know it, you fall.

I compare these voices to my thoughts, and they don't just harass me at the crag. They occur regularly, much of the time in the quiet of my own home. I get hooked on destructive thoughts and become focused; obsessed. I feel like I'm battling a negative feedback loop I cannot control.

Sometimes my mind feels overbearing. I'm a 26-year-old professional rock climber and I am living with an anxiety disorder.

Struggling in silence

Anxiety is something I've struggled with for many years. But I did not always recognize that I had anxiety. When I was 20, I developed a viral thyroid disease called thyroiditis. This general term refers to inflammation of the thyroid gland and it can present in a variety of ways. It made me feel awful most of the time. I aspired to compete in climbing competitions, and had dreams of becoming a professional climber, but physically I wasn't able to keep up. I remember several training sessions with my coach where I broke down crying because things that had previously come easily suddenly felt incredibly difficult. It was a dark time in my life.

The thyroiditis lasted close to a year, and an unexpected long-term impact was a new mindset that overanalyzed every detail about how I was feeling, all the time. My mind fixated on signs about whether I was having a good or bad day. If I fell on a warm up, or felt tired on a climb I should be able to do, I would automatically consider it a “bad day” and assume my disease was getting worse. I would obsess over this to no end.

Even though the disease was a definite negative factor in my everyday life, as I reflect back now I see that this mindset created by it was potentially more damaging. It trapped me in a constant negative feedback loop, and the side effects of the disease reinforced this pattern. Only now do I realize that many aspects of my life were controlled by my thoughts even before the disease. The what-ifs, the obsessing, the worrying, the hair pulling - I've had these patterns since my early teens. My mind sabotaged my efforts by attaching itself to thoughts of failure. My doctor finally recommended I see a psychiatrist.

Learning control

My psychiatrist introduced me to a form of therapy called “Acceptance and Commitment Therapy,” or ACT. In this, I learned how to defuse thoughts and make room for uncomfortable feelings. The idea is that, whether thoughts are true or false, you can detach from them. ACT gave me the space to process that my mind seems to want to do its own thing, but I can directly control my behavior. And even when you don't like a feeling, you can still bear it. It's not easy, and I still get hooked on thoughts and let the feelings overwhelm me, but I'm learning.

About the same time that I began practicing ACT in 2015, I had the opportunity to learn how to trad climb. Trad climbing involves placing cams and nuts into cracks as you climb so that if you fall, they will catch you. When I first started climbing in 2009, I never thought I would get into trad. I had always loved sport climbing, where you clip into bolts in the rock as you go up, but trad had not really appealed to me. Your safety is more in your own hands with trad climbing because you have to find the right piece of gear to fit, or risk it pulling out. I liked that sport climbing lacked this element, and was more about the physicality of climbing. However, something about trying something new, without having expectations, really appealed to me during this time of my life.

To my surprise, I fell in love with the mental aspects of trad climbing. Commitment is a part of every kind of climbing, but it's heightened for me with trad. You place your own gear, and whether it's a good placement or not, you have to trust it in order to succeed. Put simply, you have to place a piece and move on. You must focus on the present moment, even if you are far above your last piece or feeling scared. There's no room for other things going on in your mind.

To me, trad climbing represented a very extreme version of what I was learning when it came to dealing with my anxiety. Each time I experienced moments on the wall where I was unsure of a placement or far from my last piece, I would have so many thoughts racing through my mind, and it felt really scary. Yet being able to break through that and still control

what was going on right in front of me was like a shot of relief from my anxiety. It was uncomfortable. It was overwhelming. But most of all it was liberating.

I guess you could say it was like having a “do or die” mentality. I was never more present than in these moments. Never before in my life had I been able to turn off my mind, but this allowed me to actually focus. Learning how to tap into that mindset of control carried into other aspects of my climbing as well. I moved to Las Vegas in 2016 and started sport climbing more, trying to apply the same level of commitment and presence as I did on my trad routes, trying harder and harder sport climbs. I found difficult sport climbing less mentally demanding and scary than the trad climbing I was doing previously, but I still doubted my ability to control negative thoughts on the wall. I wanted to break through.

Practicing grace

A huge part of my anxiety is that I obsess. I have always viewed this as a negative thing in the past. Most of the time it is. But, I have learned that sometimes these obsessive tendencies can be channeled. I started focusing my obsessive thoughts on training and coaching, creating a positive feedback loop. Coaching inspired me to train harder. The more confident I felt about my training, the more confident I felt in coaching, climbing, and all other aspects of my life. These positive outcomes continued to feed each other, creating more and more positivity.

Over time I noticed that I was happiest in my life when I woke up at the break of dawn to train, went outside climbing, coached team practice in the evening, and then finished with more late night training. Close to a year after I moved to Vegas, I climbed my first 5.14 sport route - a huge breakthrough for me. I never thought I would be able to climb 5.14. I believe that the combination of obsessive training, as well as what I had learned about being present from trad climbing and my therapy, allowed me to tap into fight mode on the wall.

In 2018, I moved back to Boulder. I have an incredibly busy schedule here - coaching, training, climbing, events, etc. I split my focus between sport and trad climbing, and I currently am working on the next route I want to complete. I now know that the busier I keep, the less my mind has room to wander. Even though I sometimes overdo it, it's still better than days where I laid in bed agonizing over the same thoughts in a spiral.

Anxiety is something that you don't ever really fully overcome. I still have bad days where I can't seem to get out of my head. I have days where I lack the confidence to feel like I can make it through, and I am still constantly working on myself. But I also can say that I am proud of the progress I have made. I am proud of my breakthroughs. I feel as though climbing has become a tool. It encourages me to never give up and always keep fighting. It reminds me that I cannot engage with all my thoughts, nor can I fight them. It shows me that success comes with presence, patience, and acting upon what you value. Climbing takes my focus away from all the noise in my head. Climbing does not allow for the “what-ifs.” It only knows what is. ▲▲



LIGHTLY ON THE LAND

The Magic Behind A Well-Built Trail

By Robert Birkby, Mountaineers Books author and stewardship expert

Backpacking the Pacific Crest Trail in the North Cascades. Photo by Tim Nair.

