THE MOUNTAINEERS

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

April 23, 2024– 6:30pm

CHERYL TALBERT AND BRIAN TALBERT, MOUNTAINEERS BACKPACK LEADERS

PLEASE MUTE AND TURN OFF YOUR VIDEO WHEN YOU JOIN

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers
Outline

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- I have an available time slot - Where should I go?
- What permits will be required?
- Will the conditions be suitable and safe for my skill level?
- What route should I take? How long will it take me?
- How do I get there? How do I get out in an emergency?
- What gear and food do I need?

NOTE: A PDF and recording of this presentation and key reference worksheets will be emailed tomorrow to everyone registered for the session

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Scope for today

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- ***<u>This is a basic overview of a structure and tools for planning an on-trail backpacking trip</u>***
  - The best learning approach is to jump in and start planning an actual trip – then pursue more learning about the parts that you want to understand more

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Choosing your destination

THE MOUNTAINEERS

First you need to nail down:

- The dates when you want to take your trip
  - *Will drive what places are accessible when you want to go*
- How much time you have?
  - *To get there and back, and to walk*
- *Do you need a backcountry camping permit to do the route you want to do, and are permits available for your dates?*
- What daily distance and elevation gain is reasonable for you?

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Choosing your destination

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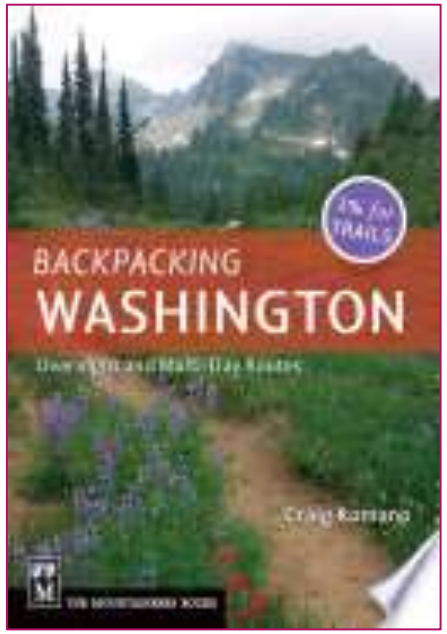
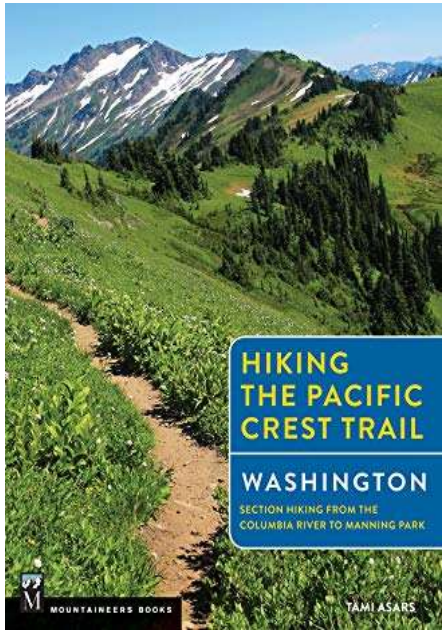
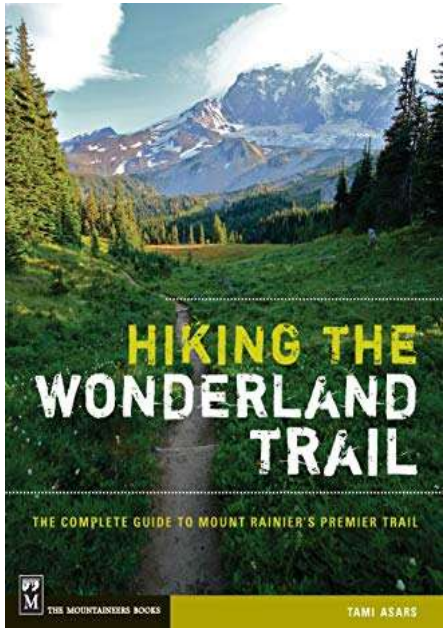
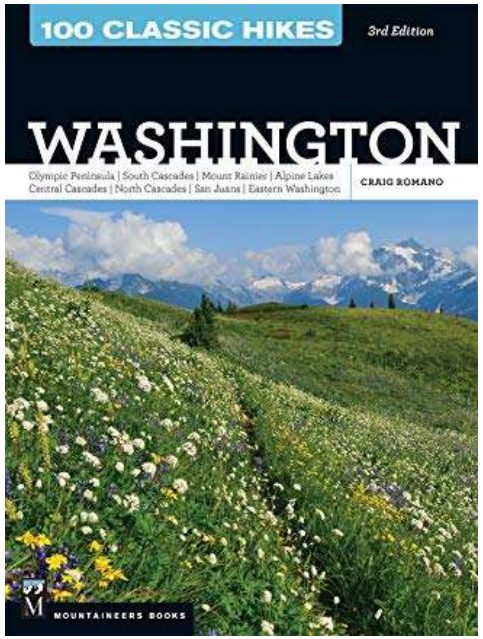
Start by investigating your options in the geography and season/month you want to visit

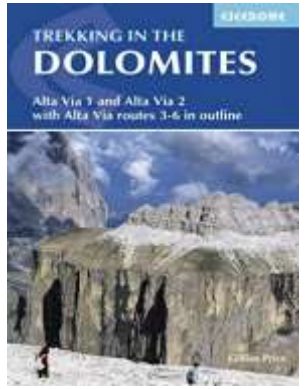
- Guidebooks!

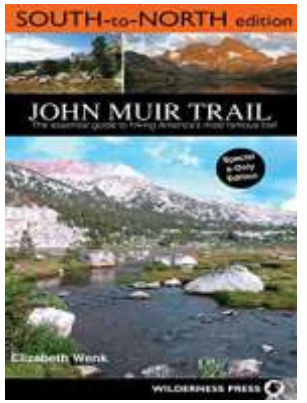


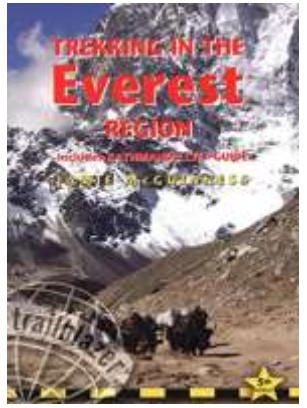












Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Choosing your destination

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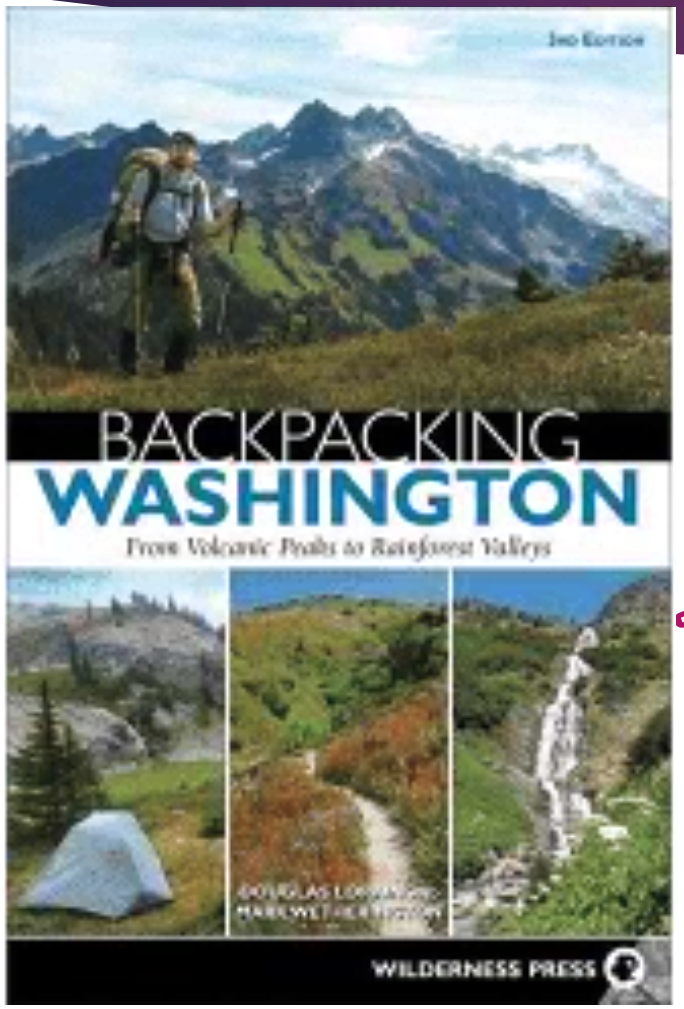

