

Mountaineer

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

in this issue:

Climb Like a Mother

A Journey Through Cancer & Resilience

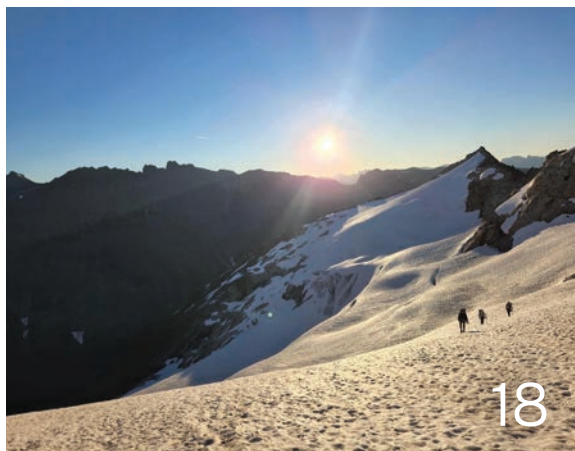
Bike Touring the San Juan Islands

How to Train for High Altitude Trips



Spring 2023 | Volume 117 | Number 2

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



On the cover: Cindy Hong at the summit of Clark Mountain with a view of Glacier Peak. Photo by Sarah McClellan.

Features

- 18 **Climb Like a Mother**
- 22 **A Journey Through Cancer & Resilience**
- 28 **Bike Touring the San Juan Islands**
- 32 **How to Train for High Altitude Trips**

Columns

- 3 **Tying In**
- 4 **Editor's Note**
- 5 **Reader Feedback**
- 6 **Member Highlight**
Deborah Anderson
- 7 **Peak Performance**
Allowing Sufficient Training Time
- 8 **Bookmarks & Staff Picks**
Cascadia Field Guide
- 10 **Youth Outside**
Climbing is for Everyone
- 12 **Impact Giving**
Celebrating 10 Years of The Mountaineers Gala
- 14 **Outside Insights**
Backcountry Bike Touring
- 16 **Conservation Currents**
Tacoma Goes Green
- 35 **Global Adventures**
Streams in the Utah Desert
- 36 **Trail Talk**
The Perils and Joys of the Backcountry
- 38 **Retro Rewind**
Changing Climate, Changing Climbs
- 40 **GoGuide**
How to Get Involved
- 46 **Did You Know?**
How Songbirds Learn to Sing

Mountaineer uses:



Discover The Mountaineers

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



Photo by Rick Meade.

Since becoming CEO of The Mountaineers seven years ago, I've regularly participated as both a student and volunteer instructor in our courses and programs. For example, a few years ago I went through the Basic Alpine Climbing Equivalency process and in 2021 I took the Basic Sea Kayaking Course. I also volunteer in our avalanche education program as a committee member and AIARE instructor. Participating in our programs has given me the opportunity to get better

acquainted with many of our talented and committed volunteers, and allows me to walk in the shoes (or boots!) of our students.

Participating in our programs has also allowed me to try new activities as a novice, reliant on our leaders to have a good experience and learn new skills. Such was the case this past summer when I was invited to descend Mineral Creek with several leaders from our Canyoning Program. Almost every aspect of canyoning was brand new to me. For instance, in climbing, you always back up a rappel with stopper knots to guard against rappelling off the end of the rope. To my surprise, you don't put stopper knots in your rope while canyoning, and routinely rappel off the rope's end into a pool of water—a novel concept to my climbing brain!

Having experiences like these, especially as adult learners, gives us the opportunity to take risks and acquire new skills in a controlled environment with expert and supportive coaching. For most of us, it takes patience, repetition, and a dedication to learn from our mistakes before we can reach peak performance and begin to teach confidently on our own.

Implementing new strategies for an organization such as The Mountaineers has some parallels to learning new outdoor activities. We seek guidance and leadership from our community, try new approaches, adjust our technique, and set ambitious goals for our future. As we gain more skills and experience, our ability to navigate challenges and achieve our vision improves.

In the months ahead, you'll hear more about our newly-updated strategic plan and vision statement titled *Adventure with Purpose*, a refinement of our plan published in 2018. It incorporates many of the lessons we've learned through the pandemic about how to best support our community. This plan also sets a bold new vision of where we're going in the years ahead, articulates a new set of goals to guide us, and challenges us to be the best version of ourselves. As you read more about *Adventure with Purpose* in the coming months, I hope you'll call, write, or email to share what most inspires you about our new vision for The Mountaineers. My door is always open.

Tom Vogl

Tom Vogl
Mountaineers CEO



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

EDITOR

Kristina Ciari

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Skye Michel, Hailey Oppelt

DESIGNER

Sarah Kulfan, Beans n' Rice

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Tom Vogl

EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER

Tom Helleberg

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Bri Vanderlinden

PROOFREADERS

Kate Regan, Issy Steckel, Bri Vanderlinden

PUBLICISTS

Kate Jay
Marissa Litak

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

President, Gabe Aeschliman
Vice President, Manisha Powar
VP of Branches, James Henderson
VP of Governance, Roger Mellem
VP of Outdoor Centers, Matt Simerson
Secretary, Carry Porter
Treasurer, Paul Stevenson

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Serene Chen
Rich Johnston
Brynn Koscianski
Takeo Kuraishi
Maya Magarati
Amanda Piro
Alex Pratt
Sam Sanders
Vanessa Wheeler
Anita Wilkins
Siana Wong

BRANCH DIRECTORS

Tim Schafermeyer, Bellingham
Matt Vadnal, Everett
Vacant, Foothills
Mark Goodro, Kitsap
Mike Kretzler, Olympia
Brad Near, Seattle
Mark Kerr, Tacoma

YOUTH BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

Serophina Ouyoumjan
Katie Strauz-Clark

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

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

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



Glacier Peak. Photo by Theresa Sippel.



Kristina Ciari
kristinac@mountaineers.org
@activelifekec
Photo by Mitch Pittman.

I believe that White-tailed Ptarmigan are the very best mountain fowl. Now, before the birding community comes at me, I should say that this belief has no basis in science or facts and solely represents a strong personal opinion that, admittedly, is heavily influenced by a deep-seated love for words that start with a silent “p.” (I may have chosen a dinosaur theme for my son’s nursery because of pterodactyls. I like to pronounce the silent letter for extra amusement.)

Putting my personal psychology aside, I’m drawn to ptarmigan because of their adaptability. I’m sure other birds can completely change their plumage to match the season in order to outsmart predators, but I have yet to see them in the wild.

I saw my first ptarmigan on a third attempt on Glacier Peak. We set out much later in the season than is ideal for a summit ski, finding ourselves exposed to the sun on 3,000 feet of heinous switchbacks up to White Pass in late June. Exhausted by the weight of our packs and bad decision making, we took a breather near snow line after two miles of climbing. I dropped my bag and slumped to the ground, feeling completely depleted.

Then they appeared: a small flock of ptarmigan. Still mostly white, with brown feathers coming in. A physical representation of the changing seasons and an example of clever adaptations in nature.

We watched the birds for what felt like a long time. They were probably nearby for only a few moments, but I was enchanted. *Look at them, I thought, just hopping and pecking about. Invisible on the snow one moment and terribly obvious on the dirt the next.* Something about them reminded me of

the awkward teenage years. Their presence was strangely comforting.

Left alone once again, we shouldered our packs and kept hoofing toward camp. We’d finally make the summit this attempt for the reward of about eight good ski turns followed by 17 miles of wallowing back through miserable snow, then dirt, to the car. We never did see more ptarmigans. But their visit the first day buoyed my psyche enough to keep hoofing.

Like the White-tailed Ptarmigan, this edition features personal stories exploring our theme of “Adaptability.” We look at how we adapt and grow as humans to both change within ourselves and to an ever-changing environment. The “Climb Like a Mother” cover story by Cindy Hong explores how one new mom adapts her expectations to getting outside, both pre- and post-baby. In “Cancer & Resilience,” author Kiana Ehsani interviews longtime Mountaineer Ida Kaller-Vincent on how Ida has adapted to climbing with significantly reduced lung capacity after having lung cancer (twice). We also have a feature from Meryl Lassen on the many ways you can help your body adapt for high altitude success.

Our regular columns deliver on the theme as well. In “Outside Insight” we share the origin story of our new Bikepacking Committee, which is complimented by a feature story by Sam Hendrix about how you can go on your first three-day bikepack across the San Juan Islands. In her regular column “Peak Performance,” Courtenay Schurman reminds us all of the importance of adapting our bodies for new pursuits with sound advice about how to avoid doing too much, too fast. And in “Retro Rewind,” Skye Michel explores how we adapt to a changing environment in the face of climate change.

I hope this edition inspires you as we look ahead to the changing season, where nature’s ability to adapt to a new environment is on full display.

Kristina Ciari



In our fall 2022 edition, we published *"Bonanza and Ben,"* lovingly penned by Bill Chapman about introducing a lifetime love for the outdoors to his son Ben. Our readers had lots of positive feedback for this piece.

"Just a note of thanks for the fall 2022 issue of *Mountaineer*... I especially appreciated Bill Chapman's tale, 'Bonanza and Ben.' The Bonanza story reminded me of the time I took my grown son (now 35) to see Jim Whittaker and his son Leif give a talk at The Mountaineers headquarters a few years ago. Leif was on a promotional tour of his new book *My Old Man and the Mountain* (2016), and we enjoyed both Jim and Leif's presentations. Afterwards, we stood in line to get their signatures for the new book. Leif signed ours: 'Keep on climbing together!' We went over to get Jim's signature, and when I got to the front I gave him our book, introduced my son, and told him we enjoyed the talk. I said, 'You must be very proud of Leif.' He looked at me, his eyes filled with tears, and he said 'Well, what he does is dangerous! You worry about them, you know?' I put my arm around Patrick's shoulders and said to Big Jim, 'Don't I know it!' There may have even been a little mist in my eyes. Something about the mountains and your children and truth. Thanks to Bill Chapman for the fine story!"

-Lloyd Skinner, 46-year member

"Thanks for sharing your article on *"Bonanza and Ben."* I didn't want it to end, and kept hoping I could keep turning the pages. What an interesting and well-written saga! Your attention to physical and emotional detail kept me riveted... One thing I have always embraced about climbing is that once you have stood on top of a mountain, it never looks the same from down below. In my mind's eye, I am always taken back to the view from the top, and the route(s) that have taken me there, and the family and friends with whom I have been able to share them."

-Judge Godfrey, *Mountaineer* reader

"I feel like I was right there with you—thank you for taking me along on a journey that I will not make in person. This is one of the things that I love so much about reading—going to times and places that I could or would not go otherwise."

-Suzanne Zannister, *Mountaineer* reader



In winter 2023, *"Trail Talk"* featured a photo of author Craig Romano on Artist Point with a friendly bird. We failed to properly identify the bird as a Canada Jay, and one reader took issue with this missed opportunity. We apologize for our lack of bird identification, and want to remind readers that even though Canada Jays are incredibly friendly, it's critical that people not feed wild animals.

"To call this 'a bird' is to slight all birds and, worse, miss the possibility of a great note about Canada Jays. Birds need all the support, help, and protection we can give them and minimizing their presence by just calling the Canada Jay 'a bird' is to suggest they don't matter. Canada Jays are, by themselves, a terrific participant and spectator sport. They are the only wild bird around which you can actually feed out of your hand. Shame on you—allegedly trying to talk up a naturalists program—for failing this simple teachable moment to your readers."

-Jonathan Fox, 50-year member

One member wrote in to share their appreciation for the winter 2023 *Mountaineer* in an email to our outgoing editor, Hailey Oppelt:

"Though not an expert, I believe this last issue is so far ahead of the previous issues! The photography, all of it, is first class! After these high-quality images you will have many more dedicated young photographers that will keep supplying great adventure shots. But most importantly this issue has the soul and vibe of real mountaineering which is what The Mountaineers is all about."

-Sergio Rojo, 3-year member and adventure photographer

We value feedback from our readers, and we'd like to hear from you! Share your thoughts about *Mountaineer* magazine at magazine@mountaineers.org.

member highlight



Name Deborah Anderson

Hometown Wellesley, MA

Member Since 1973

Occupation Retired. Former social worker (MSW) developing community-based programs for older adults.

Favorite Activities Favorite activities have varied throughout the years but include mountaineering, climbing, hiking, snowshoeing, sea kayaking, going on extended walks, and cross-country skiing.

How did you get involved with The Mountaineers?

Following my time in the Peace Corps I did some climbing in Africa (Kilaminjaro and the Rwenzoris). I loved those experiences and decided I would really like to continue climbing and live near mountains. I had a wonderful cousin who was active in The Mountaineers and a Peace Corp friend who told me all about the North Cascades. Through them I was encouraged to move to Seattle. I moved to Seattle to go to graduate school at the School of Social Work (1973-1975) and joined The Mountaineers.

What motivates you to get outside with us?

I have always been physically active, having played competitive tennis in high school and college, but I hadn't had exposure to climbing and mountaineering. I took the Basic Alpine Climbing Course and Intermediate Alpine Climbing Course and learned to be comfortable and competent in the mountains. I loved the courses and appreciated the quality of the leaders. Through the many climbs offered by The Mountaineers I made lifelong friends, and even met my husband on one of the climbs. Soon my husband and I will have gone on two Global Adventures cross-country ski trips. In 2019 we went to the Canadian Rockies which was spectacular and well-run, and in March 2023 we are going to Norway with the same leaders.

What's your favorite Mountaineers memory?

I have so many favorite memories. On my first rock climbing field trip to Mt. Erie, the leader called "party separation" as we were hiking up to the base of our first rock. I thought "oh my gosh, they are already separating the weak from the strong." I had no idea it meant for the women to go to one side and the men the other so we could relieve ourselves. I was indeed relieved when I understood what it meant.

Another favorite memory is being on the cover of The Mountaineer Bulletin in August of 1987, which featured a climb of the West Ridge of Forbidden. I had no idea who the hard-hatted person was until I looked inside the cover and saw my name. I was actually top roped by my husband Michael but he couldn't be seen in the picture.

Who/What inspires you?

Being up high, looking down on glaciers, and negotiating up rocky pinnacles in the North Cascades inspires me. I love the thrill of the physical and mental focus it takes to get to the top. I've climbed all the volcanoes in Washington and some serious peaks in the North Cascades, Argentina, and Idaho.

In the late seventies I met Phyllis Munday and loved hearing her describe her and her husband's exploration of the Unknown Mountain (now known as Mount Waddington). I told Norm Winn, a fellow mountaineer, that if he ever led a trip to Unknown Mountain I would love to go. A few years later he did and invited me. It was an amazing, awe-filled experience to be in the expansive wilderness and I ended up being the only woman on the trip. We successfully summited the northeast face and climbed several other lesser peaks in the area.