Those of us who build and maintain trails don't want you to know what we've done. We're eager for you to hear birds, see mountains and forests, feel the wind in your face, and safely reach your destination. We want you to drink in the backcountry so completely that you barely notice the tread rolling beneath your boots.

My colleagues and I began writing a book 25 years ago that explores the secrets behind this Zen-like concept. Published by Mountaineers Books in 1996, *Lightly on the Land: The SCA Trail Building and Maintenance Manual* reveals the technical magic of the trail crew's craft. Why does a pathway go where it goes? How can you move boulders through the woods and fit them into staircases and walls? What's involved in clearing trails of fallen trees in wilderness areas where power tools are banned? Flip through the book's 308 pages and you'll never hike again without being aware of what's underfoot.

Lightly on the Land has long helped conservation crews master skills they need to care for our public lands. Louie Coglas, a 32-year Mountaineers member and stewardship leader, gives the book to students enrolled in his annual trail maintenance class, saying, "The writing and drawings are an inspiration for those

learning the craft."

As an educational tool, the book supports The Mountaineers mission to help people explore, conserve, learn about, and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond. That's especially true when "beyond" includes Siberia, Moldova, and the Russian Far East.

Education of a trail dog

My own journey as a conservationist began with college summers in northern New Mexico leading backcountry work crews at Philmont Scout Ranch, a national high adventure base of the Boy Scouts of America. It was a great way to learn the basics of trail construction and maintenance, and to develop an appreciation for what goes into the design and care of sustainable pathways.



Capturing the magic of trail work. Illustration by SCA crew leader Peter Lucchetti.

A few years later I solo-hiked the Appalachian Trail and then was drawn to the Northwest in search of bigger mountains, bigger water, and people eager to explore both. I found them all, and was soon leading month-long Student Conservation Association (SCA) crews of high school-aged volunteers improving trails in national parks and forests.

The SCA had its start in 1957 in Olympic and Grand Teton National Parks. By the time I found them in the early 1980s, crews were serving in many other places as well, but their technical skills were uneven at best.

“ Flip through the book’s 308 pages and you’ll never hike again without being aware of what’s underfoot.”

A group of us launched the Wilderness Work Skills Program to better train SCA leaders and to share ideas with other organizations and land management agencies. The initial project in 1985 was the rehabilitation of the Tower Falls Trail in Yellowstone National Park. Participants rotated through hands-on stations focusing on rock work, timber construction, tread and drainage, revegetation, and survey and design. In all, we did six one-week trainings.

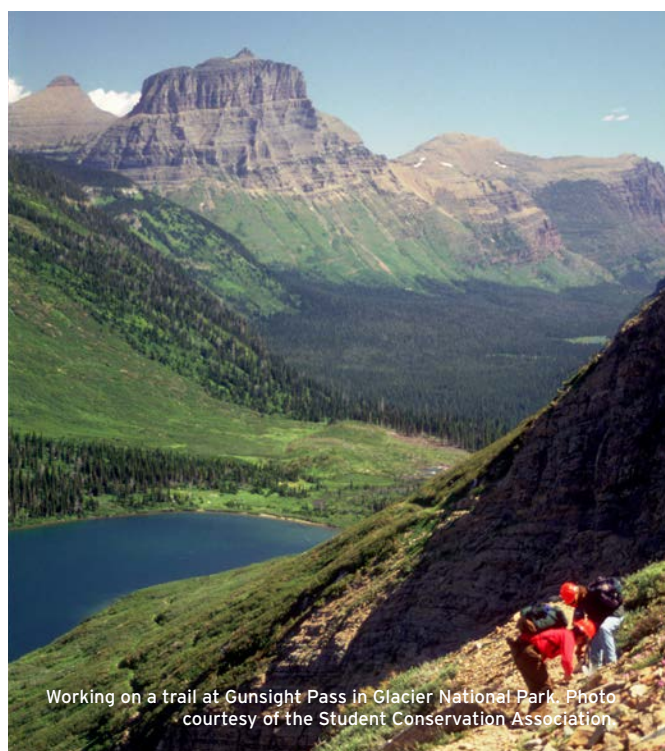
Encouraged by that Yellowstone success, we took the show on the road. Our rolling headquarters was named Beluga, an old delivery truck painted white and outfitted with the stove from a Mexican restaurant to serve as a field kitchen. Our 1962 Ford Econoline van full of tools had so much automotive putty holding it together it became known as Bondo.

We put on programs from coast to coast and soon discovered there were plenty of trails experts out there who knew a lot more about managing pathways in their regions than we did. Our role quickly changed from being instructors to that of facilitators as we encouraged everyone attending Work Skills courses to share their expertise.

“ Our 1962 Ford Econoline van full of tools had so much automotive putty holding it together it became known as Bondo.”

And share they did. Sierra trail crews taught us how to shape granite into nearly seamless staircases and retaining walls. Pacific Northwest crews with crosscuts and chisels engaged us in crafting remarkable bridges from cedar and fir. Vegetation specialists in the Southwest introduced us to the restoration of damaged arid regions. Up and down the Appalachians we witnessed solutions that had been worked out by crews pounding away at trail problems for more than a century.

We also discovered that, like ourselves, most people engaged in backcountry stewardship had honed their skills by working alongside seasoned veterans. It was a tradition that could be traced to the 1930s and the Civilian Conservation Corps of the Great Depression, when more than three million young men, each working for a dollar a day, had constructed the infrastructure of many state and national parks and forests. Much of what they built is intact today, and much of the craftsmanship they used is still considered state-of-the-art.



Working on a trail at Gunsight Pass in Glacier National Park. Photo courtesy of the Student Conservation Association

“ In teaching us how to survey trail locations, he stressed that a trail should hug the contours of the land so lightly that it would all but disappear from a hiker’s awareness.”

Spreading the word

As our Work Skills travels continued into the 1990s, we realized we were accumulating a tremendous body of knowledge that was not written down in a format available to the general public. Manuals did exist, but most were regionally focused or laden with the technical jargon of agencies. We thought we could put together a book presenting a standard approach to trail work and site restoration that could be applied anywhere. The book would also celebrate what was special about local approaches to backcountry challenges.