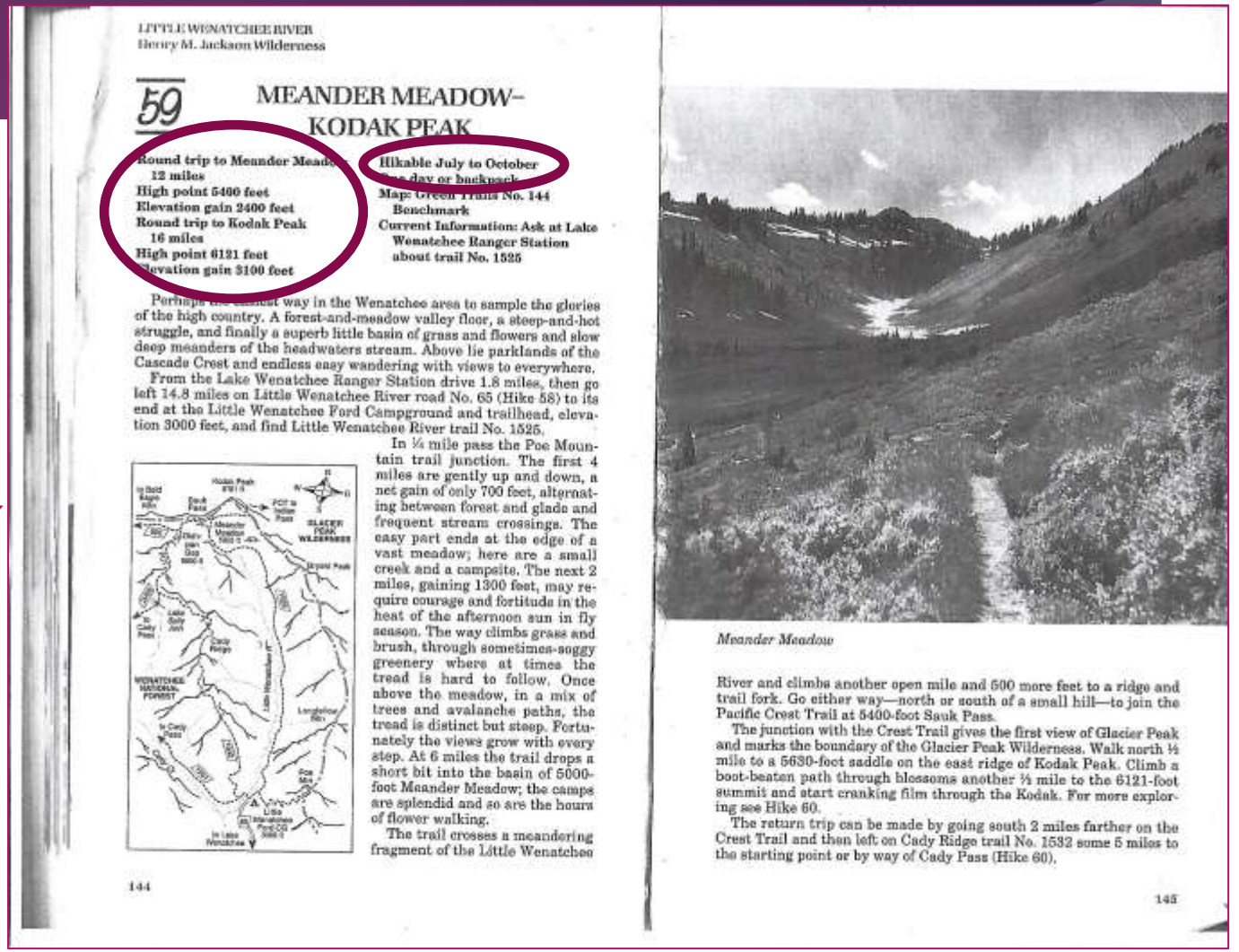

LITTLE WENATCHEE RIVER
Henry M. Jackson Wilderness

59 MEANDER MEADOW–KODAK PEAK

Round trip to Meander Meadow
12 miles
High point 5400 feet
Elevation gain 2400 feet
Round trip to Kodak Peak
16 miles
High point 6121 feet
Elevation gain 3100 feet

Hikable July to October
One day or backpack
Maps: Green Trails No. 144
Benchmark
Current Information: Ask at Lake Wenatchee Ranger Station about trail No. 1525

Perhaps the easiest way in the Wenatchee area to sample the glories of the high country. A forest-and-meadow valley floor, a steep-and-hot struggle, and finally a superb little basin of grass and flowers and slow deep meanders of the headwaters stream. Above lie parklands of the Cascade Crest and endless easy wandering with views to everywhere.

From the Lake Wenatchee Ranger Station drive 1.8 miles, then go left 14.8 miles on Little Wenatchee River road No. 65 (Hike 58) to its end at the Little Wenatchee Ford Campground and trailhead, elevation 3000 feet, and find Little Wenatchee River trail No. 1525.

In ¼ mile pass the Poe Mountain trail junction. The first 4 miles are gently up and down, a net gain of only 700 feet, alternating between forest and glade and frequent stream crossings. The easy part ends at the edge of a vast meadow; here are a small creek and a campsite. The next 2 miles, gaining 1300 feet, may require courage and fortitude in the heat of the afternoon sun in fly season. The way climbs grass and brush, through sometimes-soggy greenery where at times the tread is hard to follow. Once above the meadow, in a mix of trees and avalanche paths, the tread is distinct but steep. Fortunately the views grow with every step. At 6 miles the trail drops a short bit into the basin of 5000-foot Meander Meadow; the camps are splendid and so are the hours of flower walking.

The trail crosses a meandering fragment of the Little Wenatchee

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Meander Meadow

River and climbs another open mile and 500 more feet to a ridge and trail fork. Go either way—north or south of a small hill—to join the Pacific Crest Trail at 5400-foot Sauk Pass.

The junction with the Crest Trail gives the first view of Glacier Peak and marks the boundary of the Glacier Peak Wilderness. Walk north ½ mile to a 5630-foot saddle on the east ridge of Kodak Peak. Climb a boot-beaten path through blossoms another ½ mile to the 6121-foot summit and start cranking film through the Kodak. For more exploring see Hike 60.

The return trip can be made by going south 2 miles farther on the Crest Trail and then left on Cady Ridge trail No. 1532 some 5 miles to the starting point or by way of Cady Pass (Hike 60).