While that was the last major climb of my life, I have continued to love hiking and doing more modest climbs in the North Cascades with friends. In my mid-seventies I continue to be thankful for making a pass or summit and being able to gaze out over mountain upon mountain.

What does adventure mean to you?

There are many types of adventures in life, like getting married or having children, as adventure involves some risk-taking and no assurance of success. Physical adventures usually involve some discomfort, extra effort, and, in my case, an unplanned bivouac. My adventures through The Mountaineers have led me to amazingly wild and beautiful places. In the words of John Muir, "As long as I live, I'll hear waterfalls and birds and wings sing. I'll interpret the rocks, learn the language of flood, storm, and the avalanche. I'll acquaint myself with the glaciers and wild gardens, and get as near the heart of the world as I can." ▲▲

Lightning round

Sunrise or sunset? Sunset

What's your 11th Essential? My Sony Alpha camera

What's your happy place? Cozy in a tent

Post-adventure meal of choice? I hate to admit it, but a cold beer and a hamburger

If you could be a rockstar at any outdoor activity overnight, what would it be? It's a toss-up between being able to "look" like I can skate ski without effort or being able to roll a kayak



Allowing Sufficient Training Time

By Courtenay Schurman, MS, CSCS, PN2

Climbers approach base camp on Mount Baker, July 2009. Photo courtesy of Courtenay Schurman.

If you haven't been hiking for several months but want to prepare for a multi-day backpacking trip, can you get ready in four weeks? Possibly, but your body may not be very happy. Tendons, ligaments, tissues, joints, and muscles all need time to adapt to exercise. To avoid the common "too much, too fast" issues ranging from pulls and strains to bursitis, tendonitis, or illness, allow sufficient training time to prepare for your summer goals.

Timing your training

Give yourself more training time than you think you'll need so that when unexpected issues come up, you have a cushion. In addition to the physical training, consider your family commitments, work obligations, and any inclement weather that may alter your training plans. By building in an extra month or two, you have more flexibility for when you complete your hikes. You also have time to test out new gear and replace anything that doesn't work.

The bigger your objective, the more time you should allow for training. Someone who wants to hike 12 miles in a day, gaining 2,000 feet while carrying a 20-pound pack, might only need to train for two months. Someone targeting a more skilled challenge, such as a three-day climb of Mount Rainier while carrying a 40-pound pack, may need to train for four to six months. And someone aspiring to do a multi-week outing like Everest, Denali, or a thru-hike of the PCT might need to train for nine to twelve months.

Developing a plan

To develop an appropriate training plan, start by assessing

your current level of fitness against what you will need to achieve your goal. First consider where your cardiovascular stamina should be. This means understanding how many days you will hike without a break, what mileage you want to hike on your longest day, how much elevation you will gain, and what your pack weight will be. It also includes understanding your ability to recover.

After you assess your cardiovascular capacity, consider what your maximum pack weight will be. Think about the wide variety of tasks you'll be doing, which might include crossing loose scree or talus slopes, going over and under downed logs, self-arresting on icy slopes, building protective snow walls, or hoisting heavy gear. This will suggest what level of strength you need and what areas are most vulnerable.

Finally, reflect on how much balance and flexibility you will need and what technical skills you want to acquire. Armed with all that knowledge, you are ready to prioritize your training to minimize any gaps in ability. Develop a plan that includes all aspects of fitness, emphasizing areas you perceive as your greatest weaknesses.

By giving yourself enough training time to get ready for your goals, you'll be able to enjoy your trip rather than simply endure it. ▲▲

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.

Cascadia Field Guide

Art, Ecology, Poetry

Edited by Elizabeth Bradfield, CMarie Fuhrman, and Derek Sheffield

Unlike a traditional field guide, *Cascadia Field Guide* blends art and science to celebrate our diverse region through cultural histories, poetry, and artwork depicting many of the plants and animals who call Cascadia home. Bringing together a wide spectrum of writers and artists, *Cascadia Field Guide* invites readers to explore their relationship to the region from a whole new perspective.

Anthology Editor, Derek Sheffield, shares some of his thoughts on the newly-released book.

What is the Cascadia bioregion?

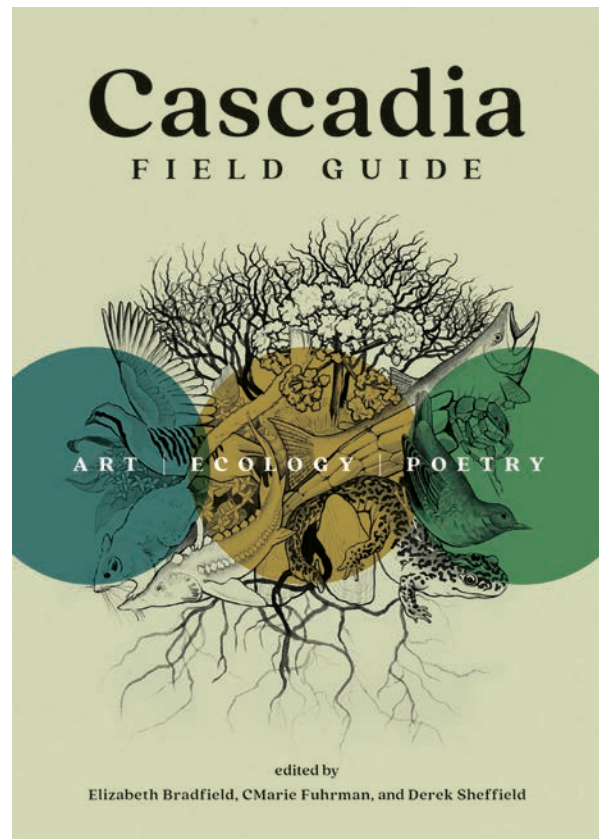
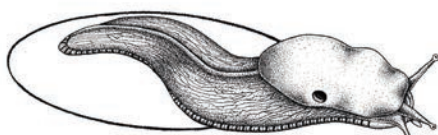
Cascadia is a series of river watersheds that flow into the Pacific Ocean, stretching from Alaska's Prince William Sound down to Northern California's Eel River, from the Pacific Coast to the Continental Divide. Alaska's panhandle, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Northern California, and even edges of Montana and Wyoming are held in Cascadia. The term "Cascadia" is also part of a movement in bioregional thinking to emphasize characteristics of the land over geopolitical definitions. Many people from the region have embraced "Cascadia" as a term for themselves.

How does *Cascadia Field Guide* bring ecology, art, and poetry together?

Think of the tripod that your spotting scope rests upon. If you are missing a leg or two, then your perception is imbalanced, incomplete. In our collection, you have all three legs. Poetry and art can enact, or bring to life, fellow plant and animal beings in ways that ecology alone cannot.

What inspired you and your fellow editors to put *Cascadia Field Guide* together?

Our shelves are full of field guides that focus on the identification, ecological description, and taxonomic categorization of the beings of our bioregion. They are



essential resources, but we wanted to create something that would add to that existing literature... and go beyond it. By combining art, poetry, and ecology, we have created a field guide for the heart. A "feel guide," as J. Drew Lanham dubs it.

Our book nurtures a holistic sense of belonging and community between humans and our other community members and also between beings themselves. Part of this work is expressed in our "being stories," the ecological passages for each entry that honor sensory experience, Western science, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

We wanted to give something back to the living place that has given us so much.

In *Cascadia Field Guide* all the flora and fauna are called "beings," why did you choose to refer to them this way?

"Species" is a fine word for what it does, but we wanted to use a term that felt less clinical. We love "beings" for its greater sense of humanity. It's grittier and more alive. There's





Derek Sheffield. Photo by Heidi Swoboda.

some verb in the noun-ness of it. It reminds us of the fact that we are human beings living in relationship with other plant and animal beings. For the same reasons, we avoid using “it” when we talk about Douglas-fir, Hera Buckmoth, or Coyote. To paraphrase geologist Thomas Berry, our fellow beings are not a collection of objects, but a communion of subjects—this is the foundation of *Cascadia Field Guide*.

Similarly, instead of organizing the book by traditional taxonomic divisions, we have it arranged by a series of communities. We have a poem, story, and art for each of the 128 beings that are part of 13 different communities, such as Pine Forest, Salish Sea, and, of course, Montane!

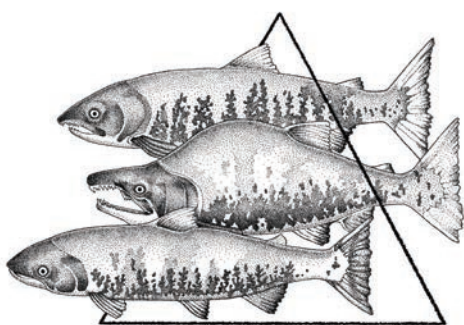
Is there a moment that you think of when you think of your love of Cascadia?

No. But there are a thousand moments that come fluttering to life in me at the sight of this question... and some of them are in the book.

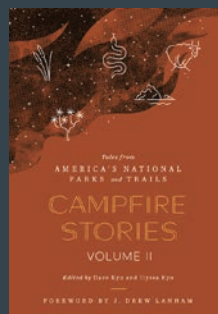
What is one thing you hope readers take away from *Cascadia Field Guide*?

Gobsmacking wonder.

Cascadia Field Guide is available for purchase at our Seattle Program Center Bookstore, online at mountaineersbooks.org, and everywhere books are sold.



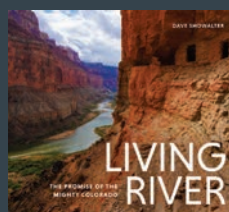
Slug and salmon illustrations by Erin Fox.
Tree illustration by Justin Gibbens.



Campfire Stories Volume II: Tales from America's National Parks and Trails

Edited by Dave and Ilyssa Kyu

Inspired by America's beloved national parks, *Campfire Stories Volume II* is a collection of modern prose, poetry, and folklore from a diverse group of writers who share a deep appreciation for the natural world. While the original *Campfire Stories* captured many historic tales reflecting the first 100 years of the National Park Service, this completely new collection depicts the parks as we know and experience them today, featuring stories from Olympic, Grand Canyon, Everglades, Glacier, and Joshua Tree National Parks and the Appalachian and Pacific Crest National Scenic Trails. *Campfire Stories Volume II* revels in the distinct landscape of each park and trail, and will transport readers to the warm edge of a campfire ring.

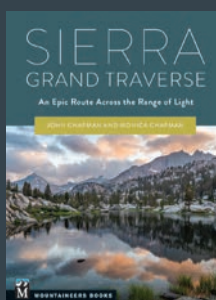


Living River: The Promise of the Mighty Colorado

By Dave Showalter

With powerful visual storytelling, *Living River* illustrates how we can create a resilient watershed in this pivotal moment.

Exploring the endangered Colorado River from source to sea, award-winning photographer Dave Showalter takes readers on an epic watershed journey that celebrates life, beauty, and resilience. The hard work ahead requires widespread engagement in our future, which begins with asking where our water comes from and how it connects us all. And at this inflection point, how do we add our voice to the call for healthy rivers that benefit wildlife and people? There's no giving up on the Colorado, for where there is water, there is abundant, dynamic life—the promise of the *Living River*.



Sierra Grand Traverse: An Epic Route Across the Range of Light

By John Chapman and Monica Chapman

Advanced hikers will not want to miss the upcoming guidebook *Sierra Grand Traverse*, arriving April 2023 from authors John Chapman and Monica Chapman. Encompassing 200 miles from Tuolumne

Meadows in Yosemite National Park to Horseshoe Meadows (and more in between), this gorgeous guide covers a route, both on trail and off, that has never been covered before. Sections on planning, resupply, transport, and permits provides hikers with all the information they need to complete the entire trek. With detailed topographic maps, elevation profiles, and stunning photographs, *Sierra Grand Traverse* is both an informative and gorgeous read.

Climbing is for Everyone

Mountain Workshops with Science and Math Institute

By Hannah Chin Pratt, Tacoma Science and Math Institute teacher

I learned how to rock climb through The Mountaineers. Learning to climb this way is empowering because you learn for yourself how to climb safely. As a teacher at the Tacoma Science and Math Institute (SAMI), a public school housed in Point Defiance Park and Zoo, I like to take this empowering educational approach with my students, and one great thing about my school is the requirement that teachers collaborate to co-teach an interdisciplinary class in January. We are encouraged to dream big.

Since my passion is rock climbing, I wrote my climbing class idea on the whiteboard in our community space to see what would come of it. My colleague Brett Knisely, a physics teacher and fellow climber, said he would love to co-teach.

I immediately thought of The Mountaineers. I knew that teaching public high school students how to safely enjoy the outdoors would dovetail nicely with The Mountaineers mission, so in January 2022, I reached out to Sarah Holt, Tacoma Program Manager, to see if it would be financially and logistically possible to bring SAMI students to The Mountaineers.

Sarah suggested the Mountain Workshops program, a decade-old program that works with a variety of youth serving organizations to offer customized partner programs that meet the educational goals of the group. We were excited about the flexible, hands-on curriculum designed to expose our youth to transferable outdoor skills and impart a desire to explore and conserve the outdoors. The program provided the opportunity for our students to learn skills applicable to almost anything they'd do for the rest of their lives: communication, planning, overcoming obstacles, teamwork, and more.

We didn't have the funds to cover the complete cost, but Sarah offered that if SAMI could cover the instructor costs, The Mountaineers donors and grants could cover the



Leo climbing at Vantage. All photos courtesy of Leo Brownawell and Neveah Ladson.

difference. We were thrilled, and partnered on 11 Mountain Workshops in January 2022. The class was wildly successful among the students—so much so that we continued weekly Mountain Workshops during the spring 2022 semester for our Action and Adventure class.

The learning didn't stop there. In fall 2022, I felt empowered by the Mountain Workshops experience to teach a rock climbing class as part of SAMI's regular course offerings. We climbed at Exit 38 over two Saturdays and spent one weekend climbing and camping at Vantage. For many, Vantage offered a first-time camping experience.

As a queer, Hapa (a Hawaiian pidgin word used to describe anyone who is part Asian or Pacific Islander), Chinese-American woman, I am passionate about creating more opportunities for students from marginalized groups. I want to diversify the climbing community to make it clear that rock climbing is for everyone. Our class prioritized finding guest presenters who identified as adaptive climbers, climbers of color, non-binary climbers, bigger-bodied climbers, and female climbers to share their experiences, and we discussed how to facilitate climbing access to folks at the margins. I enjoyed the opportunity to share what brings me so much happiness and love to think that we are planting seeds: some students may become climbers, may find joy in the outdoors, or may decide they like camping. Mountain Workshops made these revelations possible. ▲▲



Left: Neveah climbing at Gritscone, Exit 38. Top right: Leo checking out his next bouldering problem at Edgeworks. Bottom right: Neveah stoked to be climbing outdoors for the first time.