Encouraged by Jay Satz, SCA’s then vice president for program, we pulled together all we had learned into a draft of *Lightly on the Land*. The title came from my Philmont trails mentor Rod Replogle of the US Forest Service. While teaching us how to survey route locations, he stressed that a trail should hug the contours of the landscape so lightly that it would all but disappear from a hiker’s awareness.

We distributed copies to crew leaders for a season of field use and asked for their input. Forest Service crosscut saw expert David Michaels’ feedback was typical of many of the drafts we received. The white spaces in the margins of every page were crammed with his tight, penciled observations, adding richness and detail to the skills we described.

We also circulated the manuscript in search of a publisher and heard from Greg Ball, then a member of The Mountaineers publications committee and founder and director of the volunteer trail maintenance program for the Washington Trails Association. “I was in bed reading about stump removal, and started to laugh out loud,” he told us. He felt that any book that could amuse him with that subject so late at night deserved to be in print.

Even with Greg’s support, Mountaineers Books was concerned the volume wouldn’t sell. Eventually the publications committee decided the content was so well aligned with the organization’s beliefs that The Mountaineers took a leap of faith with *Lightly on the Land*, and it rolled off the press. That was two decades and more than 18,000 copies ago. The book is in its second edition and moving toward a third.

“The tribulations of stump removal will try your patience as do few other tasks in trail work. When you match your intelligence to that of a stump, though, chances are better than even that you will be at a slight advantage.”

From Lightly on the Land



Cutting a flat surface onto a log for bridge construction. Illustration by SCA crew leader Peter Lucchetti.

Going global

Who has been buying all those copies? For starters, there are hikers who want to know what goes into a well-constructed set of backcountry stairs, a rock retaining wall built without mortar, or switchbacks that have been around for years without suffering from erosion.

Secondly, the budgets of most forest and park agencies continue to shrink, reducing the numbers of paid trail maintenance crews. Land managers have increasingly turned to volunteers to get work done, providing them with *Lightly on the Land* for essential insights into ways to complete projects.

Many organizations have added the book to their libraries, too. EarthCorps, Washington Trails Association, Northwest Youth Corps, the Pacific Crest Trail Conference, and others consider it a textbook for what they do. At Philmont Scout Ranch, the conservation department has grown to more than a hundred well-trained seasonal staff, many carrying *Lightly on the Land* in their backpacks.

The reach of the book has also become global. Veteran instructors from the old SCA Work Skills Program have been helping develop the abilities of the Great Baikal Trail Association (GBTA) and leaving copies of *Lightly on the Land* as guidebooks.

GBTA invites international volunteers to join crews working on public lands surrounding Siberia’s Lake Baikal. Set in a spectacular mountain watershed, the lake is a mile deep, 400 miles long, and holds twenty percent of the world’s fresh water. During Soviet times few people were allowed into Baikal’s five national parks and reserves, so trail networks weren’t needed.

Now Russian land managers are eager to meet the demands



Hikers on Cascade Pass. Photo by Tim Nair.

of local hikers and attract foreign eco-tourists, and for that they need trails. The agencies have found GBTA's crews to be indispensable. Traditionally, in this part of the world the word "volunteer" meant "what the government tells you to do on weekends," but it's now worn as a badge of honor by GBTA leaders and crew members alike.

The stewardship model created by GBTA is spreading to parks in the Russian Far East and other parts of the country, creating a new generation of conservation leaders who realize that hands-on efforts can make a real difference. With the blessing of Mountaineers Books, our Siberian friends are preparing a Russian translation of *Lightly on the Land*.

Last autumn I traveled with several US Forest Service trails experts to the former Soviet republics of Georgia and Moldova to evaluate trail networks and provide training for agency leaders and members of nonprofit trails organizations. Helen Cherullo, publisher of Mountaineers Books, sent a dozen copies of *Lightly on the Land* with us. The books proved to be pure gold in supporting our teachings. We carefully selected who would receive each copy so that the volumes could be loaned out to people with an immediate need and then passed on to the next leaders.

Among those we met in Georgia were members of the Trans Caucasus Trail, a non-profit Georgian group hosting volunteer crews to develop a hiking trail from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea through the Caucasus Mountains. Paul Stevens, TCT's founder, told us they had learned most of what they

know about trail work from a dog-eared copy of *Lightly on the Land* he had found on a trip to America.

Perhaps that is the greatest compliment we and Mountaineers Books can receive - that *Lightly on the Land* is being used so much that the books' covers have become tattered and the pages worn as the knowledge of backcountry work skills continues to be shared.

Grab a copy of *Lightly on the Land* and see for yourself. It will forever change how you look at the trails you travel. It might also encourage you to join a volunteer trail crew, roll up your sleeves, and have a great time mastering a few work skills as you give back to the backcountry that has given so much joy to you.

To better appreciate a well-made hiking path, visit mountaineers.org/trail-architecture, where you'll find Robert's introductory guide on the subject. You can obtain your copy of *Lightly on the Land* at the Seattle Program Center, mountaineersbooks.org, and wherever books are sold.



Stewardship

The Mountaineers offers regular opportunities to help conserve our public lands. Sign up today at mountaineers.org/activities.

Better Than The 10 Essentials

Pack Plenty Of Knowledge On Your Next Hike

By Craig Romano, Mountaineers Guidebook Author

The lush forest of the Pacific Northwest. Photo by Nate Brown.

One of the biggest highlights of my career as an outdoors writer so far was being flown to Los Angeles last spring for a TV shoot on the Weather Channel's SOS How to Survive. The program is hosted by Creek Stewart, a nationally renowned survival instructor and author. Each episode of SOS How to Survive spotlights true life stories involving folks who have dealt with life-threatening situations (often in the wilderness) interjected with segments on survival tips and skills.