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Choosing your destination

Washington Trails Association – wta.org

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Go Outside > New to Hiking > Backpacking 101 > Overnight Backpacking Destinations

Overnight Backpacking Destinations

We've selected 14 trails that are perfect for novice backpackers, or for those interested in backpacking trips with lower mileage and more time for relaxing and enjoying the scenery. On them you can explore various regions of the state and experience the diverse beauty Washington has to offer.If you're tired of crowded campgrounds, and long for quiet camping out under the starry sky, you should try backpacking. No reservations are needed (unless you are in a national park), which allows you to go where the sun will be. And backpacking allows you to stay at your destination instead of having to tear yourself away after eating your lunch.

You may notice that many of these destinations are also day hikes. Extending a day hike into a longer overnight trip adds an entirely new experience, with opportunities to watch the sun rise and set, stargaze and escape the crowds.

New to backpacking or want a refresher on what to pack and how to keep camp? Check out our Backpacking 101 series:

- Backpacking 101: On the Trail
- Backpacking 101: Planning Your Trip

Interested in a longer trip? The new book, Backpacking Washington, has 70 multi-day routes. Read WTA's review here.

North Cascades

TWISP PASS - DAGGER LAKE

Best Season: July - October
Location: Near Twisp
Length: 10 miles, roundtrip
Elevation Gain: 2460 feet

OUR WORK | GO OUTSIDE | GET INVOLVED | JOIN | MY BACKPACK

Go Outside > New to Hiking > Backpacking 101 > Weekend Backpacking Trips

Weekend Backpacking Trips

After catching the backpacking bug with some overnight trips, you may be eager to immerse yourself in the backcountry with some longer hikes. This gives you the opportunity to push beyond what day hikers can get to and really experience some solitude - and some fantastic destinations!

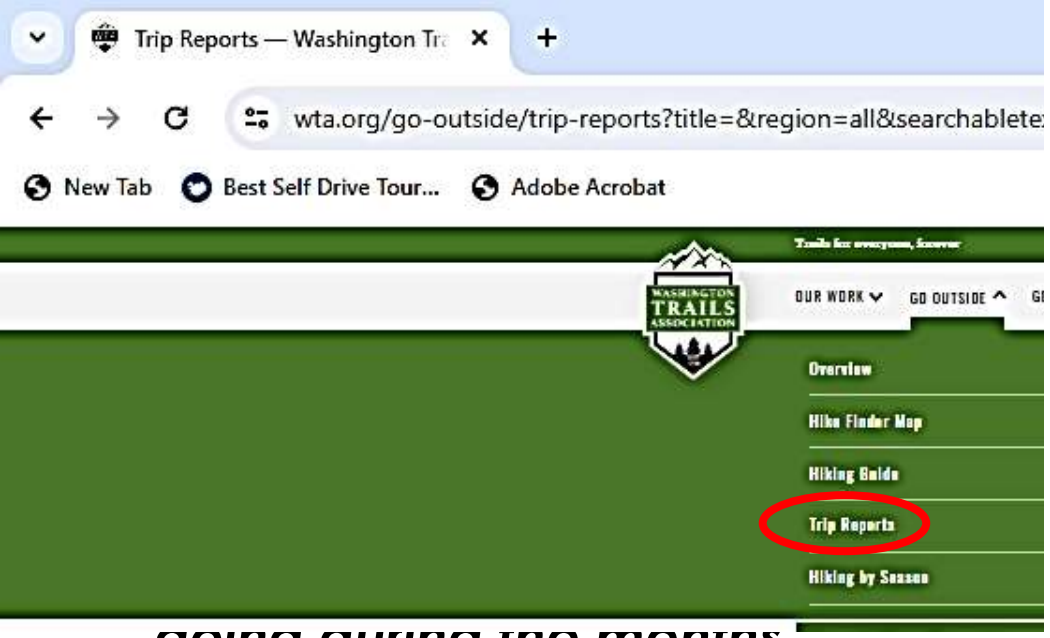
The backpack trips described here are all between 15 and 23 miles - they generally can be hiked in two days (one night), but several would be much more enjoyable if you take three days. Most have side trips you won't want to skip, and all have fabulous views to absorb. Better yet, three of the featured trips are loops and one is a traverse. The scenery surely won't get old!

Before you go, take the time to review some of our great backpacking information here. Now on to the hikes!

North Cascades

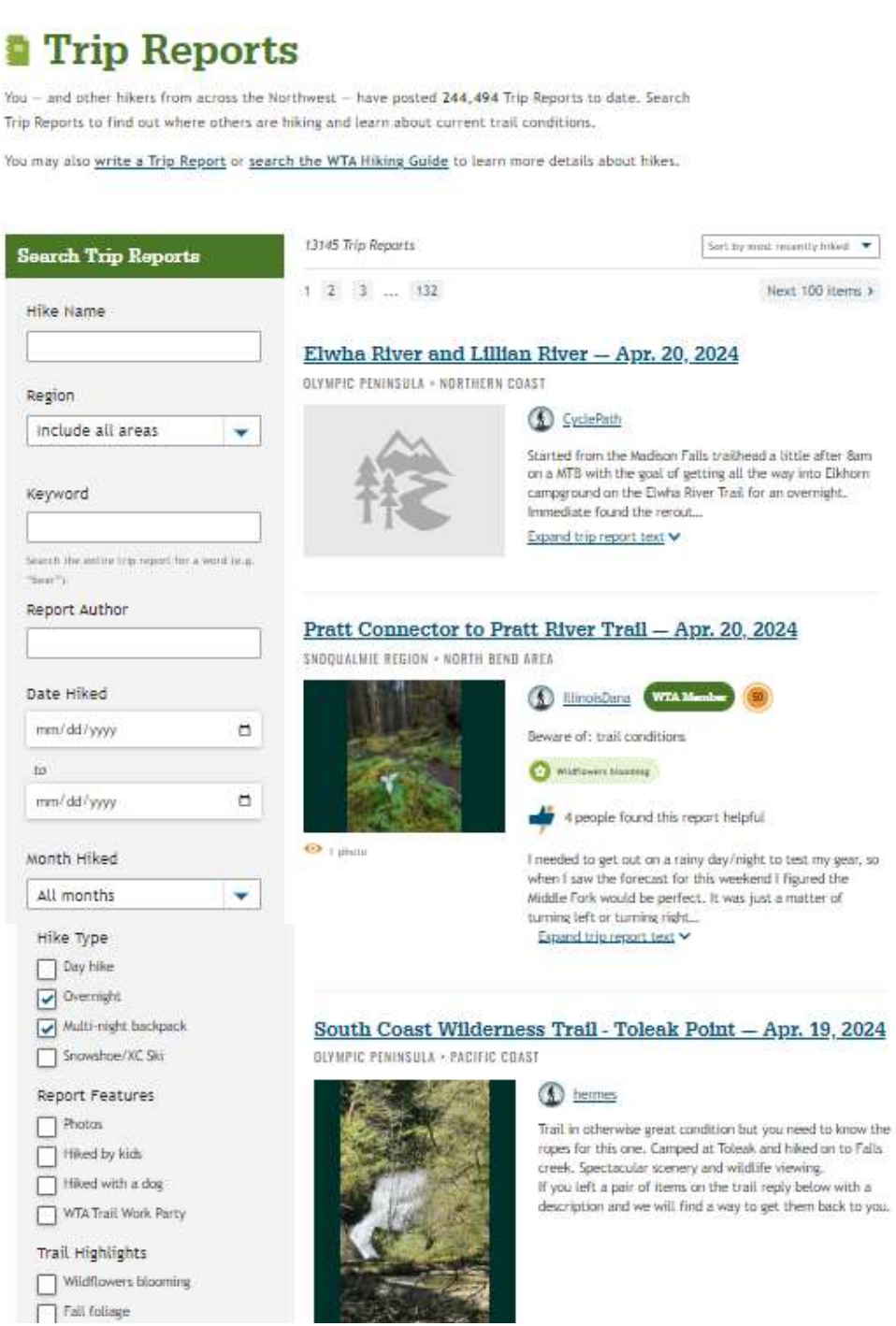
GOLDEN HORN - SNOWY LAKES

Location: Hwy 20 - Rainy Pass
Round Trip: 23 miles (2-3 days)
Elevation Change: 2700'
Season: August - September



going during the months you want to go?