A word from the students

Leo Brownawell

I am a disabled climber. I was born with Brachial Plexus Palsy (Erb's Palsy) in my right arm and have always had to adapt to activities that would otherwise be effortless with two fully functioning arms. Climbing is one of them. Rock climbing, as we all know, relies heavily on the use of both arms. Reaching above your head to grab the next hold is second nature to most climbers, but for me, doing so is an impossibility. Unless assisted, I am unable to reach even an inch above my head without wildly swinging my arm in the hopes that I successfully grasp that next hold.

When I was first introduced to rock climbing through Mountain Workshops, The Mountaineers welcomed me to the climbing community with open arms and an inspirational attitude. I was shown that I can achieve greatness in climbing. Without The Mountaineers and the relationship it has with SAMI, I may have never proved that to myself. I am grateful to The Mountaineers for making their Tacoma Program Center available to SAMI students. It allowed us to strengthen our community and love for climbing. Due to the Mountain Workshops, I can achieve things I would not think possible for myself.

Neveah Ladson

I had never climbed before and really didn't know anything about it. I never saw rock climbing as a thing people of color did. I knew no climbers and saw climbing as an affluent recreational activity. Little did I know, The Mountaineers would open the door to new friends and community, a healthy lifestyle, and my favorite way to spend my time. I am fortunate

to attend SAMI which offered rock climbing as a new elective. I thought since this was my last year, it's now or never. In the beginning, I was heavily questioned by my friends because a small, multi-racial city girl who wears heels in the harshest weather conditions and enough jewelry to be heard jingling from a mile away isn't what you may picture when you think of a rock climber.

Regardless, I took the class and tied myself in. "Just get it over with," I thought while trying not to feel too embarrassed and forget that I'm trusting someone who I've only seen once or twice with my life. I scaled the wall with ease. All the embarrassment I had just went away. The staff cheered us on which got all of us cheering each other on. This person who I've gone to school with for four years and yet never talked to cheered me on and reassured me. It didn't matter who it was, if they were on the wall, we were encouraging them to keep going. I climbed almost every wall that day, and time was the only thing that stopped me.

At The Mountaineers, I was put into a group that ranged from those who had been climbing for years to those who had never even seen a harness before, like me. Now, climbing is my "me time." When I'm on a challenging climb, my belayer and friends are right there to reassure me. They empower me to keep going and I am able to switch back into my peaceful headspace. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to rock climb at a place like The Mountaineers where I can always learn new things, connect with my community, and challenge myself by choice.

Celebrating 10 Years of The Mountaineers Gala

By Hana Wilder, Donor Event & Partnerships Manager

For 10 years, The Mountaineers has come together to celebrate and honor the remarkable achievements of our community. One such achievement gained historical recognition when, in 1963, Mountaineers member Jim Whittaker made a groundbreaking climb. Challenging the odds, he became the first American to reach Everest's 29,028-foot summit. He was only 34. The success of that climb, made possible thanks to the tireless work of the Sherpa supporters, launched Jim into the upper echelon of the climbing world. He has worked tirelessly since to give back to the outdoor community, including leading the first-ever Everest cleanup efforts.

The Mountaineers hosted our very first fundraising Gala in 2013, Everest 50, which commemorated the 50th anniversary of an American's first summit of Everest. Robert F. Kennedy served as our keynote speaker and we honored Jim with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Together our community raised an unbelievable \$287,000 in support of Mountaineers programs. The success of that inaugural fundraising event broke trail for a new annual event to elevate our mission and grow our impact.

A decade later, this annual community celebration has allowed

us to honor and celebrate some of the outdoor industry's most inspiring individuals and has become a pillar of our fundraising efforts. The Gala brings in around 30% of our annual philanthropic revenue; last year's Gala supporters gave a record breaking \$525,000! Charitable donations to The Mountaineers provide essential financial resources for greater organizational stability, effectiveness, flexibility, and innovation. Our annual fund supports need-based scholarships, conservation of our natural world, volunteer leader development, nonprofit outdoor publishing, youth programs, and more.

Beyond the financial impacts of the Gala, the event builds community by providing an opportunity to come together with friends and family, gain inspiration from changemakers in the outdoor industry, and celebrate those who have gone above and beyond. Nothing else quite like it exists in our packed calendar of events. This April we will be honoring special guests Philip Henderson and Steve Swenson, who have made tremendous contributions to outdoor communities around the world.

We are excited to offer a virtual experience again this year, providing a free and inclusive way for our extended

community to participate. The Gala provides critical funds to help us meet our annual \$1.8 million philanthropic goal, and a hybrid experience allows members to celebrate with us near and far, regardless of ability to donate. For virtual attendees, we invite you to give at any level that is meaningful for you, including a free-to-attend option. ▲▲

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, The Mountaineers relies on philanthropic support to bring our programs to life. Donations ensure that the organization has enough resources to thrive and invest in our mission to help people explore, conserve, learn about, and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

To participate in our online auction and join the fun virtually on Saturday, April 1, register online at mountaineers.org/gala2023.



Left: 2023 Keynote Speaker, Philip Henderson. Photo by Greg Mionske. Right: 2023 Honoree, Steve Swenson. Photo by Graham Zimmerman.

2023 Keynote Speaker: Philip Henderson

Over the last decade, the Gala has become an opportunity to celebrate individuals who have gone above and beyond to enact positive change for our community and on behalf of our natural world. This April, we are honored to announce that Philip Henderson will be our keynote speaker.

Philip has been making history as a groundbreaking adventurer, climber, mountaineer, and outdoor educator for nearly 30 years. Through his passion for outdoor recreation and education, Philip has climbed and skied around the world, and has taught mountain skills to guides and porters in Nepal, Kenya, Tanzania, and Chile. In 2012, Philip was a member and team leader of the North Face/National Geographic Everest Education Expedition, and in 2013 he became one of only a few African Americans to summit Denali. He also led an all-African American ascent of Mt. Kilimanjaro in 2018 and served as Expedition Leader of the successful Full Circle Everest Expedition, which saw the first all-Black American team summit Mt. Everest in 2022.

With nearly three decades as an outdoor educator, including more than 20 years as an instructor for the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), Philip has made a substantial impact on the outdoor community. As a volunteer, he's dedicated countless hours to help youth around the country experience the power of nature. Philip was recognized by Outdoor Afro in 2020 with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to the outdoor community.

2023 Lifetime Achievement Award Honoree: Steve Swenson

This year, we are thrilled to honor world-renowned alpinist and respected Mountaineers Books author, Steve Swenson, with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Steve has been climbing for more than 55 years and is known for big mountain expeditions to the Karakoram Range. He led the second successful American expedition to K2 and made a solo ascent of the North Ridge of Everest, both of which were accomplished without supplemental oxygen. In 2012 he and his partners made the first ascent of Sasser Kangri II (7,518 meters), the second highest unclimbed mountain in the world, a feat for which they were awarded the prestigious Piolet d'Or. Steve and his partners—including Graham Zimmerman—were awarded a second Piolet d'Or in 2020 for their successful first ascent of Link Sar (7,041 meters) in 2019. Steve is one of only a few people to receive a Piolet d'Or, let alone two, an award considered mountaineering's highest honor.

In addition to his book *Karakoram: Climbing Through the Kashmir Conflict*, published by Mountaineers Books, Steve has been published by *Alpinist*, *Climbing*, and *Rock & Ice* magazines, the Banff Center, and the *American Alpine Journal*. Steve has a rich history and deep commitment to The Mountaineers and our extended community. During his 12 years as an active member he has served on The Mountaineers Board of Directors and Governance Committee, founded and dedicated endless volunteer hours to supporting our Alpine Ambassadors Program, supported our mission as a Peak Society donor, and was involved in the publication of our tenth edition of *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*. Steve also served as president of the American Alpine Club from 2009 to 2012.

Backcountry Bike Touring

By Michelle Song, Volunteer Development Manager



Bikepackers camping at Lower Deschutes Recreation Area.
Photo by Pushpreet Singh Hanspal.

At The Mountaineers, we place great emphasis on experiencing the outdoors in new ways. Scott Schissel and Emma Agosta, Super Volunteers with 39 years of collective Mountaineers membership, are well aware of our community's zeal for novel experiences. A shared excitement for bikepacking brought their superpowers together.

Bikepacking is a form of bike touring on a mix of trails and gravel roads that combines the adventure and self-sufficiency of backpacking with the speed of biking. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Scott was looking for an activity with an inherently greater degree of physical separation than hiking or climbing, and bikepacking gives you the opportunity to travel farther while staying further apart. Bikepacking also gives you more control over distances. In fall 2020, Scott introduced bikepacking to The Mountaineers and formed the first Bikepacking Committee in Tacoma, launching Tacoma's inaugural courses.

Emma joined that first Bikepacking Course to take her rediscovered passion for cycling beyond the streets of Seattle and to connect with future bikepacking partners. Tacoma's foundational course introduced Emma to a community of cyclists eager to take their bikes out of the city and into the backcountry. Inspired, she quickly became a bikepacking leader and established a Seattle Bikepacking Committee in spring 2022.

Aspiring bikepackers can now tap into the dual and shared expertise of Scott and Emma. Students attending Scott's class in Tacoma easily find parallels in Emma's class in Seattle as

they approach their courses and committees with a high level of collaboration. The transparent nature of their partnership fosters deep support across both branches and nurtures an organic standardization of instruction.

Backpacking on wheels

Taking a bikepacking course, you'll quickly learn that bikepacking is just backpacking on wheels. "A true minimalistic camping experience with all of your gear packed strategically on a bike," says Scott. "You can go further, faster, and farther than if you were on foot."

Our community of Mountaineers bikepackers comprises individuals with varying cycling experience and even some with previous bike touring backgrounds. It is seldom that they travel on paved roads as their trips are focused on backcountry travel. Whether it be backcountry double track or single gravel trails, bikepackers will be hard-pressed to find a shortage of rides on Mountaineers trips. The possibilities are truly endless.

Many riders learn the hard way that carrying a heavy pack greatly inhibits riding enjoyment. "A more minimalistic kind of setup for overnight gear is necessary for an optimal bikepacking experience," says Emma. Luckily, bikepacking gear tends to be lighter than traditional backpacking gear because all of the gear needs to fit on a bike. You don't need an expensive bike to get out and explore—the only necessity is a bike capable of handling the terrain stipulated in the courses and trips. A good rule of thumb with bikes from the



Emma bikepacking the White Rim Trail, Utah. Photo by Brian Starlin.



Scott bikepacking through Ancient Lakes. Photo by Scott Schissel.

bikepacking courses: you need to be able to ride 20 to 25 miles a day at the trip-listed pace on a bike that you are capable of doing minor repairs on in the backcountry.

Students beginning the process of purchasing gear will be met with Scott and Emma's empathy, who help their students navigate potential sticker shock of certain higher-end bikes or uncertainty over indefinite gear purchases. Emma urges participants to "start with the most basic bike you have around, or you can borrow, and use basic gear that can be adapted from other sports." Both committees are making an effort to be inclusive in their communication about the wide array of bike types, veering away from a narrow scope of acceptable gear and highlighting the creative modifications their committee members make to adapt nontraditional bikepacking bikes into appropriate gravel bikes. Understanding spare parts and how to distribute your weight on different terrain are all part of the basics that Scott and Emma are keen on sharing with everyone—experienced cyclists, those with a budding curiosity in bikepacking, and active individuals from other sports alike.

A great fit for any background

Bikepacking offers the thrill of blending two different activities

while having a lower physical impact on your body. Whether you enjoy bikepacking, or if you're seeking out your next riding adventure, bikepacking could be your next new favorite sport. It can also be an opportunity to blend more than just backpacking and cycling. As it is becoming a popular multi-sport option, riders are bringing their skis, inflatable kayaks, and packrafts to explore a greater variety of terrain and landscape. If you're seeking new experiences, bikepacking may be a great fit.

Looking for a place to start? Check out Sam Hendrix's "Bike Touring the San Juan Islands" feature on page 28 to find useful tips and suggested itinerary details to help jumpstart your next biking adventure. ▲

LEADER PRO TIP: GOALS, EXPECTATIONS, STYLE

To lead a successful trip, start by thinking about your **goals, expectations, and style**. Use these elements to define the parameters of your trip, then include them in the trip description. Transparently outlining this information allows potential trip participants to understand the elements of your trip and decide if it matches their skills, ability, and interests.

Goals are what you want to accomplish. They are measurable outcomes, and they determine your feeling of success on a trip. If accomplishing something will result in a feeling of success and satisfaction, that accomplishment is the goal, and types of goals can range depending on the trip. For example, your goal could be accomplishing 30 miles in two days, getting to Bellingham in less than 4 hours, or visiting all the bakeries on San Juan Island.

Expectations are how we think things will or should get done. Expectations are actions to be done or avoided. They are not negotiable, and they are often required for success or safety. When listing skill expectations, be specific and quantify where possible.

Style is how you like to do things. Some elements of your style might be negotiable. Style is not necessary for success or safety, but contributes to your enjoyment. Examples could be: starting early because you're an early riser, making shared dinners, or allotting quiet time for evening reading. Too much divergence in style could be a red flag for incompatibility.

Want to continue expanding your leadership and instruction skills? Check out the Foundations of Leadership and Foundations of Instruction eLearning Courses on our website.

The Tacoma Bikepacking Committee offers courses and clinics in the spring through summer, and the Seattle Bikepacking Committee offers clinics in the spring and its course in the fall. If you are interested in a course, clinic, or joining as a volunteer, visit the Tacoma Bikepacking Committee at mountaineers.org/tacoma-bikepacking-committee or the Seattle Bikepacking Committee at mountaineers.org/seattle-bikepacking-committee.

Tacoma Goes Green

How volunteers brought Leave No Trace to Tacoma

By Conor Marshall, Advocacy & Engagement Manager



Tacoma Program Center exterior. Photo by Troy Mason.

Like most major Mountaineers achievements, reducing the carbon footprint of our Tacoma Program Center (TPC) became a reality thanks to the passion and drive of our volunteers.

"Every time I looked at the gas meter outside the Tacoma Program Center, I cringed," said Charlie Michel, Mountaineers leader, volunteer, donor, and Carbon Footprint Reduction (CFR) Committee member. "I knew it just wasn't right to be burning fossil fuels to heat our building."