My role was to walk through the forest and talk with Creek about edible berries. It was a survival skill segment for an episode about 71-year-old Sajeon Geer. In July of 2017 Geer had gotten lost high in the Olympic Mountains and was able to survive six nights without food and gear. The story had a happy ending because Geer was knowledgeable enough to build an emergency shelter, find water, and forage on insects and several native plants – wild currants being one of them.

I was contacted last winter by the producer and writer of the show because they were looking for an expert on the

Olympic Mountains. I was interviewed at length on aspects of the Olympics – weather, terrain, wildlife, and flora. I know the Olympics fairly well and I knew Geer's story. I was familiar with the area in the mountains where she was lost. I explained what type of plants and animals she possibly could have encountered there.

Come spring the producer decided that he wanted me on the program as one of the experts they periodically bring onto the show. My shoot would be on edible berries. I was beyond thrilled to be on the program – my first time on a national TV show. It was not only an exciting experience, but it opened up a whole new world to me. Being on the set and hanging out with the cast and crew gave me insight into the world of television. I got some behind the scenes looks. Since we shot in southern California's San Gabriel Mountains, we had to have a black currant flown down from an Oregon nursery and secure all of the permits from the Forest Service to plant it (then remove it) for our shoot in a forest of sugar pines and live oaks (not quite a fir, cedar, and hemlock Olympic forest!).



The author (right) with TV host Creek Stewart.
Photo courtesy of Craig Romano.

My shoot (including travel time to and fro) took three days for what ultimately came down to a one minute and 27 seconds segment on the show. But the whole process from initial contact by the producer to doing the shoot was transformative for me. No, I haven't gone Hollywood (although I would love to do something like this again for sure)! It was transformative in that it really had me questioning, assessing, and analyzing just how much of an outdoors expert I really am. Yeah, I have decades of outdoors experience and tens of thousands of miles on the trail under my belt. I have taken MOFA, assisted in a rescue while I was a guide in the Pyrenees, and am always prepared with the proper gear. I am pretty knowledgeable on reading the land and weather, planning, nutrition, and physical fitness. I'm all about the Ten Essentials. But how much do I know about truly surviving on my own in the wilderness if some unforeseeable event occurred?

While my role on the TV show was small, I spent hours reviewing what I knew – and what I thought I knew. I spent hours researching, coming to the realization that I don't know as much as I thought I knew. Or in this case, things I should know! Could I survive in the woods without ample food and supplies for a night – a week – longer?

In one episode of Creek's first TV program, he talks about the three biggest mistakes people make before they even set foot in the wild. Two are ones I know well and I do my best to avoid making them: not leaving an itinerary with anyone on where you're going, and not maintaining (taking care of) your body. If no one knows where you are and disaster strikes, you may not get the help you need in a timely manner (or at all) – and if your body fails, you're going to have a much harder time getting out of a situation.

The third mistake people make, according to Creek, is relying too much on gear. Gear fails and folks put too much faith in it that it will protect them and get them out of trouble. Instead Creek emphasizes that your biggest survival skill is knowledge. It weighs nothing, and the more you know the more control and options you have to survive. With the proper knowledge

you can assess your situation and use the things around you to help you survive. And this is the point that resonated with me the most. Sure, I have an adequate knowledge of a handful of plants that I can eat and ones to avoid. I know how to build a fire and shelter and find water. But through self-reflection I realized there is so much I don't know. And those gaps in my knowledge can mean the difference between life and death.

“Your biggest survival skill is knowledge. It weighs nothing, and the more you know the more control and options you have to survive. With the proper knowledge you can assess your situation and use the things around you to help you survive.”

Upon my initial interviews I began buying books on edible plants and then voraciously read about the plethora of flora in the Northwest that can sustain you. Through the years I have often scoffed at outdoor recreationists that don't even know what I consider basic knowledge – like the difference between a fir and a pine. I have always maintained that you get so much more out of nature when you fully appreciate all of its complexities and facets. Plant and animal identification has always been a priority of mine when recreating outdoors. Knowing what I am seeing and understanding its role in the beauty around me enhances my time outdoors. And now knowing (and learning more about) what I can eat out there enhances my chances that I can survive if something goes terribly awry on one of my hikes.

It doesn't take much for things to go badly. It can happen to any of us at any time, from first-time hiker to skilled, crusty outdoorsperson. Knowledge is power – and in this case, knowing what is edible in the wilderness may very well save your life.

Creek's shows have shined a lot of light on tens of thousands of viewers each week. He teaches skills and hacks that almost anyone can do if need be. For me, being on the show for one short segment was a big learning opportunity. I learned not to be content with what I know. There is so much more to know. Knowing too much won't hurt me. But not knowing enough may mean the difference between life and death. There is more than picking the best food, tent, stove, etc. for performance in the outdoors. You need to devote time learning what you can do if you find yourself in the middle of the wilderness without your performance food, tent, stove, etc. I don't know about you, but I have lots more to learn before my next hike! ▲▲

Craig Romano is an award-winning author who has written more than 20 books. His latest release, *Urban Trails Eastside* (Mountaineers Books) highlights the best trails for walking, running, and hiking in Bellevue, Redmond, the Snoqualmie Valley, and the Issaquah Alps. Some of his other titles includes; *Urban Trails Seattle*, *100 Classic Hikes Washington*, and *Day Hiking Olympic Peninsula* (2nd edition).

Mastering McKinley

By Charlie Crenchaw



Charles “Charlie” Crenchaw was a member of The Mountaineers and the first African American to summit Denali. He did so on a Mountaineers expedition and Charlie wrote a report of the adventure for our 1965 Annual to commemorate the trip. The expedition, was exemplary for a variety of reasons, and Charlie’s recap has its fair share of excitement.

The trip resulted in a variety of firsts for the time, and James Edward Mills wrote about the expedition in his book *The Adventure Gap* [published by Mountaineers Books]. He wrote of the days following the adventure: “In all accounts of the expedition, Crenchaw was an equal and well-supported member of the team. The fact that he was black appeared to be wholly irrelevant. His race is mentioned only once at the end among the list of the team’s accomplishments. ‘The First Negro to climb Mt. McKinley – Charles Crenchaw’ is included with the same weight and bearing as ‘The largest number of women to reach the summit – three in one party’ or ‘the largest number of husband-wife teams – 2.’ These details were recorded for posterity like baseball statistics, worthy of note but hardly a Jackie Robinson moment. Like so many achievements in climbing, the fact of its having occurred would be recognized and celebrated only by those to whom such things truly mattered. Crenchaw, like most climbers, upon his return probably took a day or two off from work before heading back to his job at Boeing with a few new water cooler stories and snapshots.”