WTA Trip Reports, filtered by Overnight-Multi-day, month, and snow-free



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Choosing your destination

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Elwha River and Lillian River — Apr. 20, 2024

OLYMPIC PENINSULA > NORTHERN COAST

CyclePath

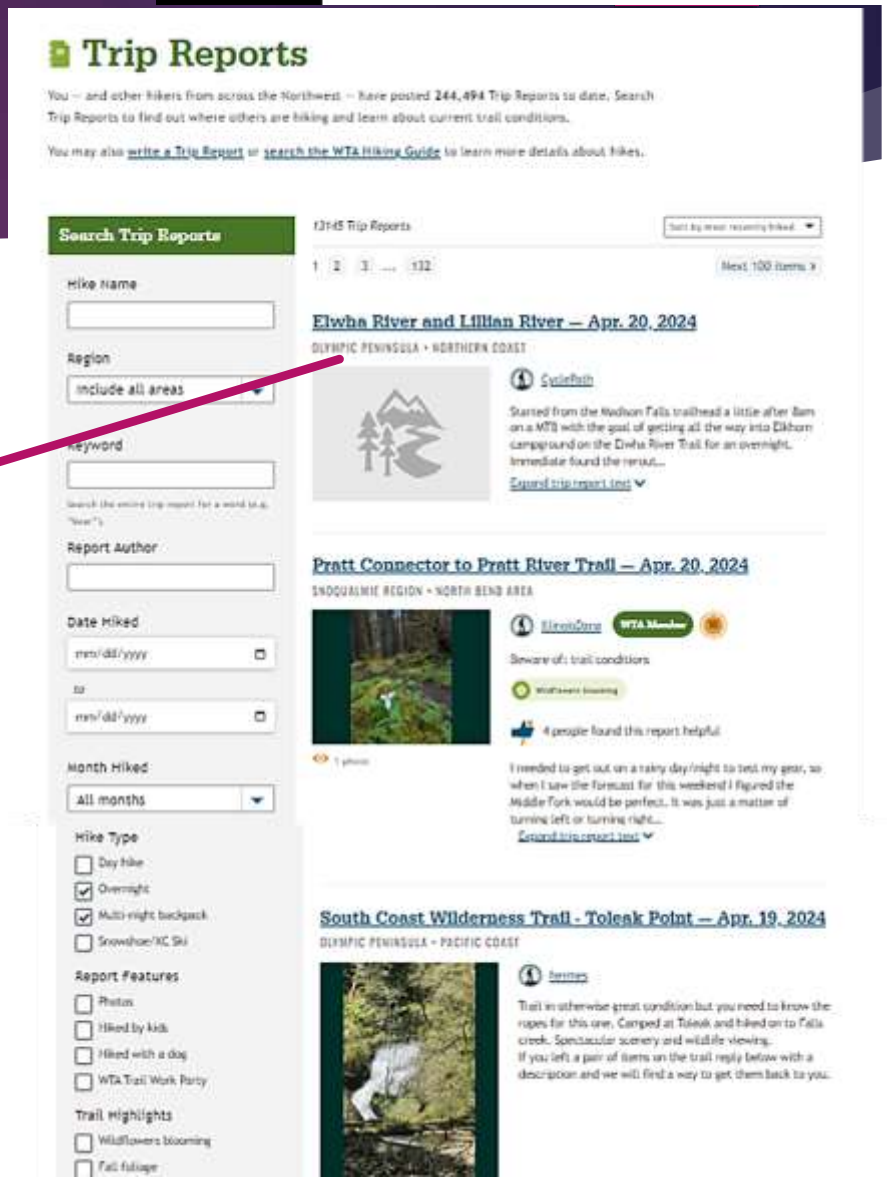
Started from the Madison Falls trailhead a little after 8am on a MTB with the goal of getting all the way into Elkhorn campground on the Elwha River Trail for an overnight. Immediate found the reroute trail around the road washout.

Turned at the bypass trail and immediately ran into a few difficulties. The reroute is doable on a decent MTB if you are an experienced rider, but I am not that and the extra weight of my overnight pack made it fairly challenging, so I ended up walking about half of it while pushing the bike.

After I made it around the bypass (~15 mins), it was just a few minutes to the Whiskey Bend gravel road. My GPS said that this was going to be 6.5 miles at 4% avg grade, but that didn't give it nearly enough credit. Several grade reversals made the actual climbing closer to 7-8% with extended stretched up around 12%. Without a pack on, this would be pretty fun ride, but fully loaded down it was quite a slog with several sections that I just had to walk.

After the grunty climb, pull into the Whiskey Bend trailhead and get ready to start walking. Trail is gorgeous basically from the moment you start and that doesn't really stop being so for the whole hike. Mostly flat terrain (for ONP at least) and the grades are very managable until you get to Humes Cabin 1.8 miles in. A sustained climb gains a few hundred feet of elevation and begins your time up and away from the Elwha river.

Moderate grades for the next few miles until you reach the fork for the Lilian River trail. I ignored that fork and



Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Choosing your destination

Washington Trails Association – wta.org

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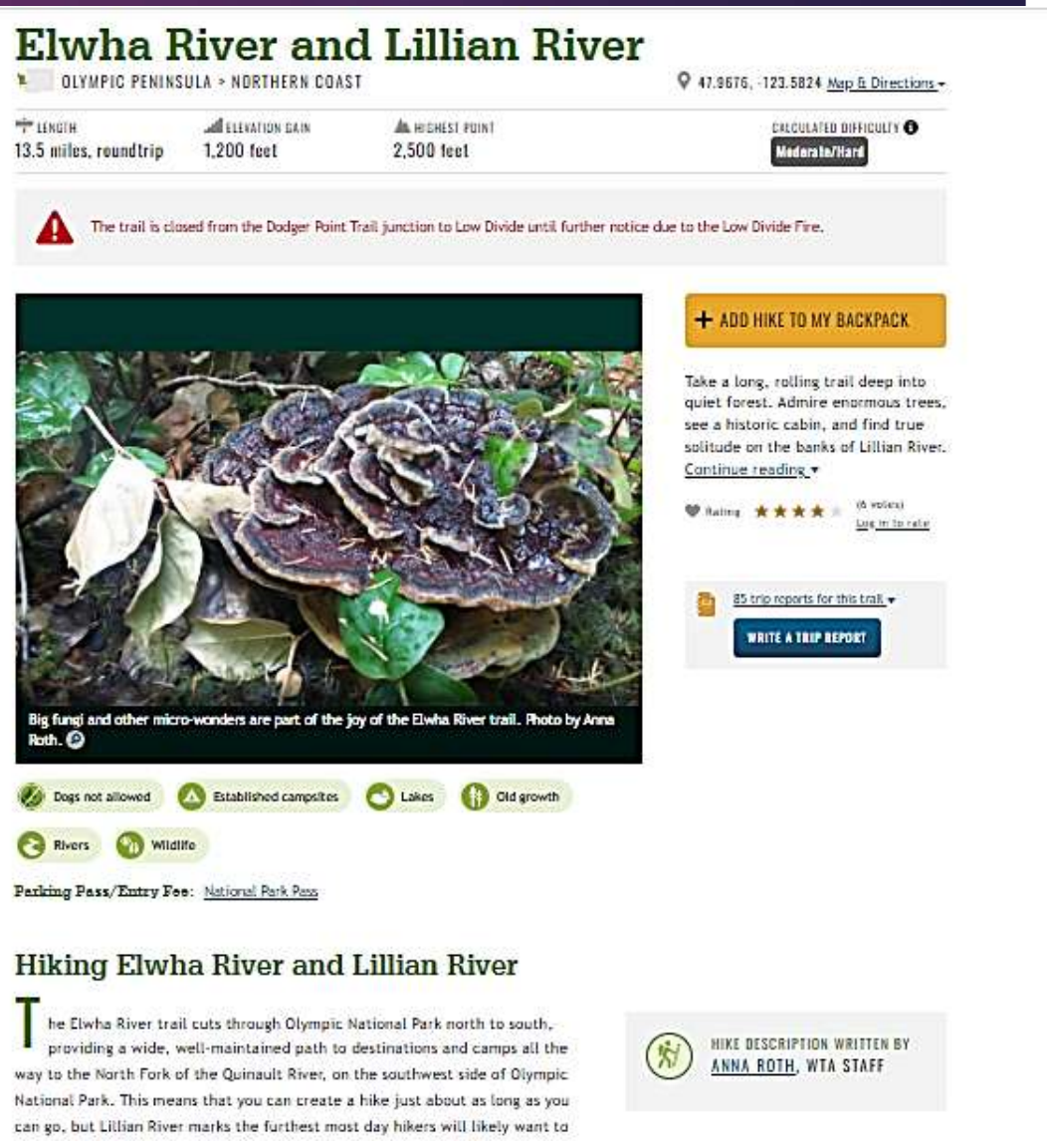
Then pull up the WTA hiking guide to find out more details about the location