Thanks to the tireless efforts of leaders like Charlie, that gas meter is gone. With the addition of the building's new rooftop solar panels earlier this year, the TPC is now a Net-Zero energy building—it will power our programs and activities without any net carbon emissions. Completion of the Tacoma Net-Zero project is anticipated to eliminate at least 6.5 metric tons of CO2 emissions per year, an offset equivalent to one year's worth of emissions produced by 1.5 gas-powered cars.

Getting the TPC to Net-Zero is a recent example of how The Mountaineers is tackling climate change by reducing the energy consumption of our facilities, programs, and activities. This project wouldn't have been possible without the dedication of our CFR Committee and many volunteers and donors throughout our Tacoma community and across The Mountaineers.

Why Tacoma?

Our original Tacoma clubhouse was built by volunteers on land donated by a member in 1956. As Tacoma membership and programming expanded in the early 2000s, the branch

needed more space and an upgraded facility to meet increased demand. Thanks to a generous bequest from a long-time member and a fundraising drive that raised \$150,000 in individual donations, the TPC was rebuilt in 2011 to LEED standards.

The rebuilding effort was led by former Tacoma Branch Chair and past Board President Geoff Lawrence, who took on the role of project manager with the belief that Mountaineers facilities should embody our conservation ethic. "The new building was designed as eco-friendly and energy-efficient as we could afford at the time," said Geoff. "There was always discussion within the branch membership about how to embody Leave No Trace throughout our programs and initiatives. A lot has changed in the world of carbon footprint reduction in the last 10 years, and we came to realize we could do more to model those values."

The Tacoma Net-Zero project reduces The Mountaineers impact on the planet and will decrease infrastructure costs and save an estimated \$3,000 on utilities per year, allowing us to invest in future renewable energy projects.

Volunteer-led, staff-supported

In 2017, The Mountaineers committed to addressing the climate crisis by reducing our carbon footprint in our Vision 2022 strategic plan. Former Board Member and Tacoma Branch Chair Jim Burke led efforts to include and prioritize climate change and carbon footprint reduction. "Climate change kept rising to the top during those strategic planning

listening sessions with our Tacoma membership,” Jim shared. “To make this a priority for The Mountaineers, I knew we needed to bake it into our strategic plan moving forward.”

Since the beginning, Jim, Charlie, and Geoff have been central to The Mountaineers efforts to address climate change. In 2019 Jim and Charlie urged staff to create the Carbon Footprint Reduction Committee, where staff and members could collaboratively envision and execute the critical work of reducing The Mountaineers carbon footprint and elevate the issue of climate change.

Reducing the carbon footprint of Mountaineers buildings gained momentum in 2018 when Charlie made a large philanthropic donation, which was matched by our Board of Directors, to install solar panels at the Seattle Program Center (SPC). After successful completion of that project in 2019, Charlie made a similar commitment to fund solar installation at the TPC—a critical piece to reaching Net-Zero in Tacoma. Throughout each phase of the project, volunteers made generous gifts of time, money, and expertise to enable our Net-Zero vision.

Phase I: LED lighting

Volunteers kicked off the project in 2020 by transitioning the TPC’s lighting to energy-efficient LEDs. Fortuitously, several Tacoma Mountaineers members—including Charlie Michel, Tom Carroll, Bruce Durham, and Dave Schultz—have engineering and electrician backgrounds and were instrumental in planning and executing the lighting project. The old lighting was so dark that Tacoma Program Manager Sarah Holt had to bring additional halogens to light the climbing wall while instructing. The new lighting system saves energy, lowers operating and maintenance costs, and shines brighter on the programs and activities that bring the TPC to life.

Phase II: Energy-efficient heating and cooling

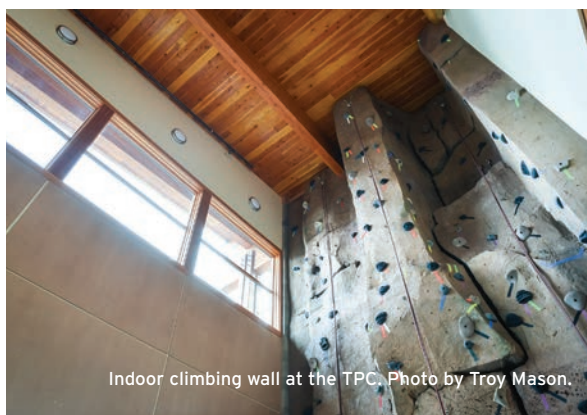
In 2021, gas-powered furnaces and appliances were replaced with energy-efficient electric versions to reduce the building’s fossil fuel reliance. Heat and hot water now run on electricity from Tacoma Power through heat pumps, using less than half the electricity required by traditional baseboards or electric furnaces. With a rebate from Tacoma Power, we were also able to replace the old refrigerator. These projects were made possible by an ambitious \$31,000 fundraising campaign and a generous donation by Charlie to cover half the costs of phase II.

Phase III: Rooftop solar

To help fund the project’s final phase, The Mountaineers sought a \$50,000 grant from Tacoma Power’s Evergreen Options (EVO), a public utilities program that allows Tacoma Power customers to invest in renewable energy for as little as \$3 a month and vote on annual grant applications.

This process resulted in a unique community engagement opportunity for The Mountaineers. After an unsuccessful attempt in 2020 to secure EVO funding, volunteers recruited Mountaineers members living in the Tacoma Power service area to join the EVO program and vote for our 2021 application. Our efforts paid off, and we secured a 2021 Evergreen Options grant award. Combined with another substantial gift from Charlie and additional donations from our community, securing this grant made rooftop solar and achieving Net-Zero status for the TPC possible.

“What we accomplish together at The Mountaineers is always because of the generosity of our volunteers and donors, recreationists with a deep love for our special outdoor places,” said CEO Tom Vogl. “Completion of the Tacoma Program Center Net-Zero Project is a great example of how volunteers and donors continue to lead us to adventure with purpose in new ways.”



Indoor climbing wall at the TPC. Photo by Troy Mason.



Heat pump air handlers for the water heater at the TPC. Photo by Geoff Lawrence.

Continuing to reduce our carbon footprint

The TPC solar panel installation project will likely qualify for a significant rebate thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act. Additional savings will help fund future Net-Zero projects for the SPC. Achieving Net-Zero in Seattle will save an estimated 7,260 therms of natural gas

and 85,000 pounds of CO₂ from being emitted into the atmosphere a year. That’s equal to taking eight gas-powered cars off the road each year.

Thanks to our volunteers, we’ve also retrofitted all lighting in the SPC by replacing over 500 light bulbs with energy-efficient LEDs, adding timers and occupancy sensors, and installing rooftop solar panels. Replacing gas-fired furnaces with energy-efficient heat pumps tops our wish list of future SPC energy-reduction projects. ▲▲

Reaching our goal of Net-Zero will not be possible without continued philanthropic support from our members. You can support this important work by making a gift to our Carbon Footprint Reduction Fund at mountaineers.org/cfr. By making carbon footprint reduction a part of your Mountaineers journey, we can continue to build a community where recreationists shape a better climate future.

CLIMB LIKE A MOTHER

Summiting my first glaciated peak as a new mom

By Cindy Hong, 2-year member



Cindy enjoying a hard-earned view of Mount Rainier during a Mountaineers scramble of Foss Peak. Photo courtesy of Cindy Hong.

A five-hundred-foot wall of loose rock loomed above me—the final five hundred feet between me and my first glacier summit, Clark Mountain. Someone on my climbing team drew a line through the air to map out our path. “Shouldn’t be more than thirty minutes,” our trip leader said. I flinched at the cheer in her voice. We’d left camp almost six hours earlier, and it felt like a lifetime away. My lungs and legs burned. I was hungry—no, thirsty. “Maybe I’ll just wait for you guys here,” I said, fishing for encouragement from our leader. “I think you can do it,” she said. “But it’s your decision.”

I wanted to believe her. I had trained for this moment with countless conditioning hikes, crevasse rescue practices, and gear checks. I thought of all the time I had dedicated—time away from my infant son. Maybe it wasn’t enough. Maybe it was ridiculous to try to complete a glacier climb before his first birthday. I watched as the team began ascending the wall. I tightened my shoulder straps and stepped forward.

Scrambling at six months pregnant

My journey to the summit block of Clark Mountain began a year earlier in the summer of 2021 when I had just completed

The Mountaineers Alpine Scrambling Course. I joined the organization shortly after moving to Western Washington in March 2020 to meet fellow outdoor enthusiasts and learn the skills that would allow me to explore my new home. I found both of these things in the Alpine Scrambling Course, where I learned what an ice axe is actually for and how to navigate off-trail. By learning how to scramble, I went from hiking on well-maintained paths to tagging increasingly technical peaks using clever route-finding.

I wanted more. More technical skills. More craggy peaks. I wanted the skills that would prepare me for the bigger objectives that I heard seasoned Mountaineers talk about. I didn’t quite consider myself a small “m” mountaineer yet, but I admired those who were. I listened, engrossed as they described their adventures in remote places. I marveled at the way they described the famous peaks of the Pacific Northwest as if they were naming close friends: Baker. Hood. Glacier. Rainier.

That summer of 2021 I was also six months pregnant. As my partner and I prepared for our baby’s arrival, we made plans to stay as active as possible. We wanted to continue spending time outdoors and eventually introduce our son to our favorite



Traversing a crevasse on the way down from Clark Mountain. Photo by Sarah McClellan.

pastimes. Being physically active in the outdoors is part of my identity. Before living in Washington, I took pride in being a runner who'd completed three marathons. I stopped distance running just a few years ago following an arthritis diagnosis, but stayed active by hiking, climbing, and backpacking at every opportunity. So when the registration for The Mountaineers Basic Glacier Course opened, I had to apply. I figured I could go on field trips while my partner took care of the baby. And the graduation requirement—one completed glacier climb—was a built-in opportunity to meet a personal goal.

Besides, the class didn't start until late January. Easy! By then the baby would be four months old. That's when everyone says they start sleeping through the night, right? And I was due to return to work then. I was sure I'd be ready for more independence. Never did it cross my mind that climbing a glacier was an unreasonable goal for a new mother. Never did it cross my mind that getting in shape might look different for me post-pregnancy.

Baby arrives & class begins

Baby Alistair was born at the end of September. The next four months passed in a blur. I didn't get out much. The days got darker and were focused around naps, bottles, and laundry. Forays outside revolved around baby wellness checkups and the nap stroll. The three times we made it out to a patch of green felt like hard-fought victories in which two parents armed with a 20-pound diaper bag battled a squirmy 12-pound foe.

As the start of the course neared, I began worrying about how I would possibly make it out of the house to travel the four miles across town to the Seattle Program Center, much less the hour to Snoqualmie Pass for snow skills practice. The doubts intensified with the first class. I huffed and puffed from a few minutes of prusiking, the method of ascending a rope on your own in case you fall into a crevasse. The months of



Cindy roped and ready for snow skills practice during the Basic Glacier Travel Course. Photo courtesy of Cindy Hong.

sitting on the couch nursing Alistair caught up with me. My fingers were all thumbs trying to tie knots, even though I had practiced beforehand. I wanted to explain: this isn't me. I'm usually a quick study, someone with steady hands who's full of energy! I wanted to say this is a sleep-deprived version of me. An up-all-night, covered-in-spit-up version. Not the real me.

I rushed home that night. I needed to help with bedtime and pump. I thought about deferring the rest of the course until the following season. Sure, I'd seen the inspirational stories of professional female athletes winning titles and setting records shortly after giving birth. But I wasn't a professional. I even started to question if my comparatively modest goals were better left to the child-free.

Stepping in as a leader

Another month passed with little improvement. My son was five months old, growing fast, but I was still searching for my pre-baby self. It was then that I got another invitation from The Mountaineers that ultimately helped me overcome my self-doubts and achieve my goal.

As a recent graduate of Alpine Scrambling, I was invited to go back and instruct. "It's a great way to refresh your skills," the Scrambling Committee implored. I was skeptical at first. With the trouble I was having on Basic Glacier field trips, surely it was a bad idea to commit to even more Mountaineers activities. But my partner pointed out that the first event was a conditioning hike at West Tiger, a location relatively close to us. I needed the exercise, so I agreed to help instruct.



Alistair enjoying the view of Tatoosh Range at Paradise.
Photo courtesy of Cindy Hong.

The conditioner fell on a clear day in March. I couldn't shake my nerves as we set off for the day. Would I be able to keep up? I would be so embarrassed if the students had to wait for me on their training hike.

My anxiety started to fade ten minutes in as we ascended the trail through dense forest. I relaxed, breathing in the scent of Douglas-fir after the spring melt. We adopted a moderate, diligent pace. I welcomed the sensation of my extremities warming up as my heart rate gradually climbed. We chatted about all things outdoors: recent hikes, reasons for joining The Mountaineers, big goals for the season. One couple said they wanted to learn the skills to reach summits without hiring a guide. Another pair shared that, despite living in Western Washington their entire lives, they didn't grow up camping or hiking and wanted to explore their backyards in adulthood. I nodded in recognition listening to their stories.

At one point while I was leading, we found ourselves losing elevation when we should have been gaining. I checked the map and declared that yes, we were still going the right way. It wasn't until we ran into another group that I realized we had taken a wrong turn. So much for my authority, I thought. But the students took it in stride. It was an extra twenty minutes of conditioning, they joked.

We stopped to do some ice axe demonstrations and discuss gear at the summit of West Tiger. As I demonstrated ice axe arrest in the dirt, I was surprised to find my reflexes were still there. I finally felt I had something to give back, and marveled that I was in the students' shoes just a year ago.

The seven-hour conditioner was the longest I had been away from baby Alistair since his birth, but I immediately knew it was worth it. The next few months I volunteered with the Scrambling Committee whenever I could. At Stevens Pass, I helped students execute ice axe arrests on real snow. At The Mountaineers Seattle Program Center, I gave tips on maintaining good balance while using the "three points of contact" method for scrambling. Not only did I regain my confidence in my technical skills, I also learned how to juggle the logistics of parenthood and mountaineering. Eventually, I worked up to spending a whole night away from

my son, staying overnight in the Teanaways to instruct at the scrambling graduation weekend.

As spring bloomed into summer, I found myself fitter and holding a newfound sense of belonging. I finished all the mandatory instruction for the Basic Glacier Course. All that remained was completing one Mountaineers-sponsored glacier climb. We were allowed to defer the climb for up to a year, but, eager to prove myself and earn a new badge, I decided to do everything I could to go for it. When a spot opened up on a climb of Clark Mountain in August, I jumped on it with just two days' notice.