Read on to see how it went in Charlie’s own words. (Note: Mount McKinley was officially renamed Denali, based on the Koyukon name “Deenaalee”, meaning “the high one”, in 2015. Charlie’s expedition took place 10 years before the name of North America’s highest peak became a subject of dispute. We have kept his original wording throughout this piece.)

- Trevor Dickie, Content Associate

On June 13 and on June 14 [1965] took the train for McKinley Park where we caught our first glimpse of Mt. McKinley. As we approached the mountain we were all looking out the window at what would be the altitude of Mt. Rainier and saw nothing. Then suddenly all heads raised, as if on a common lever, 6,000 feet higher; there in the distance stood the top of Denali. No jokes were made, we just quietly settled back in awe. It was huge—most huge! We understood why the Indians named it Denali—The Great One.

For three days, bent under 80- to 90-pound packs, we trekked across tundra, rivers, and glacial moraine, finally arriving at McGonagall Pass (5,600 feet). This was to be the site of the first air drop.

Camp II was established at Gunsight Pass (6,500 feet). Here we were confronted with our first major obstacle – the lower ice falls, which were crisscrossed with crevasses. One climber said of the ice falls, “It looked as if the gods had been playing tick-tack-toe with ice blocks.” The break-up was horrendous.

Our first victim, Pat Chamay, fell into a crevasse on this trip; we rapidly learned that the Muldrow Glacier was very porous, shell-like, and always groaning. Crevasses were frequently opening, making any deviation from the established route hazardous. We moved up to Camp IIIA. Again foul weather chained us to the mountain, and we sat for two days waiting for the second, and vital, air drop.

On the mountain, time is precious, and we were now five days behind schedule, due to bad weather. We had come to our second major obstacle – the great ice falls. Randall left in a "white-out" with a party to establish a route through these ice falls. We had scarcely entered this mass of ice when a serac, estimated at ten tons, tore away and narrowly missed the party. The mountain was nipping at us. Shortly after this, a crevasse some fifteen feet wide opened just after the first rope team had passed.

Pierre had just taken the lead when a crevasse opened under him and he fell twenty feet with full pack plus snow shoes. It was a near disaster. We later appointed him "Chief Crevasse Explorer," but even this imposing title could not induce him to make a career of this.

The climbers developed an esprit de corps that would make a team of ants green with envy as they tirelessly hauled 60- to 70-pound loads through the dangerous ice fall and over the treacherous crevassed fields for four days.

Jim Prichard was gleeful as he operated the 16mm movie camera and anxiously waited for some loaded climber to take an embarrassing tumble.

Camp IV was established at the base of Karsten's Ridge at 11,000 feet. That night we were "dog tired" and preparing to sack out on the glacier when we were jolted by a sharp earthquake. Helpless climbers, scrambling out of frail tents in scanty clothing, saw billows of snow above and felt the mist on their faces. It took some time to realize we had been spared. Few slept well that night.

Karsten's is a knife-edged ridge which twists and turns up the mountain, ending at 14,600 feet (Brown's Tower): this was our route. The first attempt to find a route up the ridge was repulsed and the scouting party was forced to turn back when Sean Rice was almost swept away by an avalanche. At 7pm the same day, Randall and a party left for a second attempt at the ridge.

Disregarding this disaster, the party fought up the ridge foot by foot until they found a spot to establish Camp V.

The party moved up the upper part of Karsten's Ridge with the precision of a fine watch. The first team shoveled cornices clearing the route, and the second team followed putting in ice screws, pickets, and fixed ropes.

We began in the fog, but as we reached Brown's Tower (14,600 feet), the mountain was in sunlight. From this spot we got our first look at our objective the South Peak. We were exuberant.

Camp VI was established at 15,500 feet and our high camp was made at 17,700 feet. The long hours, fatigue, lack of rest, and altitude were starting to show. Three climbers lay ill in their sleeping bags. The weather was beginning to turn sour. On

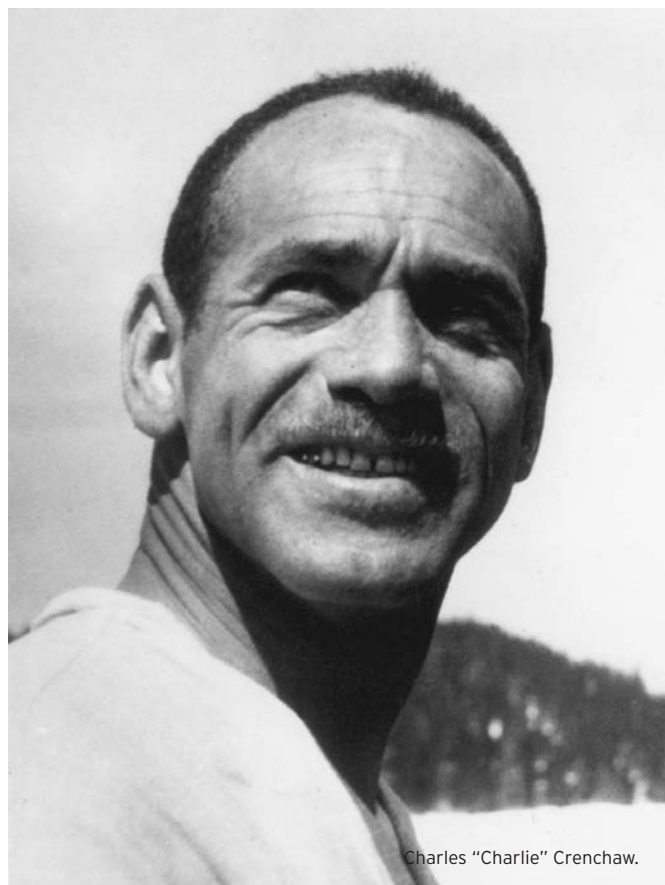
July 9, Randall called the summit assault.