Elwha River and Lillian River

OLYMPIC PENINSULA > NORTHERN COAST

47.9676, -123.5824 Map & Directions

LENGTH 13.5 miles, roundtrip

ELEVATION GAIN 1,200 feet

HIGHEST POINT 2,500 feet

CALCULATED DIFFICULTY Moderate/Hard

The trail is closed from the Dodger Point Trail junction to Low Divide until further notice due to the Low Divide Fire.

Big fungi and other micro-wonders are part of the joy of the Elwha River trail. Photo by Anna Roth.

+ ADD HIKE TO MY BACKPACK

Take a long, rolling trail deep into quiet forest. Admire enormous trees, see a historic cabin, and find true solitude on the banks of Lillian River. Continue reading

Rating (6 votes) Log in to rate

85 trip reports for this trail

WRITE A TRIP REPORT

Dogs not allowed · Established campsites · Lakes · Old growth · Rivers · Wildlife

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: National Park Pass

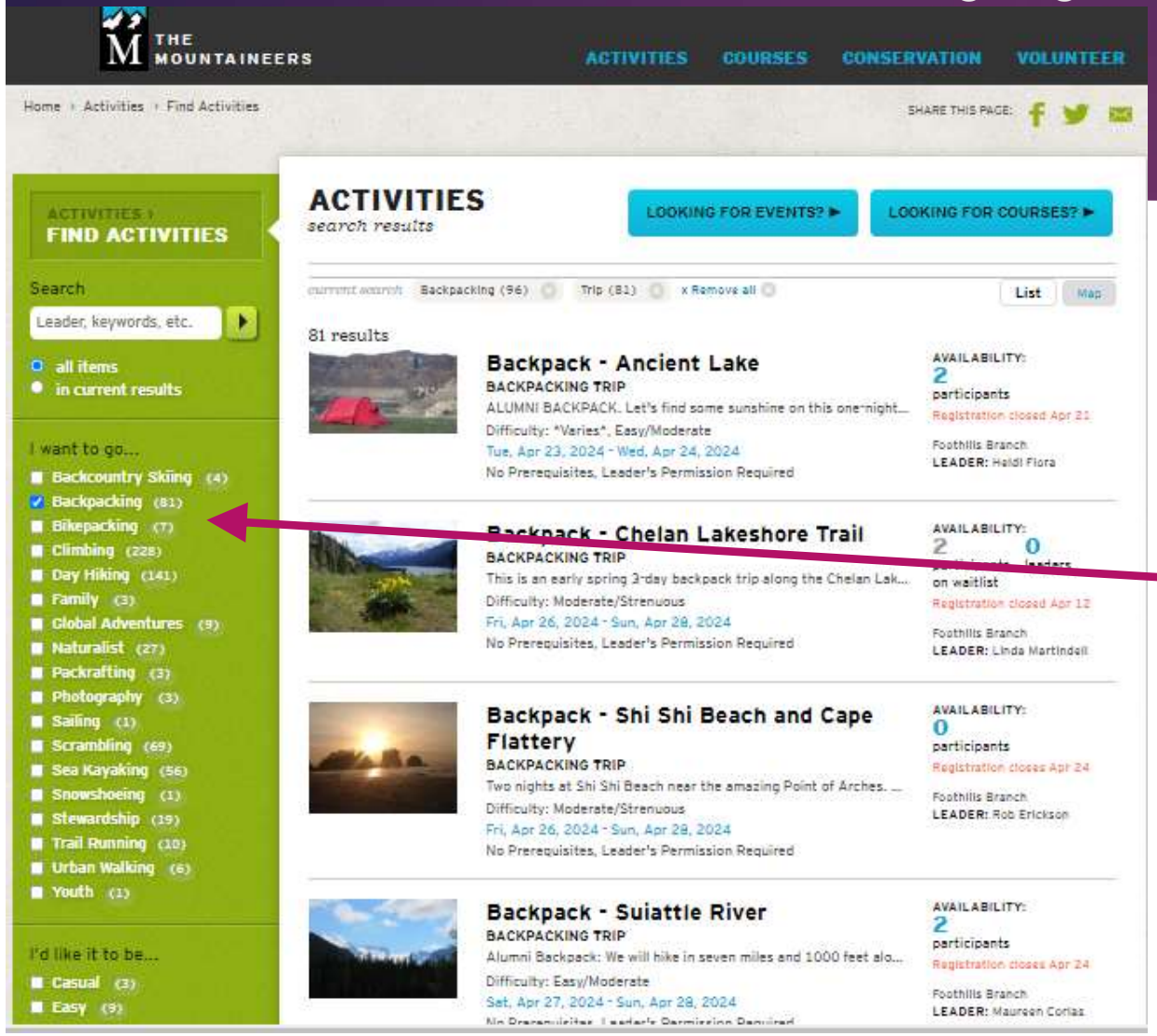
Hiking Elwha River and Lillian River

The Elwha River trail cuts through Olympic National Park north to south, providing a wide, well-maintained path to destinations and camps all the way to the North Fork of the Quinault River, on the southwest side of Olympic National Park. This means that you can create a hike just about as long as you can go, but Lillian River marks the furthest most day hikers will likely want to

HIKE DESCRIPTION WRITTEN BY ANNA ROTH, WTA STAFF

Choosing your destination

Where have Mountaineers leaders been going?



Set filters for backpacking …

Choosing your destination

Where have Mountaineers leaders been going?