The climb

Clark Mountain was advertised as a two-day climb near Glacier Peak. I had never heard of it, but my research showed that it clocked in at respectable number 42 of the 100 highest peaks in Washington. I surmised that the stout 10-mile approach to high camp, and its relative lack of name recognition compared to its volcanic neighbor Glacier Peak, explained why it was rarely climbed. For the same effort, one could tackle any number of better-known peaks in the state. But as I soon discovered, my climbing group largely consisted of more experienced climbers who had already claimed most of those more famous peaks.

The first day started off well. Our group of six made camp at 6,500 feet an hour ahead of schedule. It felt good to be outside in the sun, though it was unseasonably hot. Caterpillars clung to our clothes as we traversed fields of their host trees. It felt magical to be surrounded by all this beauty with thoughts



Cindy and Alistair on their way up Sourdough Mountain. Photo courtesy of Cindy Hong.



Cindy and Alistair at Lake Serene. Photo courtesy of Cindy Hong.

of diaper changes, naps, and bedtime a million miles away (although I did bring a manual pump—just in case).

But summit day proved to be a daunting challenge. We set off with a 3am alpine start. The first task was to descend into a basin down a dusty rock face before we could start our ascent of the glacier. We were halfway across the glacier when the sun came up. I felt myself fading as my rope team navigated around gaping crevasses. I thought I was prepared, but maybe I hadn't been for the heat.

At the summit block, it took repeated encouragement from the rest of the team to help me muster the will to finish the climb. I trudged to the summit behind everyone else. Finally at the top, I basked in my teammates' smiles and our spectacular view of Glacier Peak. The celebration was short lived. My thoughts turned darker as I faced an obvious truth: we were only halfway. We still needed to descend to camp, pack up, and hike a fully-laden ten miles out that same day. I didn't want to admit it out loud, but I was already gassed.

On the way down, two incidents made me question yet again if new motherhood and mountaineering were compatible. At the last glacier crossing, I started putting my crampons on upside down, alarming the rest of the team. Then, with just a few miles left to the trailhead, I full-on faceplanted, nearly spraining my ankle. My teammates chalked it up to heat exhaustion and, to my horror, redistributed my stuff. With a near-empty pack I was able to make it out on my own two feet.

During our debrief in the parking lot, I acknowledged that I had been the weakest link. That I might have underestimated the trip. I didn't say I might have overestimated myself. As I drove back to Seattle, I wondered if I was better off staying at home.

Looking ahead

Our trip leader emailed me the next day. She wanted to make sure I was doing ok and to let me know that I should be proud of my accomplishment. I thought about what she'd said on the trail: not every beginner climber could summit this particular mountain. I took those words to heart. Looking back on the climb, I've learned to see it as a success. Even though it was a challenging excursion for me, I reached the summit with the support of the whole team.

This achievement fueled the rest of my summer. Knowing that I had managed to climb a glaciated mountain in time to graduate from my Basic Glacier Course allowed me to push past any lingering doubts. I went on more adventures this past season, including another glacier climb and a backpacking trip with my now one-year-old baby. With the help of my fellow Mountaineers, I had the opportunity to embrace my new identity as both a mother and a climber. Although things are certainly different from my pre-baby days, I'm more eager than ever to see what the future holds. ▲▲



A JOURNEY THROUGH CANCER & RESILIENCE

By Kiana Ehsani, Climber & Super Volunteer

Ida Kaller-Vincent hiking into Ama Dablam, Nepal. All photos courtesy of Ida Kaller-Vincent.

Given my strong family history, it's not a matter of if I'll get cancer, but when.

Almost every woman in my family has had cancer, and I'm working to come to terms with this near-certain reality. One thing I'm struggling with most is the anxiety around how a future diagnosis will affect my climbing. My mom started backpacking after she went through cancer treatments which gives me hope, but I am still grappling with questions about my own future.

Ida Kaller-Vincent is an 11-year Mountaineers member and a marine and wildlife biologist currently living in San Diego, California. She has been a Super Volunteer, key leader, and climb leader with the Seattle Branch since 2014. Ida is also a two-time lung cancer survivor.

When I reached out with questions about my struggles, Ida graciously agreed to talk to me about her own cancer journey. Hearing her challenges in her own words helped me work through my own anxiety. Everybody's path is different, but after talking with Ida I am convinced climbing and recovering from cancer can coexist.

How did you get involved with mountaineering and outdoor recreation?

I've always loved nature. When I was a child growing up in Sweden, I went to forest school and spent the summers in

the Baltic Sea. I first got into mountaineering when I moved to Seattle from Australia, where I'd been living. I did a lot of scuba diving in Australia, and at first I tried scuba diving in Seattle. I was like, no, thank you! It's way too cold. I figured that people in Seattle climb mountains and hike. So I signed up for The Mountaineers Basic Alpine Climbing Course.

How did your cancer journey start?

It's strange. I've had cancer twice now, and both times I found out by accident. The first time I had been traveling in Africa. I came back and had the flu, but I thought maybe I had malaria. I went to the doctor who sent me for X-rays to check if I had pneumonia. The scan found something in my lung. They did a biopsy and found out it was cancer, which was quite shocking. I didn't anticipate that at all. I didn't even think that people my age got lung cancer. It didn't feel real.

It was tough to tell my mom and my close friends. My biggest concern was telling people and having to make them sad and worried. I wanted to protect them from that burden. When I was sick and I didn't know what was going to happen, I wrote many letters to many people because I just wanted them to know they were loved; so that if I didn't make it, they would know how much I loved them.

When you started the treatment, what were your biggest challenges and how did you deal with them?



Ida building a snow kitchen in Mount Denali, Camp 3.

The most challenging thing was the chemo and radiation. I had them both at the same time. I would have radiation every single day and every couple of weeks I'd have a chemo treatment.

When you are in the hospital getting your treatments, you have a bag that says "Biohazard" that's infusing fluids into your body, and you're like, well, this doesn't seem right! I felt healthy, and then suddenly, I started treatment and felt like I was dying. Chemo makes you feel so sick that you want to jump out of the window just to make it stop. It felt like there were worms in my brain. I had a tough time swallowing, and my chest was burning. My fingernails started to separate from my fingers. You can't do anything and you're seeing your body deteriorate.

It gives you this feeling of helplessness, and it's hard to wrap your head around what's happening. I couldn't do anything and had to tell my brain to just endure.

That feeling of uncertainty...

Yeah, even after you recover, there's always a fear that you don't have a future. I only started planning for the future six months ago, because I don't know if the future is out there. It is a weird space to be in, but I like to remind myself that no one knows; a car accident can end everything too.

How was it to suddenly go from having every weekend planned to putting an indefinite pause on everything?

The first time I had cancer, they took out a quarter of my lung. I didn't know what that meant and I remember talking to my surgeon and asking him, can I go to high altitude after this? Can I scuba dive? He said that usually his patients ask if they can go back to playing bingo (because they are generally not in my age group). So he didn't know. Being in outdoor spaces is my meditation. Not being able to have that was very hard, especially when I needed it the most because of all the stress.



Ida Kaller-Vincent, Tammy Martin, and Liana Robertshaw on the summit of Mongolia's highest peak, Khüiten Peak.



Ida at Denali, Camp 2.

Did you receive any comments or suggestions that you found more hurtful than helpful?

I think one thing that's been hurtful (or maybe not hurtful, but difficult) was how some people would say "you're so strong, you're gonna be fine." That puts it on you! If you die or you're not fine, that means you weren't strong and it's your fault. This isn't something anyone can control. People would say you're such a positive person, you'll be fine. And I thought that didn't mean anything. It doesn't matter how strong or positive I am. Cancer can just kill me.

I also had a lot of people who wanted to give me remedies and advice, which was not something I necessarily wanted. Then at some point, I decided that no matter what advice I got or what anyone told me, I was just going to accept that it came from kindness and that they were trying to help. I didn't know the right thing to say, so how could anyone else? That changed the way I thought about it. If anyone reached out, it meant they were thinking of me. It doesn't matter what advice they gave and whether I agreed with it.



"And I also believe this: that the battles worth fighting
are the ones that we are not sure that we can win."

-Nestor Walters



One of Ida Kaller-Vincent's Basic Alpine Climbing students, Svetoslav Kolev, on a climb of West McMillan Spire. Ida led this climb after her first lung cancer surgery in 2017. Photo by Ida Kaller-Vincent.



Ida after lung surgery at Virginia Maison Hospital, Seattle.

What support did you receive that you appreciated the most?

People being there for me; my husband, family, and friends. I had a lot of friends flying over from Australia to stay with us. Just having people there was really helpful. They took turns babysitting me and bringing me the food I could eat. It was also great knowing it didn't all fall on my husband. It's hard to consider other people when you're feeling sick. But they are also hurting, dealing with it, and trying to work it all out. Having a network of support was extremely helpful.

It was also very helpful to talk to a few people that had gone through cancer. Someone I met through The Mountaineers reached out to me and mentioned that her wife had gone through cancer. I spoke to her, and that was incredibly helpful, and made me feel less alone.

If you could go back in time, what advice would you give yourself that might make the process easier?

Unfortunately, I had the painful experience of getting a do-over because the cancer came back. But I don't know that you can do anything to change what it feels like. It's a shock. Each time! Even though I already had cancer once before, and you would think it shouldn't be a big surprise, it still was. I think back, and I could not have done it without my husband, friends, and family. I think it's about allowing people to be there for you.

What were the thoughts and emotions you went through when the cancer came back?

It was pretty rough. When the cancer came back two years later, it came back much more aggressively. This time they gave me a 60% chance of survival. That was a lot worse than the first time. I thought, wow, I might not make it. What do I want to do with the time I have? And what can I do?

It's been a little more than two years since my last treatment. I feel good, and there are no signs of recurrence so far. But it's hard not to worry every time I feel unwell.

Going through all of that must have been traumatic, and losing lung capacity adds more complications. How did you restart mountain trips after treatment?

After the first cancer, my climbing friends and I planned an all-female expedition trip to Ama Dablam in Nepal to get me back out there and give me a reason to train. Back then, even hiking Kite Hill in Gasworks Park felt like an achievement. But I had something to work toward, and having a goal and friends to support me was really helpful. Because my lung capacity is reduced, I never returned to the strength I had prior to the surgery, but I got pretty close.

The second time, the radiation caused a lot of scar tissue in my chest, making it much more difficult to breathe. Now I am slower than I used to be, and I'm coming to the realization that I'm never going to be what I was.

A few weeks after I finished my last radiation and chemo, my husband and I scrambled to the summit of Mount Langley at 14,042 feet. It took me so long. That was maybe a little too much only a couple of weeks after chemo and radiation treatments. But I'm pretty bullheaded. The first year after those treatments there were some trips where I felt great, and there were some where the altitude really slowed me down.



Ida at Ama Dablam, Camp 1.



During one chemo treatment at UCSD hospital, San Diego. (Left to right) Katie Spahr, Liz Johnson, Ida Kaller-Vincent, Madeleine Pierce, and Matthew Kaller-Vincent.

I had one backpack in the Sierra, maybe only to 12,000 feet. I was so slow and couldn't breathe or catch my breath. And then two weeks later we climbed Mount Williamson (the second tallest peak in California at 14,379 feet) and I felt fantastic. Some days are good, and some are bad.

This year I attempted to climb Denali, and it was the first time I did a guided climb. My husband is double my size, yet we were required to carry the same weight. When I couldn't keep up with the [guide's] pace despite being close to the summit, I was told to turn around. I was angry. I knew I could do it. I felt good, and I knew my body. I was just a little bit slower and breathing a little heavier.

But even though I didn't get to the summit, I still loved every bit of it. I was angry about having to turn around, but in hindsight it was a grand adventure and I think that's the lesson I'm taking from it. I still want to go and attempt these expeditions, and maybe I don't make it, but that's okay because the process and the adventure are what make it exciting.

Denali is at an altitude many people with full-capacity lungs can't even think about. How do you get the courage to continue traveling internationally and to high altitudes?

I don't think it's courage because I'm scared often. Having cancer and realizing how precarious life is and how it can be

gone in a second makes you want to live life to the fullest. I was already in the philosophy of "you gotta live in the moment," and then this happened and pushed it even further. I'm not fearlessly brave, but I don't have time to let that fear affect my life. We only get one shot. It's a gift to live and do these things. I often reflect on how fortunate I am that I was born in a country where I have these opportunities. I guess that gives me the courage to go out and do things even though I'm scared.

What advice do you have for someone who's going through a similar journey?

I think that it's incredibly scary and, at times, incredibly hopeless. But you are stronger than you think. As humans, we are more resilient than we give ourselves credit. We can only do our best, try and be there for each other, and be kind and understanding. Particularly in the mountaineering world there is a lot of ego. But we don't know each other's journey. When I'm out in the mountains, people don't know that I'm missing a quarter of my lungs and that's why I'm going slower and breathing hard. We don't know everyone's backstory. So we need to be a little kinder and a little more accepting. ▲▲



Kiana and her mom backpacking in the Pamir Mountains Range, Tajikistan. Photo by Kiana Ehsani.

In addition to her work as a biologist, Ida Kaller-Vincent (@alpineida) is a published author of a novel and children's book, Siggie the Sasquatch, and has produced and directed two documentary films. She was also featured on the cover of Mountaineer in fall 2016. Kiana Ehsani is a 2-year Mountaineers member and Super Volunteer, and has been featured in the fall 2021 issue of Mountaineer for sharing how her experiences as a young climber in Iran brought her to a leadership role with The Mountaineers.



BIKE TOURING THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS

By Sam Hendrix

Sunset looking west from San Juan County Park. All photos by Sam Hendrix.

Western Washington is spectacular in the summer. After eight months of wet, overcast weather, July brings sunshine and boosts morale just when we need it most. But between seasonal residents and tourists, and the desire to squeeze a year's worth of adventures into three dry months, our state gets busy. Lines of cars wind up Mount Rainier, campsites are booked for months, and good luck getting Enchantments permits. Worst of all is the dreaded ferry line. Ferries themselves can be enjoyable, but if you don't have the foresight to book your ferry reservation in advance, you may find yourself waiting all day in a hot parking lot for the next open spot.

What if I told you there was a better way? What if I said you could access one of Washington's most popular destinations—and all the camping, wine, pastries, and seafood it has to offer—without the headache of traffic and ferry reservations? All you need to start is a bicycle.

Getting started bike touring

Beginning as a bike tourist can be intimidating. I found the simplest way to get started is to use a modified version of

my backpacking setup. The core components of the gear are the same for a comfortable night camping, but include a few specifics to keep you safe and rolling along.