For hours on end we trudged upward, looking and feeling absolutely insignificant against the huge face of the South Peak. It was snowing when the first team hit the summit and continued even as the last rope came onto the summit. We congratulated each other, wiped away a few tears, and then went to work. Chuck De Hart, who had slept with the radio all the way up the mountain to keep the batteries from freezing, got it out and made contact with Anchorage. This was the first call in history from the summit of North America's tallest mountain.

Meanwhile, the snow stopped, the sun came out, and we were rewarded with a breathtaking view from the pinnacle of North America.

On the final day, we had only to ford the McKinley River before being back in civilization. This turned out to be no easy task. Seven of us were swept away by the strong torrents and one climber was almost drowned. In this melee we lost ice axes, cameras, climbing gear, and ropes, and received our only abrasions of the trip.

We had a farewell dinner in Fairbanks, Alaska, where the climbing party gave Al Randall a tearful standing ovation and thanked him for having led us up the Mountain. We heard Randall, in a choked voice, thank us for having come with him. The Mountaineers' McKinley Outing had been a complete success because of careful planning and attention given each minuscule detail, the close teamwork of the party, and the exceptional leadership qualities of Al Randall. ▲▲

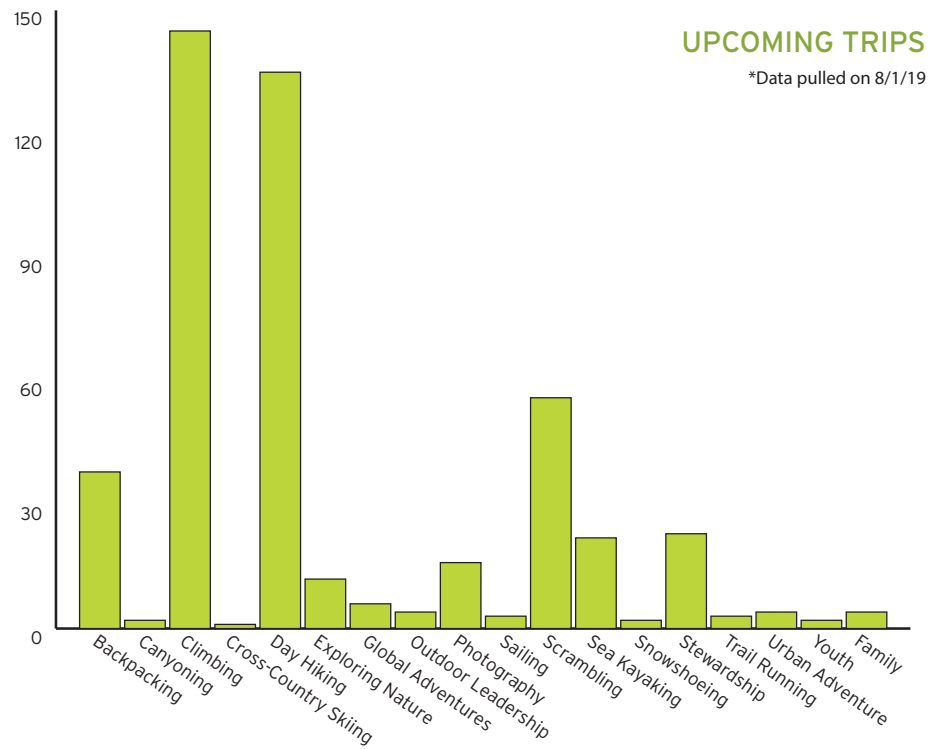


Charles "Charlie" Crenshaw.



Mountaineers Activities

The Mountaineers has over 500 activities on the calendar RIGHT NOW, and our volunteer leaders are listing new things every day. The best way to get involved is to go online and find your next adventure today!



THE MOUNTAINEERS 2018 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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



 **13,153**
members

 **2,865**
volunteers

 **393,000**
books sold worldwide

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

 **540**
new volunteer leaders

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

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

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

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

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

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

 **9,064**
youth experiences

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

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

How to Sign Up for Activites

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.