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…plus date ranges and difficulty to find trips in the month you want to go

Backpack - Snoqualmie Lake
BACKPACKING & PHOTOGRAPHY TRIP
We will hike 19 miles round-trip, gaining 2,100 ft from the trailh...
Difficulty: Moderate
Sat, Jun 30, 2018 - Sun, Jul 1, 2018
No Prerequisites, Leader's Permission Required

SUCCESSFUL
5
participants
Foothills Branch
LEADER: Gregor Doerr

Backpack - Lake Dorothy
BACKPACKING TRIP
A backpack adventure for families ages 5 and above. Bring your...
Difficulty: Easy
Fri, Jul 27, 2018 - Sun, Jul 29, 2018
No Prerequisites

SUCCESSFUL
6
participants
Seattle Branch
LEADER: Jenifer Brink
Qualified Youth Leader

Backpack - Olympic Coast North: The Shipwreck Coast
BACKPACKING TRIP
Spend the weekend gawking at sea stacks on the breathtaking ...
Difficulty: Strenuous
Sat, Jul 28, 2018 - Sun, Jul 29, 2018
No Prerequisites

SUCCESSFUL
6
participants
Foothills Branch
LEADER: Michael Montgomery

Backpack - Dewey Lake
BACKPACKING TRIP
Experience the splendor of the Mt. Rainier area at the most fav...
Difficulty: Moderate
Sat, Aug 4, 2018 - Sun, Aug 5, 2018
No Prerequisites

AVAILABILITY:
2
participants
Registration closed Aug 2
Tacoma Branch
LEADER: Dick Hayek

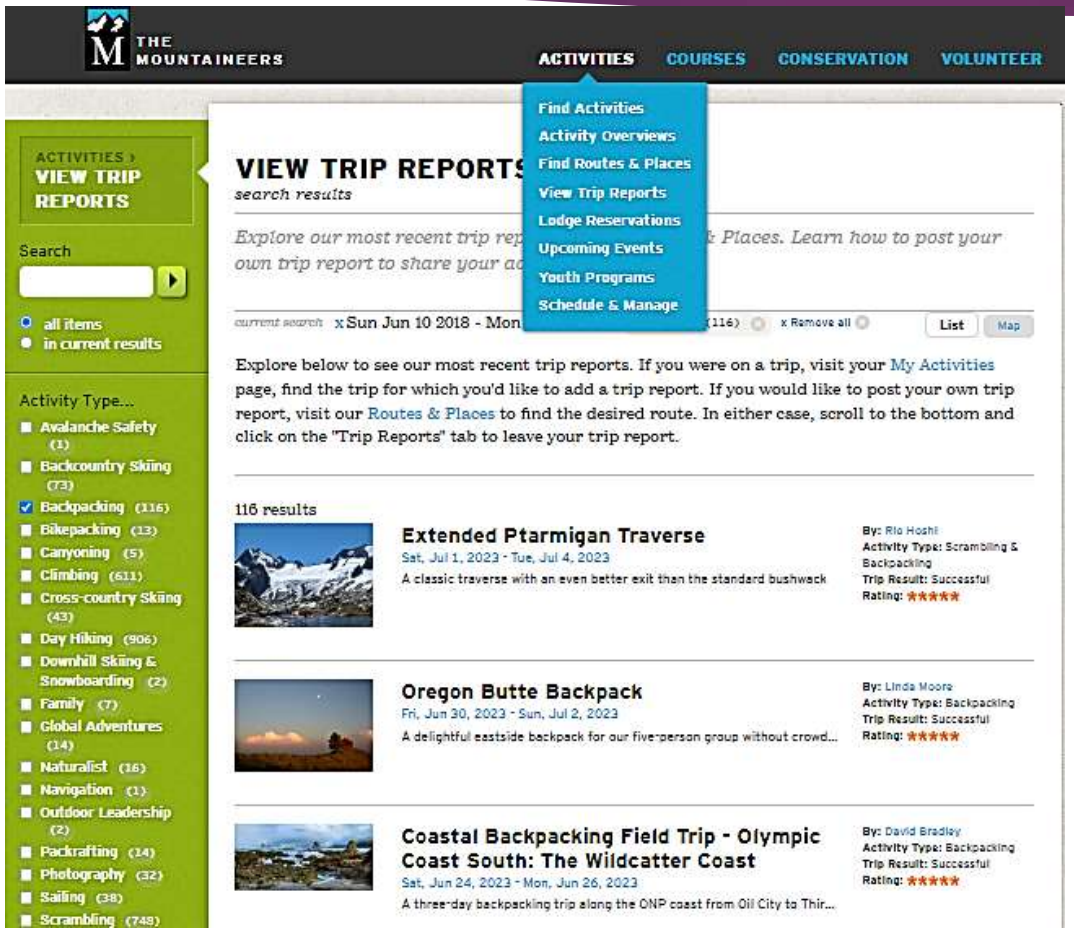
Backpack - Summit Lake
BACKPACKING TRIP
Experience a beautiful alpine lake, alpine meadows, a spectacul...
Difficulty: Easy/Moderate
Sat, Aug 11, 2018 - Sun, Aug 12, 2018
No Prerequisites

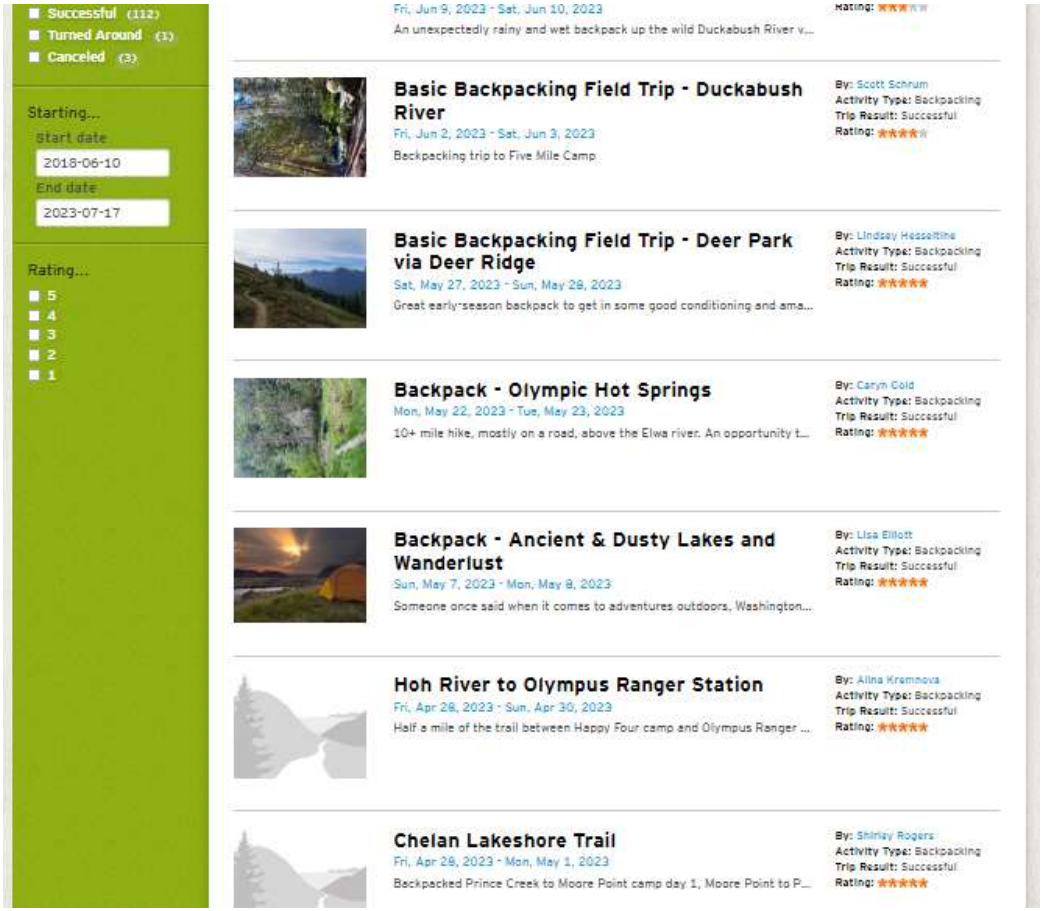
SUCCESSFUL
7
participants
Tacoma Branch
LEADER: Dick Hayek

Choosing your destination

Where have Mountaineers leaders been going?