Suggested gear:

- Panniers or bike bags (you need a way to carry your gear) and corresponding rear and/or front bike bag racks
- Tent
- Sleeping bag and pad
- Camp stove and pots
- Lighter or matches
- Water bottles
- Tire patch kit with spare tubes and a pump
- Multi-tool
- Weather appropriate layers (rain jacket and pants, puffy jacket, long underwear)
- Headlamp
- Front and/or rear bike lights



A Lopez Island map greets cyclists at Odlin Park, shortly after leaving the ferry.

Whether you're a seasoned bike tourist or looking to dip your wheels into a new type of adventure, touring the San Juan Islands has something for everyone. I've taken this trip annually for the last six or seven years, and I regularly make tweaks to encompass more of the things I enjoy and less of the things I don't. Feel free to modify the packing list or itinerary for your adventure. This is your opportunity to reconnect—or connect for the first time—with the freedom of cycling as you explore a place from a new perspective.

Day 1

Friday afternoon, 10 miles, San Juan Island (part one)

To get the most out of the weekend, I prefer to head to Anacortes early on Friday by car. Anacortes lies roughly an hour and a half north of Seattle, though it can take much longer to get there with weekend traffic. Once you arrive at the Anacortes ferry terminal, you have several parking options near the ferry entrance. Parking at the official ferry terminal can cost \$10-20 per day, but the offsite parking outside the ferry terminal is significantly cheaper.

Once you ditch the car, the fun begins. The quick ride to the ferry doesn't even require peddling. Coast down the hill and past the cars to the ticketing office, throwing a few smug waves along the way as you skip the line. Grab your round-trip



Cyclists appreciating the smooth rides and sweeping views of San Juan Island.

ticket to Friday Harbor on San Juan Island and wait for the next boat to depart. All walk- and bike-on ferry tickets from Anacortes are round-trip, and your ticket includes inter-island ferry travel as well as the trip back. Ferry schedules can be found on the WSDOT website and typically run every couple hours and into the night.

While on the ferry, relax and enjoy the ride. Grab a drink from the galley or head to the sun deck for breathtaking views of the islands. If you're lucky, you may catch a glimpse of marine life playing on the water's surface.

You'll land in Friday Harbor, the primary commercial center of San Juan Island. If you're hungry, you have several options to eat in close riding distance. Golden Triangle provides reliable Thai favorites for a quick dinner before hopping back in the saddle. For something higher-end with waterfront views, Downrigger's has American fare and cocktails that you can enjoy on an outdoor patio. I recommend their smoked salmon Reuben. If you're planning a camp feast, King's Market is a great place to stop for last-minute grocery items. Outside of Friday Harbor, very few places offer the opportunity to stock up on supplies, so be sure to get everything you need before setting out for camp.

Camping is the primary reason for making San Juan Island your first stop. San Juan County Park remains one of my all-time favorite camp sites. Perched on a bluff above Haro Strait, San Juan County Park gives unmatched views of the water and Vancouver Island. The park is a breezy ten miles from Friday Harbor, and Beaverton Valley Road takes you most of the way there as you pedal through the island's rolling farmlands. Since you're arriving via bike, you get prime access to the hiker and biker camp sites closest to the bluffs with the best views. Get to camp early enough to secure the best spot and catch a sunset over Vancouver Island.



Just one of countless touring set-ups a rider can adopt to make their own.

Day 2

Saturday, 41 miles, San Juan Island (part two)

After a night sleeping by the sea, you're well rested and ready for today's adventure: circumnavigating the island. I recommend traveling counterclockwise, heading south out of the campground.

Your first stop lies a couple miles south of San Juan County Park, Lime Kiln Point State Park. This is a great spot for a cup of Joe and is said to be among the best spots in the world for orca sightings. The park lighthouse is a center for orca research and provides a list of recent sightings along with information on local wildlife.

When you're finished sipping coffee and searching for orcas, continue south on West Side Road to Bailer Hill Road before heading left down Douglas Road. Here you have two options: continue straight to Friday Harbor, or add some miles (and hills) by detouring through San Juan Island National Historical Park to the Cattle Point Lighthouse, another great place for sightseeing and stretching your legs among the seaside trails.

If you're looking for a snack, the Friday Harbor Farmers Market runs 9:30am-1pm every Saturday from April through October. Cynthia's has you covered with sweet and savory offerings,

and for something more substantial you can't go wrong with Tibetan dumplings at Ultimate Momos. Grab some food, kick back on the lawn, and listen to live music before you go back for seconds, or even thirds. Vendors tend to change each week so if you have your appetite set on something specific, check the San Juan Island Farmers Market website.

Now that your belly is full and you're ready to hop back on the bike, consider trying some of the island's finest vino to wash down the last of your lunch. Just four miles north of the farmers market lies San Juan Vineyard, the only operating winery on the island. Stop in and get some tasters or a bottle to sip and share with friends on the patio.

When you're ready to continue on, keep north on Roche Harbor Road for another six miles until you reach Afterglow Drive. Turn right and you'll find yourself at the parking lot for Afterglow Vista. Completed in 1936, Afterglow Vista is a mausoleum and final resting place for John McMillin—a wealthy businessman—and his family who resided on San Juan Island in the early 1900s. Stash your bikes at the parking lot and hike a couple hundred yards down the trail where you'll be greeted by a stone archway and columns surrounding a concrete table and several chairs. Each concrete chair houses the cremated remains of a member of the McMillin family. Legend has it if



Cyclists on Bayshore Road enjoying 360-degree water views as they approach Fisherman Bay.



A sign for "The Mausoleum" reminding visitors that Afterglow Vista is a memorial for the McMillin Family.

you visit after dark you may witness blue light orbs floating in the chairs, said to be the return of family members visiting from the beyond.

On your way back to camp, you have the option to stop at a few places. Down the road from Afterglow lies Roche Harbor, a swanky seaside resort with high-end dining options and lots of yachts. If that's not your thing, check out the sculpture garden located just before the resort. If you're running low on daylight and eager to get back to camp, follow Roche Harbor Road back the way you came until you get to West Valley Road. This takes you past English Camp, a British army camp established in 1859 when San Juan Island was a shared territory between Great Britain and the United States. Beyond English Camp, you'll take a right on Mitchell Bay Road which eventually turns to West Valley Road and puts you right back into your campground.

Day 3

Sunday, 33 miles, Lopez Island

With a significantly lower population and fewer tourist attractions, Lopez Island is arguably the best island for biking and why I like to save it for my last day of the weekend. Cyclists also laud Lopez Island for its biking since it's fairly flat relative to the other islands.

In previous years, I've explored Lopez Island a few different ways. Depending on how much daylight is left after biking San Juan Island on Saturday, you can pack up camp and catch the ferry Saturday afternoon or evening, allowing you to camp on Lopez that night. If you choose to do this, there are two different camping options, both fairly close to the Lopez Island ferry terminal. Odlin County Park is my first suggestion because it's just a mile from the ferry and easy to find a campsite. To get there, take a right on Odlin Park Road just as you get over the hill from the ferry. Camping at Odlin Park is the one and only time I have seen the Northern lights. Though I suspect it's rare, keep your fingers crossed that you get the same light show.

The other camp is Spencer Spit State Park, but it's a harder site to land because it's more popular and has views of Mount Baker. Instead of taking a right on Odlin Park Road, take a left on Port Stanley and follow this road to Bakerview Road which takes you directly to the park, just over four miles from the ferry.

Regardless of the site you choose, camping overnight on Lopez will allow you a leisurely morning and more time to explore the island on Sunday. While I generally opt for the hiker and biker sites, all camp sites are reservable with enough planning, and Washington State PRO 65-8 guarantees bike riders a place to stay at state campgrounds even if the camp is completely full. This ensures that you won't be turned away on a busy weekend.

If you're planning to stay another night on San Juan Island, I suggest an early rise to catch a morning ferry to Lopez Island, as it's a ten mile ride from camp to the ferry in Friday Harbor. Once on Lopez, book it to Holly B's bakery, one of the island's most popular breakfast spots. Try one of the cinnamon rolls or a veggie strata. You can thank me later.

Post-cinnamon roll, make your way down Fisherman's Bay Road. As you work your way south, you'll roll through farmland along two-lane roads that you often have all to yourself. If you have time, keep your eye out for Shark Reef Sanctuary and Agate Beach County Park. Both offer short hikes and water access with incredible views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

My favorite thing about Lopez Island is that you can make it exactly what you want it to be. Take time to explore side roads, find a hidden sandy beach and stop for a snack, or enjoy the rolling hills as you make your way across the island. When you decide to call it a day, head back up to the ferry terminal to catch the next ride back to Anacortes. Better yet, call in sick Monday and jump over to Orcas Island to keep your weekend-on-wheels rolling. ▲▲



HOW TO TRAIN FOR HIGH ALTITUDE TRIPS

By Meryl Lassen (she/they), Kitsap Branch Super Volunteer

(Left to right) Meryl Lassen, Michelle Tirhi, Lisa Katzman, Suzy Diesen and Mandy Russell pause at 16,000 feet on Peru's Ausangate trek. All photos courtesy of Meryl Lassen.

As the pandemic ebbed in 2022, five of us Mountaineers decided it was time to finally travel again. Our goal: the Ausangate Loop in Peru, a 60-mile, weeklong trek that ambles between 13,600 and 17,200 feet. We ranged in age from 43 to 68 and all identified as female-bodied. So, basically, we were five middle-aged ladies on a high-altitude adventure.

Spoiler alert: Most of us rode the "emergency horse," a lovely equine named Wayra (which means "wind" in Quechua), once or twice. She and her flute-playing horseman Ignacio accompanied us in case we got sick or winded at altitude. But we all made it—and had a blast!

Maybe you dream of climbing Mount Rainier or Mount Whitney. Or you have lofty, faraway goals like Aconcagua or Kilimanjaro. Many Mountaineers aim for new heights—literally and figuratively—but our home elevation does little to help us avoid Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), also called altitude sickness, which can be fatal. Pro athletes and people with money can spend a few weeks—or months—in Colorado's Breckenridge (9,600 feet) before hopping on a plane for higher pursuits. But if that's not you, don't despair! Paths to high altitude success abound. Our ladies tested most of them since our work schedules, vacation packages, family obligations, and finances varied. Here's our collective wisdom to help you on your next high-altitude adventure.

Make a training plan

To avoid AMS and have the best possible time, you'll first want to make a training plan. Generally, you'll want to ramp up your activity to match your trip objective. In January, we scheduled our trek for late May. We immediately started hoofing up Mailbox Peak, Teneriffe, Mount Ellinor, and Cleman Mountain most weekends. As the weather improved, we progressed to higher-elevation hikes, including Mount St. Helens and Camp Muir.

During the workweek, the gym was our friend.

We found inspiration in a training program designed by Kitsap youth leader Debbie Maraglio-Lynn. While preparing for a self-guided Denali attempt with a Kitsap Mountaineers group in 2019, Debbie did six consecutive hikes up Mount Walker (12,000 feet) in one day.

We each put together our own training plan starting 12 weeks out:

- Suzy Diesen (Kitsap) began with sporadic 4-mile runs and stationary bike rides, but soon incorporated daily 3-mile runs and spring farm work.
- Lisa Katzman (Olympia) used a treadmill for runs, intervals, and steep walks with pack weight. She added strength, stretching, and yoga.
- Mandy Russell (Tacoma) used a stair-stepper with pack



(Left to right) Meryl Lassen and Lisa Katzman have been "getting high" together for years. Here they are pictured at the 14,265-foot summit of Quandary Peak, Colorado, in July 2019.

weight twice a week and did heavy construction all spring, interspersed with hill walks and squat reps.

- Michelle Tirhi (Tacoma) used a Stairmaster at high speeds with pack weight three times a week, did circuit training twice a week, and hiked as part of her job.
- I used a treadmill with pack weight or took aerobics classes and did strength training on alternate days, five days a week.

For Debbie, her training built physical and mental endurance for the long days, heavy hauls, bad weather, and rotations on Denali. In addition to hiking, running, and weightlifting, she and her partner Steve Anderson built a dry-land sled that they loaded up and dragged out on evening walks, while dogs barked and neighbors cheered.

Train in an altitude chamber

Altitude chambers re-create high-altitude conditions indoors. Many high-altitude athletes use them for training, as spending even limited time "at elevation" can have long-term benefits for future high-altitude pursuits.

As a transplant from Oregon, I wholeheartedly recommend the Hypoxico gym at Evolution Healthcare in Portland if you can get there. As one of the only public altitude chambers on the West Coast, Evolution offers 30-degree treadmills, stairmasters, stationary bikes, rowing machines, air bikes, a ski erg, and a climbing treadwall, all in a high-altitude environment. An air compressor in an adjoining room puts high pressure air in a storage tank, which runs through a series

of filters into the altitude room. The filters remove oxygen and increase the levels of nitrogen and other molecules until they simulate the amount of oxygen you would breathe at a high altitude. This type of training can improve oxygen delivery, fat metabolism, VO2 max, capillary density, and mitochondrial count. While technical in name, all of these things allow you to better cope with lower levels of oxygen at higher elevations.

I trained at Evolution for Kilimanjaro, Ecuadorean volcanoes, Mexican volcanoes, and two Everest Base Camp treks. My blood oxygen level regularly dropped below 70%. Normal base rate at sea level is 95-99%, and Brad Farra, the owner of Evolution, urges clients to keep it above 75%. Under 70%, I'd get loopy and leave the altitude room for ten minutes. My Kili crew called it "the best high in Portland," which is saying a lot if you know Portland.

With enough notice, Evolution rents the altitude room overnight—a "No-Air BnB" (BYO sleeping gear, earplugs, movies, and popcorn). Brad cites research on the benefits of getting good sleep and recovering at lower elevations before "training high." I've personally had good results spending even more time "at altitude" by working out in the evening, sleeping all night, eating breakfast, and working out again at 14,000 feet in the Evolution room. Sometimes I leave the place feeling like roadkill, but it prepares me physically and mentally for most trekking itineraries.

Rent a home altitude chamber

Noodling around Instagram in 2021, I followed Seattle coach,



A typical home altitude sleeping system. Photo courtesy of Mile High Training.

author, and Seven Summitter Lisa Thompson (@lisaclimbs) and saw that she used a home altitude tent. She agreed to a chat, and based on our conversation, I rented a similar setup from Mile High Training.

Mile High Training Director Matt Formato recommends using at least one, ideally three training methods to maximize pre-acclimatization: 1. sleeping at altitude, 2. exercising at altitude, and 3. intermittent hypoxic breathing (IHB), or breathing with the mask on and generator at high altitude for five minutes, taking the mask off for five minutes, and repeating for up to an hour a day. By sleeping in or being exposed to a low-oxygen environment, the body makes adaptations, including increased red blood cell count to help transport oxygen. Repeated exposure to altitude leads to better on-mountain performance and lower rates of AMS.