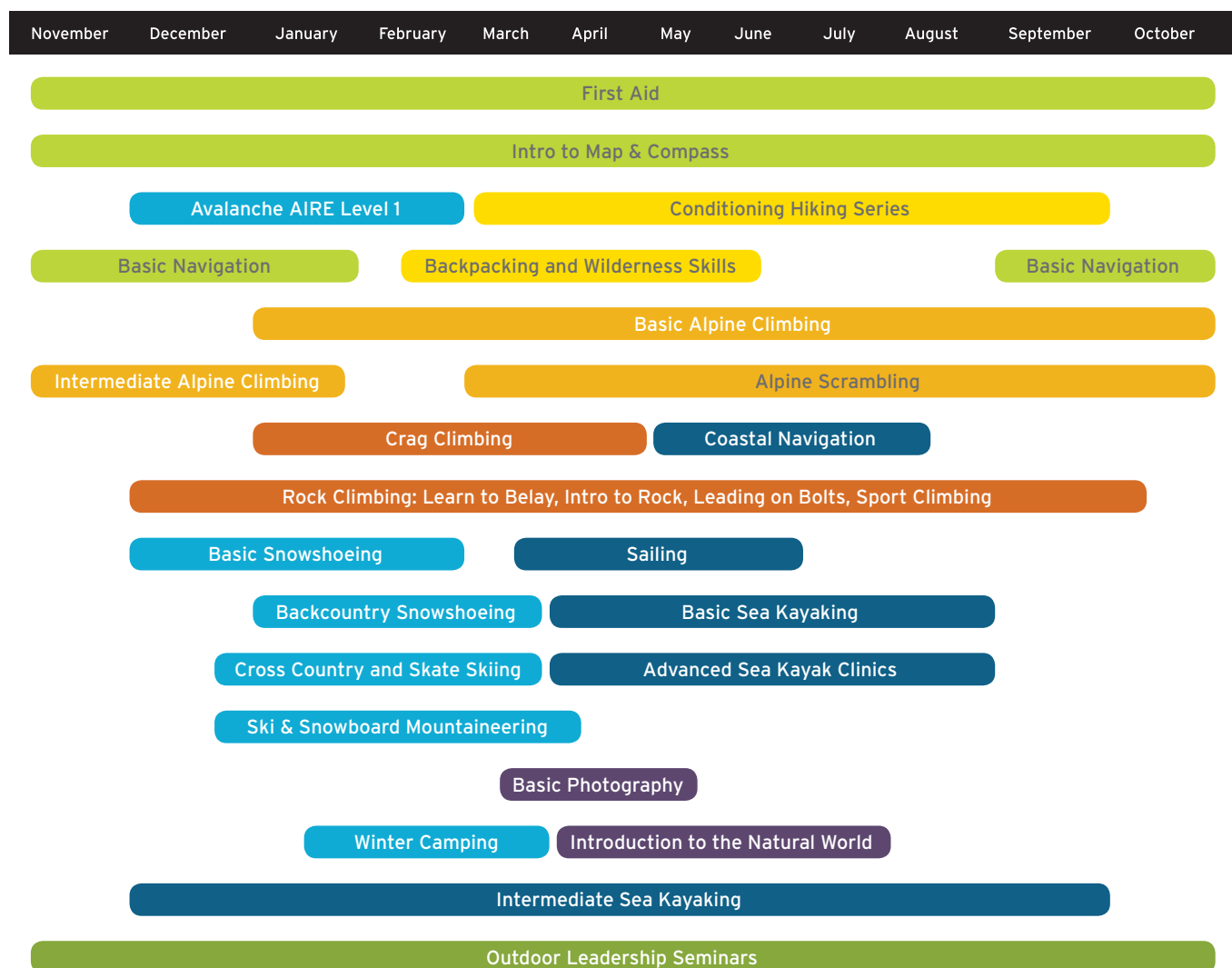
What if the activity is full? Sign up for the waitlist! Yes, it works. We have roughly a 10-20% drop-out rate in courses and activities, so spots often become available.





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!

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

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.



Baker Lodge

www.mountaineers.org/bakerlodge

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



Kitsap Forest Theater

www.foresttheater.com

Theater inspired by a magical place! Join us for a grand adventure as you stroll down the forested trail to The Mountaineers breathtaking theater and create a treasured family tradition. We are located 15 minutes from the Bremerton Ferry dock - all ages will delight in this fun Northwest experience. Come early and picnic under the firs before the show. Watch our website for the 2020 season announcement.

HELP WANTED

We are looking for cooks for week-end rehearsals and performances, as well as help with set building, costume sewing, prop collecting, ushering and parking for shows, and carpentry work.

KITSAP FOREST ADVENTURE CAMP

Sign your children up for an exciting summer camp, or join in the fun yourself and come work with us! Sign-ups open in January for two weeks of Adventure Day Camps, available to grades K-4. Spots fill up fast, so don't delay. We offer ferry transportation from Seattle. We are also hiring staff for two weeks of outdoor day camp (July 6-10, 13-17).



Meany Lodge

www.mountaineers.org/meanylodge

Built in 1928, this destination ski resort is located off of I-90's exit 62 (the Stampede Pass exit) in the Wenatchee-Okanogan National Forest. Meany Lodge provides a warm, family-friendly environment for all. Fall work parties are a great time to visit this outdoor center. In exchange for your help in maintaining the lodge, enjoy free meals, an overnight weekend stay, and a stewardship badge. Sign up for lessons with flexible schedules in our nationally-recognized snow sports school - lessons are offered January and February for downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, and snowboarding. The lodge sleeps 97 people and is available for meetings, conferences, and wedding rentals.



Stevens Lodge

www.mountaineers.org/stevenslodge

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

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



BELLINGHAM

Chair: Krissy Fagan, kristenfagan@hotmail.com

Vice Chair: Minda Paul, mindapaul@hotmail.com

Website: mountaineers.org/bellingham

Courses & Activities: climbing, first aid, hiking & backpacking, scrambling, and stewardship.

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

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

EVERETT

Chair: Elaina Jorgensen, elaina.jorgensen@gmail.com

Website: mountaineers.org/everett

Courses & Activities: avalanche safety, backcountry skiing, climbing, cross-country skiing, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, scrambling, sea kayaking, snowshoeing, and stewardship.

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

KITSAP

Chair: Jerry Logan, cjtjlogan@gmail.com

Vice Chair: Bill Bandrowski, bill.bandrowski@gmail.com

Website: mountaineers.org/kitsap

Courses & Activities: climbing, exploring nature, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, outdoor leadership, scrambling, sea kayaking, snowshoeing, and youth & family.

The Kitsap Branch draws members from throughout the Western Puget Sound, from Gig Harbor to the Olympic Peninsula, including Pierce, Kitsap, Jefferson, and Clallam counties. We're

excited to announce that our branch recently leased a new program center, conveniently located in Bremerton, which will provide us with new and improved training facilities.

Branch Council Meetings are held in March, June, and December. Please join us! Visit our branch calendar for details.

SEATTLE

Chair: Peter Hendrickson, p.hendrickson43@gmail.com

Website: mountaineers.org/seattle

Activities & Courses: avalanche safety, canyoning, climbing, Nordic 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 space, and more.

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

FOOTHILLS

Chair: Cheryl Talbert, cascadehiker@earthlink.net

Websites: mountaineers.org/foothills

Courses & Activities: AIARE avalanche safety, backcountry and downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, first aid, hiking & backpacking, navigation, outdoor leadership, scrambling, snowshoeing, stewardship, and trail running.

The Foothills Branch is the club's newest branch, founded in 2004 and encompassing the eastside communities along the I-90 and I-405 corridors. Our signature programs include a Backpacking Building Blocks (B3) Course and a Ski & Snowboard Mountaineering Course, and our new Conservation Committee is busy conducting trail work and advancing stewardship education and advocacy. We also host film screenings, guest speakers, and other community events, and we're excited to be a close partner with Meany Lodge!