And read trip reports from that destination and timeframe





Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers
Other online sources for trip ideas……

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Hiking Blogs - Searches

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers
Where are commercial companies going?

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WILDLAND TREKKING
UNFORGETTABLE HIKING VACATIONS

TRIP STYLES DESTINATIONS TOUR CAL

SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS

DESTINATI

Current Filte

Search Trips SEARCH

45 trips found Show only trips with

See All Trips (257)

Destinations
Regions Countries N. America

Activities
- Backpack (45)
- Base Camp (1)
- Hiking (1)
- Lodge (1)
- Service/Volunteer (1)

Specialty Trips

Price Ranges

Service in the Sky, Chiricahua Mountains, Arizona >>

$595 / May 6-13, 2024

BOOK NOW >>
3 Spots Left

24308A

REI co-op Adventures

Search for your next adventure

Contact Us Traveler Login

Destinations Activities Specialty Trips Dates Deals & Special Offers FAQs & Resources

Looking for a more bite-sized REI adventure? Find a guided day trip or class near you

All Trips

Hiking Trips (88 results)

Filter

Hiking ×

Sort by: Best Match

Region

North America (88)

Departure Date

Select date range

Popular Destinations
- National Parks (65)
- Appalachian Trail (8)
- Arches National Park (3)
- Big Bend National Park (1)
- Big South Fork National River & Recreation Area (1)

Hiking

Arizona Hiking Sedona Women's Adventure – Lodge Based

★★★★★ (89)

Days: 4

Hiking

Bryce Hiking Weekend

★★★★★ (42)

Days: 3

Activity Level: 3

Member: from $2,099

Hiking, Rafting

Canadian Rockies Hiking & Camping

★★★★★ (1)

Days: 6

Activity Level: 3

Choosing your destination

Do you need a wilderness camping permit? Can you get one for your dates?

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Many national parks and popular wilderness areas around the country and in Canada now require permits to camp in the backcountry.

- **Some operate by lottery, others by first-come-first-served**

ALWAYS start by looking up the land manager and Wilderness or Backcountry Camping to find their latest permitting process. Most open in the winter or early spring for the following season.

Washington Trails Association has an excellent overview of permit requirements for backcountry camping in Washington, as well as parking permit requirements

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Choosing your destination

Climate Information

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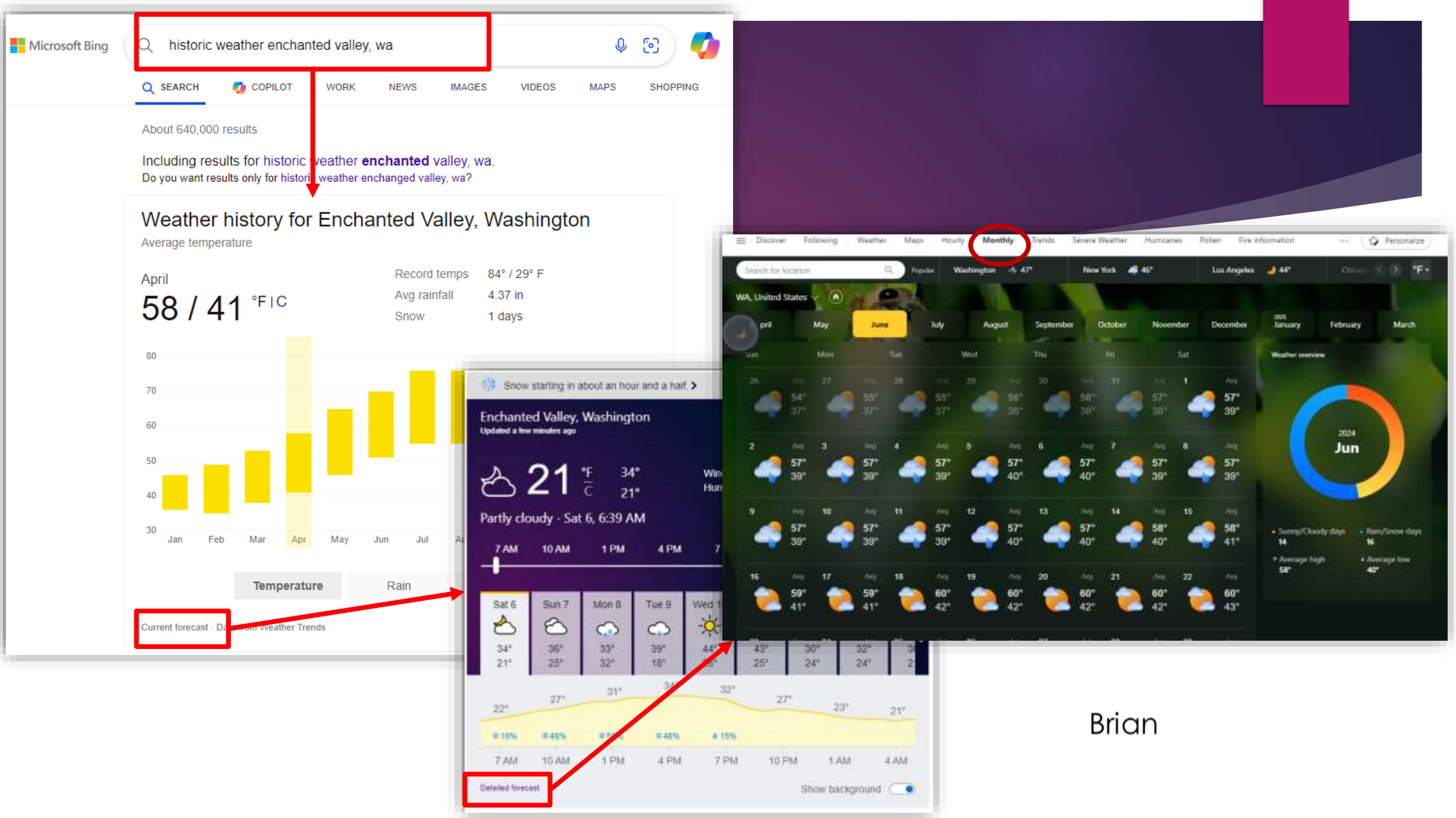
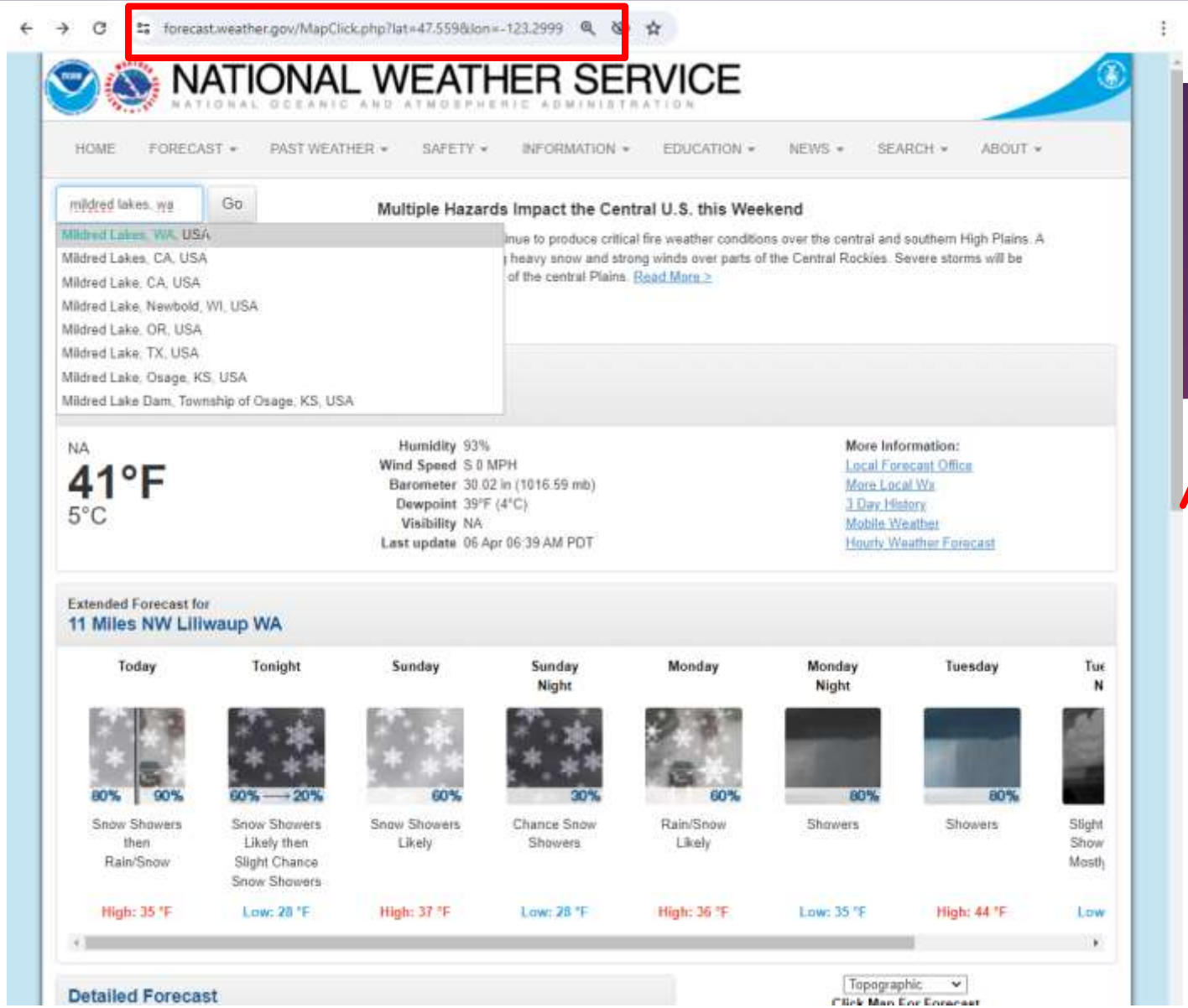
Is your destination suitable and safe for the dates that you hope to go, given your skill-set and gear?