Home altitude systems work like the Evolution Altitude Room on a smaller scale. They are light and portable, but they simulate higher altitudes in the comfort of bedrooms and living rooms. A generator filters and pumps low-oxygen air through a hose into a mask or tent. Users can control settings to simulate 5,000 to 21,000 feet. Matt recommends lowlanders use the home system for six weeks before a trip, starting at 5,000 feet and increasing elevation by approximately 1,000 feet every few days. The company provides individual protocols for shorter pre-trip timelines.

The Mile High tent fit over my bed, and I used the mask on my treadmill at home. By the time we left, I was “living” at 15,000 feet. It made my work video calls look a bit interesting, but it worked. I did not feel sick or even slow down much in Peru.

Bring medications and supplements

Seattle guide Garrett Madison led my first high-altitude climb up Kilimanjaro in 2015. He recommended we use the altitude medication Diamox, and we all summited. According to Garrett, Diamox can be beneficial in some in some situations. The medication can help people sleep better and suffer less at elevation. But his best advice, like that of most high-altitude pros, is to “go slow.”



Diamox is a diuretic, so users should drink plenty of water, limit alcohol, and resign themselves to frequent urination. On a pre-Peru hike to Mauna Loa, my aging bladder rejected Diamox, so I switched to Ibuprofen for our trek. However, it's worth noting that Ibuprofen can exacerbate digestive issues and aggravate the liver, kidneys, and stomach lining.

Some guides will ask if you're taking Diamox, since it's often their first recourse for AMS symptoms (headaches, nausea, bad indigestion, dizziness, acting tipsy or confused, trouble breathing, or swelling of the face or feet). If you're already using Diamox and begin to have symptoms, you likely need to descend to a lower altitude.

Go early and have fun

It takes hard work to prepare for high altitudes, but Peru, Kilimanjaro, and Denali aren't just notches in our hip belts. They are trips of a lifetime. Most of our Peru crew spent a week in Cusco before the trek. We climbed a few “via ferrate,” hiked Inca ruins, ran stairs, hung out, and just had fun. Our time at 11,200 feet helped us adjust to the elevation and to each other.

So, please don't forget to have fun. Take pictures. Make memories. Learn from locals. Deepen friendships. Let your eyes pop and your jaws drop. Be awestruck at the wonder of these higher places. ▲▲

Meryl Lassen considers herself an altitude amateur and thanks the pros and friends who shared their expertise for this article.

Streams in the Utah Desert

By Linda Shewey, 17-year member and Global Adventures Leader

Raindrops began to fall as our group of Global Adventurers set off to hike Lower Calf Creek Falls in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Prior to the trip, we had checked the weather forecast and knew rain was possible. As we had previously done a hike up the Virgin River Narrows, we were aware of the risks of flash floods and the appropriate precautionary measures to take while hiking. Although this trail was along a creek surrounded by greenery and red sand, it was not in a canyon and there was plenty of easily-accessible high ground near the trail should the creek abruptly rise.

Being from Washington, we were not daunted by a little rain and promptly donned our gear and continued up the trail. However, as we were soon to witness, the Navaho Sandstone is nowhere near as absorbent as the pine needle and moss floors of Western Washington.

As we made our way up the trail, we paid close attention to our surroundings. To our left we observed a large vegetation-covered plateau and some low rocky outcroppings. Across the creek to our right were high desert-varnished cliffs containing pictographs and a granary—a testament to the early native inhabitants of the area. As the rain turned into a downpour, we sheltered under a rock overhang located a safe distance away from the creek and watched in fascination as the drops gathered into rivulets, the rivulets into streams, and the streams into ruddy torrents. The water rushed to make its way into the creek, carrying sediment from the sandstone being washed off the rocks.

The creek rapidly swelled and covered portions of the trail we would have been walking on. We couldn't believe how quickly

the landscape transformed. Then, just as fast as it had started, the rain stopped. The thirsty ground absorbed the water and the previously-tumescent creek returned to its normal course, leaving behind new wrinkles and crevices in the ground.

Once the risk of flooding was gone, we continued up the now water-free trail to the Lower Calf Creek Falls. Water cascaded 126 feet below into a refreshing pool, spraying mist in every direction—a truly magnificent sight. We were awed to have witnessed first-hand the power of water in the desert.

During our eight days of adventuring in Utah's National Parks, we had plenty of opportunities to see the geologic sculpturing effects of water. In Zion National Park, our hikes included The Watchman (a magnificent monolith overlooking the river), the Emerald Pools (fed by a 400-foot waterfall surrounded by sheer cliffs), and the Narrows of the Virgin River (a slot canyon with walls 1,000 feet high).

The next several days were spent hiking among Bryce Canyon's spectacular crimson-colored spires and taking advantage of the night sky to see the stunning display of stars, including the Milky Way extending from horizon to horizon. In addition to amazing geology, we learned about the area's unique flora—like the Bristlecone Pine, Mormon tea, and Sacred Datura plants—and the history of the Fremont People, the area's first inhabitants.

Not all Global Adventures need to take place internationally to be amazing. There is so much to learn about the unique cultures, landscapes, flora, and fauna that inhabit areas closer to home. And it's even better to learn while hiking with a great group of Mountaineers friends. ▲▲

The Perils and Joys of the Backcountry

By Craig Romano, Mountaineers Books Guidebook Author

Craig enjoying the view at Glacier National Park, British Columbia. All photos courtesy of Craig Romano.

Hiking has always been my refuge from the craziness of the world. I find solace and peace of mind in the wilderness. I know that the natural world can be as unforgiving as the civilized world, but I find wilderness far easier to negotiate. Perhaps it's my illusion that when taking off for the backcountry, I need only worry about my actions and not the actions of others. In the human world there are far too many people making decisions that will affect me—and often not in a positive way.

The world is full of suffering, injustice, cruelty, and heartbreak, and I often find myself turning to nature for comfort. So it's always with dismay and sadness that I read about a hiker meeting tragedy in the backcountry. There have been no shortages of them lately, with the rash of folks recently discovering the natural world outside their windows. Many take to the trails not fully versed in wilderness travel. Some pay a fatal price for their lack of knowledge and preparation.

Who among us has not done something stupid, rash, or not fully thought through in our lives? I can recall several experiences

in my younger years that came dangerously close to being my last hike. I remember being overconfident, underprepared, and pretty damn lucky. And perhaps that is why many of the tragic accounts that I read strike a chord.

Two recent events in particular struck me. In one, a young woman in my home state of New Hampshire died just two days before her twentieth birthday above the tree line at Mount Lafayette in blizzard-like weather. She was hoping to celebrate her birthday by completing all of New Hampshire's 48 highest peaks. In another, a woman backpacking the Narrows in Utah's Zion National Park with her husband died during an overnight snap of brutally cold temperatures. She died of hypothermia while her husband frantically left her behind to find help.

The worst part of dying is leaving the living to live with it. As a father, the New Hampshire hiker's death hit close to home; I can't imagine the loss and pain her parents were experiencing. And as a husband, I can't imagine the pain of suddenly losing my life partner like the Utah hiker did. Maybe both of those cases hit hard, too, because they could have happened to me.



Craig enduring a treacherous creek crossing while hiking the Timberline Trail.

I have nothing but empathy for the friends and families of these deceased hikers. No doubt anguish is running through their hearts. And for many who have read, watched, or heard their stories, their kneejerk “they should have,” “I never would have,” and “what the hell were they thinking,” responses won’t bring them back. The court of public opinion is teeming with self-proclaimed experts and self-righteous disciples who are quick to condemn and judge, as if they’ve forgotten that they, too, have lived imperfect lives riddled with mistakes.

Life involves risk, and to truly live we must be willing to take chances, get out of our comfort zones, and push our limits.

While risks should be calculated and we should do everything we can to be prepared, life often doesn’t work that way. We can read about the circumstances that led to these hikers’ deaths and learn from them so that it won’t happen to us, but there is always some other unforeseen danger, set of circumstances, or personal shortcomings that may manifest. Life is a crapshoot and sometimes we survive purely by luck - or for the faithful, by the grace of God.

So I’ll continue to push myself in the wilderness. Go on long trail runs or backpacking excursions alone. Explore mountain ranges inhabited by grizzly bears and deserts teeming with venomous reptiles and scorpions. I’ll continue to ford raging

mountain creeks, cross alpine snowfields, round narrow coastal headlands, and experience nature in all its forms, be it in winter cold or summer heat. I will diligently plan, properly prepare, and do the best I can to make the wisest decisions every time I set out, but there’s no guarantee that my best efforts won’t be derailed by an oversight.

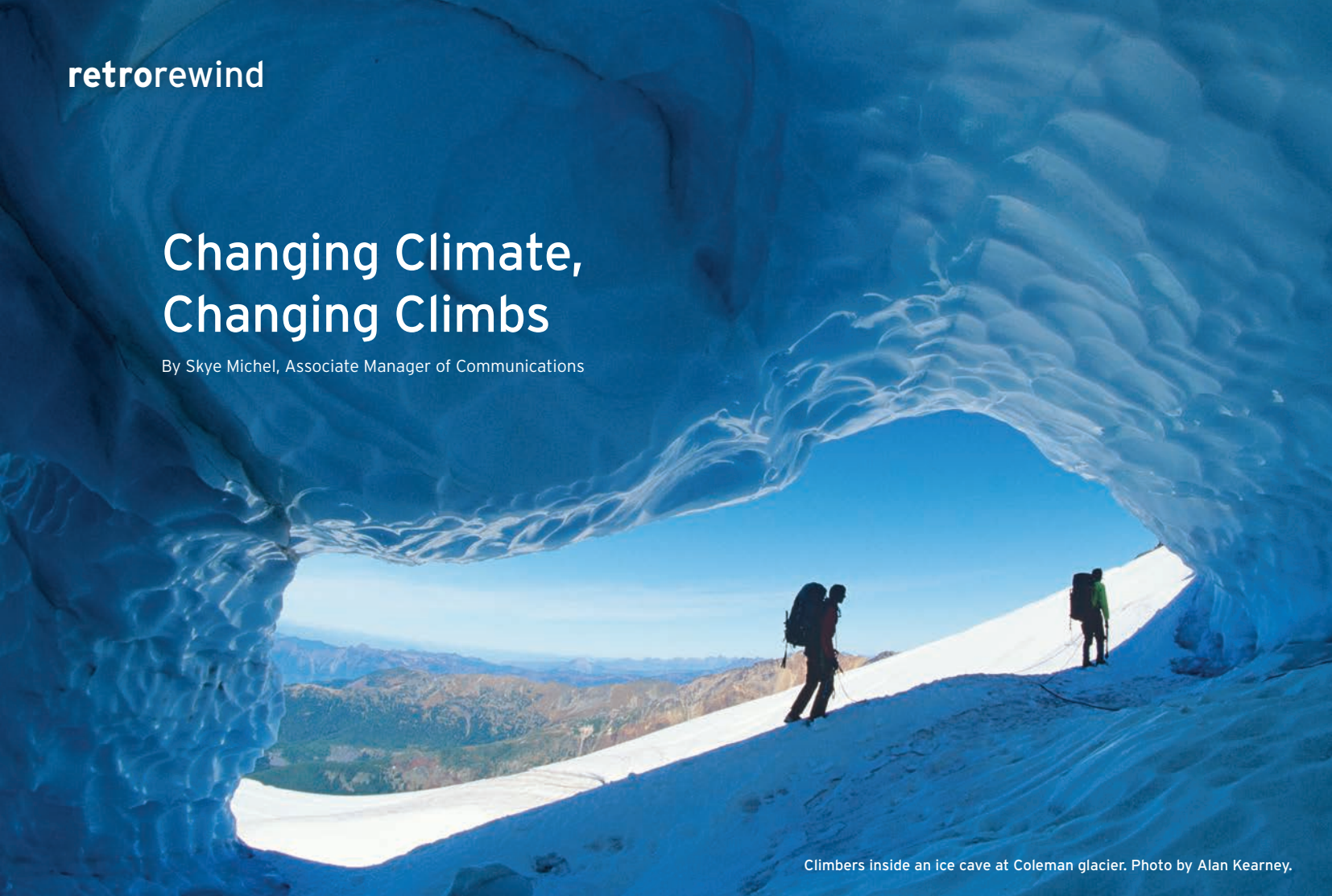
Yes, it’s risky heading into the backcountry. I am reminded of that every time I hear of a fellow hiker, trail runner, or skier perishing while doing what they so passionately loved. I acknowledge those outcomes are possibilities and freely accept the risks involved when I step onto a trail.

What I have a hard time accepting is the chaos of the frontcountry. I wonder, will I be killed on the highway heading to the trail by a distracted or inebriated driver? Or find myself gunned down by a deranged or disillusioned individual in a grocery store, movie theatre, school, or church? The civilized world doesn’t look too civilized with these questions in my mind. I’ll take my chances in the backcountry. A place that I, ironically, feel a greater sense of control and a lesser need to worry. ▲▲

Craig Romano is an award-winning guidebook author who has written more than 25 books, including Backpacking Washington, Day Hiking the North Cascades 2nd edition, and eight titles in the Urban Trails series (Mountaineers Books). Purchase his titles at our Seattle Program Center Bookstore, online at mountaineersbooks.org, and everywhere books are sold.

Changing Climate, Changing Climbs

By Skye Michel, Associate Manager of Communications



Climbers inside an ice cave at Coleman glacier. Photo by Alan Kearney.

Alan Kearney and his posse of bell-bottom clad buddies are obsessed with building. All the rage in 1973, 'building' is the art of bouldering on urban infrastructure, or in lay terms, climbing up a building. Inspired by the emerging ice climbers in the Alps, Alan and crew want to take their new passion a step further by building on ice. They look for ice anywhere they can find it, and stumble across a 15-foot frozen wall behind a local meat market in the dark of night. Ice axes in hand, they anchor a top-rope to a fence post and begin to climb. To call them "ice climbers" would be an overstatement, but they have a blast regardless. Ice building, as it turns out, is just as fun as they had imagined.

The triumphant climbers return the next morning to examine the wall in its full glory. By the light of day, they notice a strange discoloration to the ice, then, the broken septic pipe. They'd been climbing on frozen sewage.

Fast forward 50 years, and today climate change is melting Alan's favorite ice climbing. Could urban ice building be the future of outdoor recreation?

Ice climbing and adaptability

Alan, who has since abandoned sewage climbing for more pristine ice, is a 20-year member and leader for Bellingham's

Basic Alpine Climbing program largely responsible for introducing ice climbing into Bellingham's curriculum. During his early climbing days, ice climbing was not at the level of popularity that it is today and "people weren't climbing a pitch of ice for the sake of ice."