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

Branch Council Meetings are held every other month (except summer) to discuss new and ongoing initiatives. Visit our branch calendar for details.

TACOMA

Chair: Jim Paxinos, jim.paxinos@tacomamountaineers.org

Website: mountaineers.org/tacoma

Activities & Courses: 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 Mount Rainier. A great way to get involved is our Meet the Tacoma Mountaineers events, held on the third Thursday of every month (except June - August and December). At these meetings we begin with a presentation about our branch, followed by an interlude where guests can speak to various activity representatives.

OLYMPIA

Chair: Marko Pavela, mlpavela@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.

Our adventure speaker series and potluck is from October to May. On October 2, Cassandra Overby will share her experience hiking in Europe and how you can build your own adventure. Craig Romano returns on December 4 to review the hikes in his book *Urban Trails: Tacoma*. Visit our branch calendar for details.

Branch Council Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month. Members are encouraged to attend. Visit our branch calendar for details.

Get Involved With Your Branch

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

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

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

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

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

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

T S U G A



Fine Art & Framing

What We're About

We create unique and eye-catching designs that will enhance your home or business environment.

Check out TsugaFineArt.com or stop by our store in Bothell, WA.





DID YOU KNOW?

Fall Colors of the Northwest

By Hailey Oppelt, Communications Associate

Larches in the Enchantments. Photo by Ida Vincent.

Although you'll likely need to bring your rain shell, fall is a great time to hike. The cool air, colorful foliage, and snow-capped mountains are an appropriate sign-off to the glory of summer. Learn about the plants dotting our mountainsides and lighting up our trails, and the best places to see them before winter snuffs out the candle.

Plants to Know

Larches

Larches are among the most dramatic trees we have, with sharp, upward-reaching branches covered in bristling gold needles. They are deciduous conifers, losing their needles in winter. We have two native species in Washington; the western larch and the subalpine larch. They grow primarily on the sunny eastern slopes of the Cascades, and can be found in full golden glory from late September through early October.

Vine Maples

Vine maples are lesser-known but quite common. This native plant often grows as a large shrub, with long, spindly branches that weave themselves through the surrounding foliage. As they work their way through the forest, they form a blanket across the hillside that turns yellow and bright orange-red in fall. You'll see vine maples from sea level into the mountains.

Mountain Blueberries

Although we typically associate spring and summer with berries, higher elevations mean later fruiting seasons for many berries. Head into the hills to enjoy blueberries in September, where they can often be found on the side of the trail in the western Cascades. Remember to keep an eye out for wildlife - they enjoy the late-season offerings just as much as you.

Places to Go

Summit Lake - Mount Rainier Area

This moderate trail offers vibrant fall colors in addition to a direct view of Mount Rainier. In just 6.1 miles you will find marshland, forest, grassy meadows, mountain views, and Summit Lake. The hike in showcases our local vine maples, which can be seen crawling across the surrounding hills. Several camp spots surround the lake as well, making this a great overnight with minimal mileage.

Heather and Maple Pass Loop - Cascades

A stunning loop trail, this 7.2-mile hike features alpine meadows, lakes, mountain views, and its signature ridgeline. Enjoy the nearby peaks and golden larches that light up the trail in fall, with the possibility of blueberries in the forest. If you can, bop down to Lake Ann for views of Heather Pass and additional time with the trees.

Enchantments - Cascades

One of the crown jewels of Washington, the Enchantments are well known for their stunning alpine beauty. Although the elevation gain into the Enchantments is substantial, if you're in search of larches this is the place to go. Adding to the allure are mountain views, pristine lakes, and mountain goats. Practice LNT diligently; alpine ecosystems are delicate and particularly susceptible to damage. ▲▲



Vine maples near Deer Creek. Photo by Ryan Franklin.



Alpine blueberries. Photo by Ida Vincent.

CHILL OUT

with member benefits

Mountaineering Club

10% off your tab at this rooftop bar

Diamondback & Raleigh Bicycles

10-40% off bicycles and accessories

Sherpa Adventure Gear

15% off high-quality performance gear

Skratch Labs

25% off healthy training food and drinks

And more!

For more information, visit
www.mountaineers.org/benefits

Photo by Rafael Godoi.

Board & Branch Elections October 1-21, 2019

As a volunteer-led, nonprofit organization, The Mountaineers depends on the generosity, initiative, and leadership of volunteers to further our mission to transform lives and protect wild places for generations to come. Each fall we host elections for our Board of Directors and participating branch leadership. Your vote is important, and we value your participation in the election process for these volunteer leaders!

The Mountaineers will be sending members an electronic ballot on October 1, 2019. Electronic ballots are preferred, but mail-in votes will also be accepted if postmarked by October 21. For more information on our elections process, please visit www.mountaineers.org/elections2019.

This year, voters will weigh in on:

- Four Directors-At-Large positions on the Board of Directors
- Foothills Branch Elections

At The Mountaineers Annual Meeting on Tuesday, September 17, we will present the candidates for Directors-At-Large positions on the Board of Directors. At this meeting, held at our Seattle Program Center from 6:30-7:30pm, members will also have the opportunity to nominate Directors-At-Large from the floor per our bylaws.



Mark Kroese
(member since 1998)



Steve McClure
(member since 2010)



Roger Mellem
(member since 1985)



Siana Wong
(member since 2014)

THE MOUNTAINEERS 2019 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Saturday, December 7, 2019

A day of professional development dedicated to thanking, inspiring, and empowering The Mountaineers current and aspiring volunteer leaders.

The Mountaineers Leadership Conference is a one-day program that includes both esteemed outdoor professionals and seasoned leaders from our own community. The theme for this year's conference is Vision Forward, and a series of interactive sessions will explore the many facets of leadership and how they relate to the three core tenets of our Vision 2022 strategic plan - leading innovation in outdoor education, engaging future Mountaineers, and advocating for wild places - plus a core track for the sessions that are central to who we are and what we do. We hope that you can join us to participate in this engaging and exciting event!

mountaineers.org/leadershipconference2019