But Alan fell in love with ice and made sure that the Bellingham climbing program did too.

While changing conditions are amplifying as a result of a changing climate, unpredictability has always been imbedded in the mountain. One of Alan's principal messages to students is the variability inherent in ice climbing. When in the field, climbers are ideally looking for bare and exposed ice unobscured by seasonal snowpack. Often, a large layer of powder can make the ice difficult to access, or a heavy crust of snow overlaying the ice may be frozen over altogether. On top of that, Mother Nature's mood is not one to be tested, and months of trip planning can be derailed by a bad weather window.

Although inconvenient, Alan believes this variability is what better prepares recreationists for more challenging alpine climbs. "In the big mountains, conditions are all over the place," he said. "You can't go and expect there to be perfect rock and perfect ice." Glaciers change, weather shifts, snowbridges collapse, and just because a feature was present the previous year doesn't mean it can be relied upon the next. In the world of climbing, adaptability is your friend.

Challenges to our climbing programs

Faced with a changing environment, The Mountaineers are confronted with the difficult challenge of adjusting our programs and reimagining how and where we recreate. Jerry Logan, 10-year member and Chair of Kitsap's Intermediate Climbing program, is one of many climbing leaders disappointed to discover the loss of a popular ice climbing route this year: Observation Rock. Observation Rock has long been a favorite because of the amount of exposed ice providing excellent teaching and climbing conditions. It was also the most easily-accessible multi-pitch ice climb for beginners.

Like all ice climbing areas, Observation Rock's usability varied by year depending on snowfall, but this year was the first that all the ice melted away completely. "This was the first time that it was very obvious to me that the changing climate resulted in the loss of ice climbs," Jerry said. "It was a 'wow' kind of moment that was very in-your-face as opposed to theoretical."

Alan has also been experiencing challenges with the Bellingham climbing program. One of the realities that weighs heavily on his heart is the rapidly shrinking alpine glaciers, which he's been photographing to track seasonal changes for over 40 years.

"I feel like they are friends," he said about his relationship to glacial landscapes. "And I think that a lot of us, when the smaller [glaciers] are gone, will be really sad." In Bellingham, the best place to teach Alpine Ice is the Coleman Glacier, which was inaccessible last year due to washout. Easton Glacier offered an alternative, but last year experienced slightly higher snowfall and not enough ice. Conditions were not ideal, but Alan and his students did the field trip anyway. As Alan reasons, in the face of unpredictable conditions, "you just have to adapt."

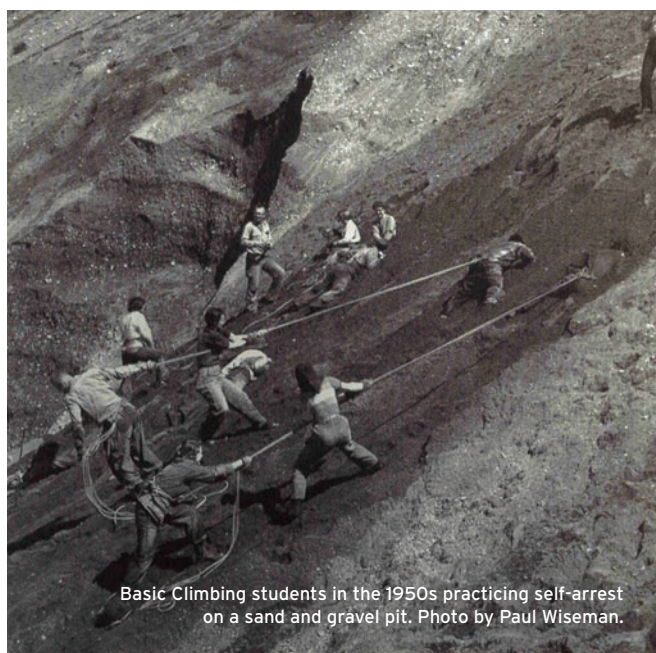
Embracing adaptation

Adapting is nothing new for The Mountaineers, and history can attest that we're actually quite good at it. In 2015, the Pacific Northwest experienced record breaking low snowfall that prevented the Tacoma Basic Alpine Climbing Course students from having an appropriate place to practice self-arrest. Serendipitously, they stumbled across a 1950s archive of Mountaineers practicing self-arrest on a sand pile. Inspired by the resourcefulness, the Tacoma students, with the generous aid of Lynch Creek Quarry, took to the sands. The field trip was described as a "huge success" with "remarkably realistic" conditions. Sand piles pale in comparison to a glacier, but when conditions call for it, Mountaineers can climb anything.

Other innovative forms of recreation are also gaining traction. Building is experiencing a renaissance, and this year's Banff Film Festival featured two climbing pros scaling the underside of a 2,600-foot long bridge using nothing but trad climbing gear and ingenuity. They described the sport as "almost better than real climbing." Gravel pits, bridge interstices, mysterious frozen walls—the possibilities are endless.



Ice climbers at Coleman Glacier. Photo by Emma Agosta.



Basic Climbing students in the 1950s practicing self-arrest on a sand and gravel pit. Photo by Paul Wiseman.

Our favorite outdoor places are not replaceable, and alternative forms of recreation may fall short in replicating the natural phenomena that bring us so much awe. But they can still provide an occasion for people to come together in community. They can still offer an opportunity to adventure in new areas while lessening recreational traffic on public lands. And, hopefully, they can still preserve some of the charm that drew us outside in the first place.

Imagining alternative approaches to recreation is not a means to disparage the weight of climate change and the intense alterations it will bring to our lives. Rather, it's an attempt to envision what lies at the periphery of possibility. Witnessing changes to our public lands will be challenging, but challenges like these are usually the impetus for unimaginable innovation. So find your bridges, fall down your sand mounds, scale your frozen buildings... just make sure you check for any leaking sewage pipes. ▲▲



Virtual Education Center and Calendar

Check out our Virtual Education Center and Calendar, your home base for accessing all of our great virtual learning tools. Find activities, events, and classes held online, and browse our educational resources for skills and more.



Conservation & Advocacy



Fitness & Performance



Gear Tips



Leadership Skills



Preparedness & Planning



Technical Skills

How to Get Involved

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

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

Step 2: Choose what you want to learn

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

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

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

What You'll Find

18

Online Courses

200+

Educational Blogs

25

Virtual Events & Activities

How to Sign Up for Activities

Step 1

Visit our website

www.mountaineers.org
Click on the big green 'Find Activities' button, or hover over the 'Activities' tab and choose 'Find Activities'.

Step 2

Filter your activity search

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

Step 3

Select an activity & register

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

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

How to Sign Up for Events

Step 1

Visit our website

www.mountaineers.org
Click on the 'Upcoming Events' button on the left of the main page, or click 'More' and choose the 'Events' tab.

Step 2

Browse for local events

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

Step 3

Select an event & register

RSVP for the event. Some events will have paid tickets available for purchase on the website. If the event is free to attend, RSVP using the "free ticket" option.

Frequently Asked Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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



Introductory Course Overview

Updated October 2022

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



Baker Lodge

mountaineers.org/bakerlodge

Our rustic Mt. Baker Lodge is nestled in the spectacular North Cascades and is a beautiful getaway year-round. The lodge is located within walking distance of the Mt. Baker Ski Area and numerous summer and fall hiking trails.

Stevens Lodge

mountaineers.org/stevenslodge

Nestled near the Stevens Pass ski area, this rustic ski-in/ski-out lodge is open to skiers and snowboarders in the winter, and PCT thru-hikers and mountain bikers in the summer and fall. Come enjoy a cabin in the woods, with bunks for the whole family. In addition to skiing, snowboarding, and mountain biking, hikers and snowshoers can enjoy nearby trails year-round.

Meany Lodge

mountaineers.org/meanylodge

Meany Lodge operates a 450' high ski hill with rope-tow, ski lessons, cross-country skiing, and snowshoe excursions. Check out our Spring Carnival with lots of snow fun; cheer on the Patrol Racers; or join us this summer for work parties, hikes, and bike excursions. Come for a day or for the weekend, and join the family-friendly Meany community. Visit our webpage for more details and registration information.



Kitsap Forest Theater

foresttheater.com

The Kitsap Forest Theater has been alive with music and the power of imagination for 100 years (1923-2023). Celebrate our centennial with two fabulous musicals perfect for all ages. In **The Sound of Music**, showing spring 2023, an exuberant young governess brings music and joy back to a broken family, only to face danger and intrigue in 1930s Austria. Showing summer 2023 is **Seussical, The Musical**, which celebrates friendship, loyalty, family, and community with the best-loved characters from Dr. Seuss' magical books.

Come be a part of this milestone year, either on stage, behind the scenes, or in the audience. Enjoy our incredible outdoor theater by planning your day away in the forest. Tickets make great gifts and are available online; save on our two-show package.

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



BELLINGHAM

Chair: Nathan Andrus,
nathan.andrus@gmail.com

Website: mountaineers.org/bellingham;
bellinghammountaineers.com

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

You'll find the Bellingham Branch tucked alongside the upper craggy expanse of the North Cascades. We enjoy easy access to the peaks that drain into the Nooksack and Skagit River basins. Our close-knit community offers climbing courses, hiking trips, and backcountry adventures in a diverse, inclusive, and supportive environment. We're also home to one of the most popular Mountaineers getaway destinations, Mt. Baker Lodge.

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

EVERETT

Chair: Nick Mayo, nicholas.e.mayo@gmail.com
Website: mountaineers.org/everett

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

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

KITSAP

Chair: John Mackey, john@pttaxcpa.com
Website: mountaineers.org/kitsap

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

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

Join us at our program center, conveniently located in Bremerton.

Branch Council Meetings are held in February, May, August, and November. Our annual branch celebration is in October, please join us! Visit our branch calendar for details.

SEATTLE

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

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

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

Branch Council meetings are held every other month to discuss new and ongoing initiatives. Our branch is growing rapidly, and we are actively seeking people to support our community - no prior experience required. Visit our branch calendar for details and reach out to the branch chair if you are interested in organizing activities for members based in greater South Seattle.

FOOTHILLS (I-90/I-405 CORRIDORS)

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

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

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

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

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

TACOMA

Chair: Curtis Stock
curtis@tacomamountaineers.org
Website: mountaineers.org/tacoma

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

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

Branch Council meetings are held every six weeks to discuss new and ongoing initiatives and general branch business. Visit our branch calendar for details.

OLYMPIA

Chair: Janette Zumbo, janettezumbo@gmail.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 ends its season in March. Visit our website for details.

Branch Council Meetings are held at 6pm on the second Wednesday of the month, alternating in-person and Zoom, though Zoom is always available. Members are encouraged to attend. Contact Janette Zumbo for information about attending.

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.

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

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

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

membershipmatters

UNWIND

with member benefits

As a Mountaineers member you have access to:

Courses, clinics, and seminars to gain lifelong skills

Activities to get outside and find community

Gear Library access to help outfit your trips

Lodge access at our Baker, Meany, and Stevens lodges

20% off Mountaineers Books publications, USGS maps, and Green Trails maps

10-70% off gear and experiences from our partners

And more!

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

Photo by Nate Derrick.



How Songbirds Learn to Sing

By Skye Michel, Associate Manager of Communications

A young Northern Shrike hunting from the top of a bush.
Photo by Tom Bancroft.

One of the telling markers of spring is the trilling of birds gradually filling our newly-cerulean skies. To humans, birdsong is a welcomed reminder of the sunny days and warm-weathered adventures ahead. To the birds, these songs are an earnest attempt to captivate a mate and charm them into the breeding season. Luckily for us, birds have remarkably good voices, and although it may seem that songbirds come out of the nest ready to serenade, baby birds undergo quite a bit of training before being awarded their solos.

Types of vocalizations

Singing is an innate behavior for songbirds, but the actual notes of a species-specific song must be learned. Two types of vocalizations are performed by birds: calls and songs. Calls are simpler sounds produced year-round and often used to indicate a threat or communicate location. Songs, on the other hand, are longer and more complex sounds sung—most often by a male—to attract a mate during the breeding season. Unlike humans, songbirds have a syrinx, a vocal organ that splits into two independently-controlled bronchial tubes, that allows them to produce two different pitches at the same time.

Each species of songbird has its own species-specific song, and, similar to how different geographical regions may have their own dialects, some songbird species can even have their own regional version of a song. The majority of songbirds will master one song throughout their life, but some birds—like the Brown Thrasher—boast over 2,000 different song types.

Finding their voice

Songbirds learn how to sing during the early stages of life, and the learning stage can be divided into two phases. During the sensory learning phase, baby birds are primarily focused on listening to and memorizing the sounds of their parents.

During the motor learning phase, baby birds begin to practice songs they hear. Initially they make soft and non-specific vocalizations, similar to the incoherent chatter of a human infant, but as they mature, they produce louder, more complex songs that better resemble their parent's melodies.

Hormones, and specifically testosterone, play an important role in song memorization. Testosterone levels are frequently high in baby songbirds in spring when adult males are intent on serenading, allowing baby songbirds the opportunity to listen closely and properly memorize songs. If testosterone levels are high during the wrong season, baby songbirds will end up memorizing simpler songs rather than the more complex ones used to attract a mate.

Born to sing

With myriad sounds emanating from the local environment, songbirds are well attuned to notice the vocalizations of their species. It's even believed that elements of species-specific songs are ingrained in a songbird's genome. For example, if raised in isolation, a songbird will develop an abnormal song that is different from the original generation but still contains similar characteristics to the original species-specific song. As this new abnormal song is learned by proceeding generations, it gradually changes and eventually begins to resemble the original song sung by the community from which the first songbird was removed.

Become a birder with The Mountaineers

Want to make the most of spring? Sign up for a Naturalist course or activity with The Mountaineers! We have an enthusiastic community who would love to show you the best spots to find birds and enjoy the springtime show. For more information, visit mountaineers.org/activities/exploringnature or mountaineers.org/courses/exploringnature. ▲▲

Hilleberg: Tents for any mountain, any weather, anywhere.



Tilman Graner/foto-tilman-graner.de

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

HILLEBERG
THE TENTMAKER



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

Facebook.com/HillebergTheTentmaker

— APRIL 1, 2023 —

The Mountaineers
**Annual
Gala**

— FEATURING —

STEVE SWENSON & PHILIP HENDERSON

Join us virtually for no cost or
purchase one of the remaining
in-person tickets.

www.mountaineers.org/gala2023

Proceeds benefit The Mountaineers mission to enable and inspire future generations to seek adventure, connect with nature, and care for our natural landscapes.