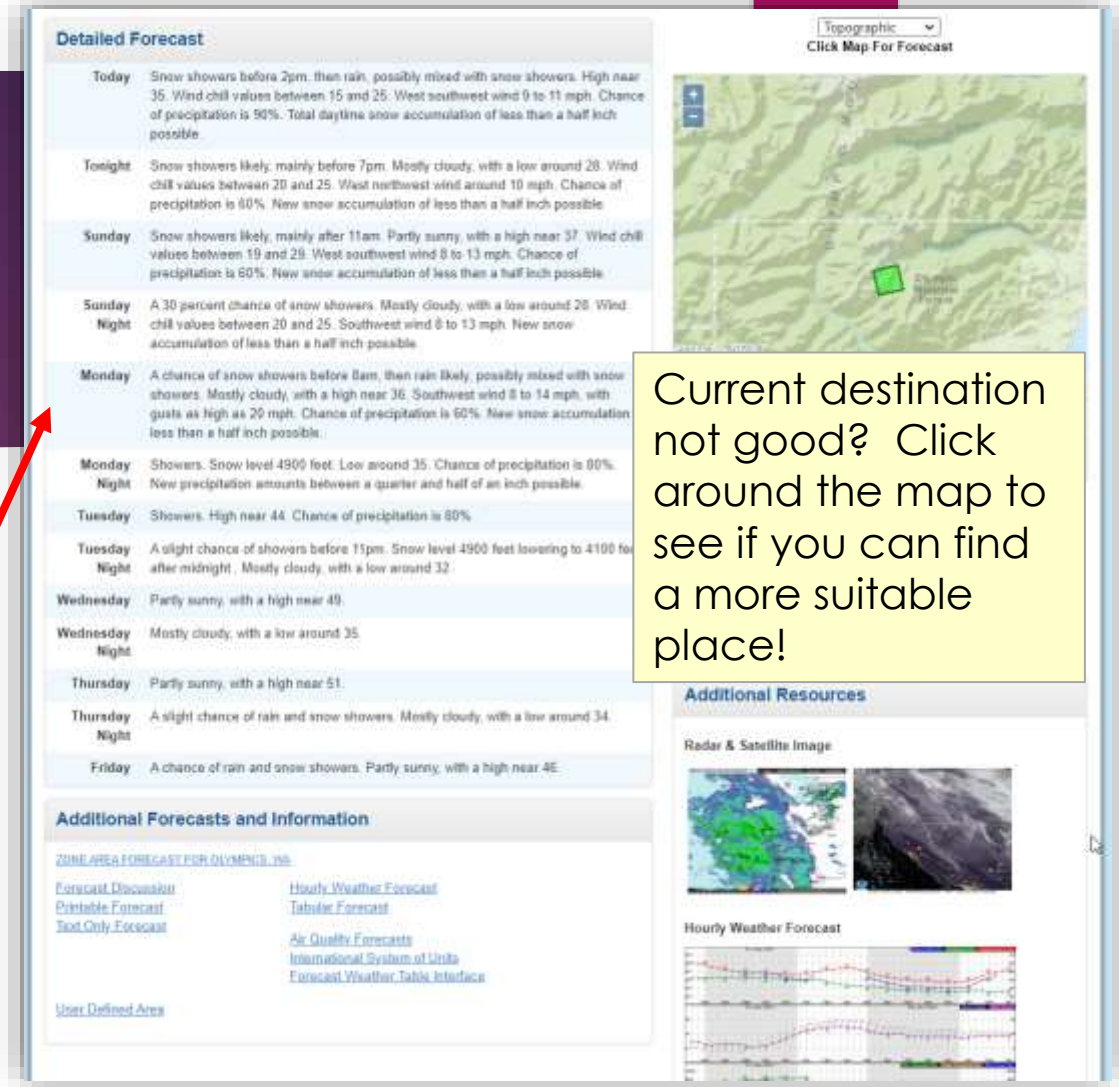
- Temperature, precipitation expectations for the month
- Then more detailed near term forecasts as the date gets closer:
  - Temp, precip
  - Snow levels
  - Fires, smoke
  - Road conditions, closures

Brian


Microsoft Bing
historic weather enchanted valley, wa
SEARCH
COPILOT
WORK
NEWS
IMAGES
VIDEOS
MAPS
SHOPPING
About 640,000 results
Including results for historic weather enchanted valley, wa.
Do you want results only for historic weather enchanged valley, wa?
Weather history for Enchanted Valley, Washington
Average temperature
April
58 / 41 °F | C
Record temps 84° / 29° F
Avg rainfall 4.37 in
Snow 1 days
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Temperature
Rain
Current forecast · Daily from Weather Trends
Snow starting in about an hour and a half.
Enchanted Valley, Washington
Updated a few minutes ago
21 °F/C
Partly cloudy · Sat 6, 6:39 AM
Sat 6
Sun 7
Mon 8
Tue 9
Detailed forecast
Show background
Monthly
Washington
New York
Los Angeles
WA, United States
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December
January
February
March
Weather overview
2024
Jun

Brian





Current destination not good? Click around the map to see if you can find a more suitable place!

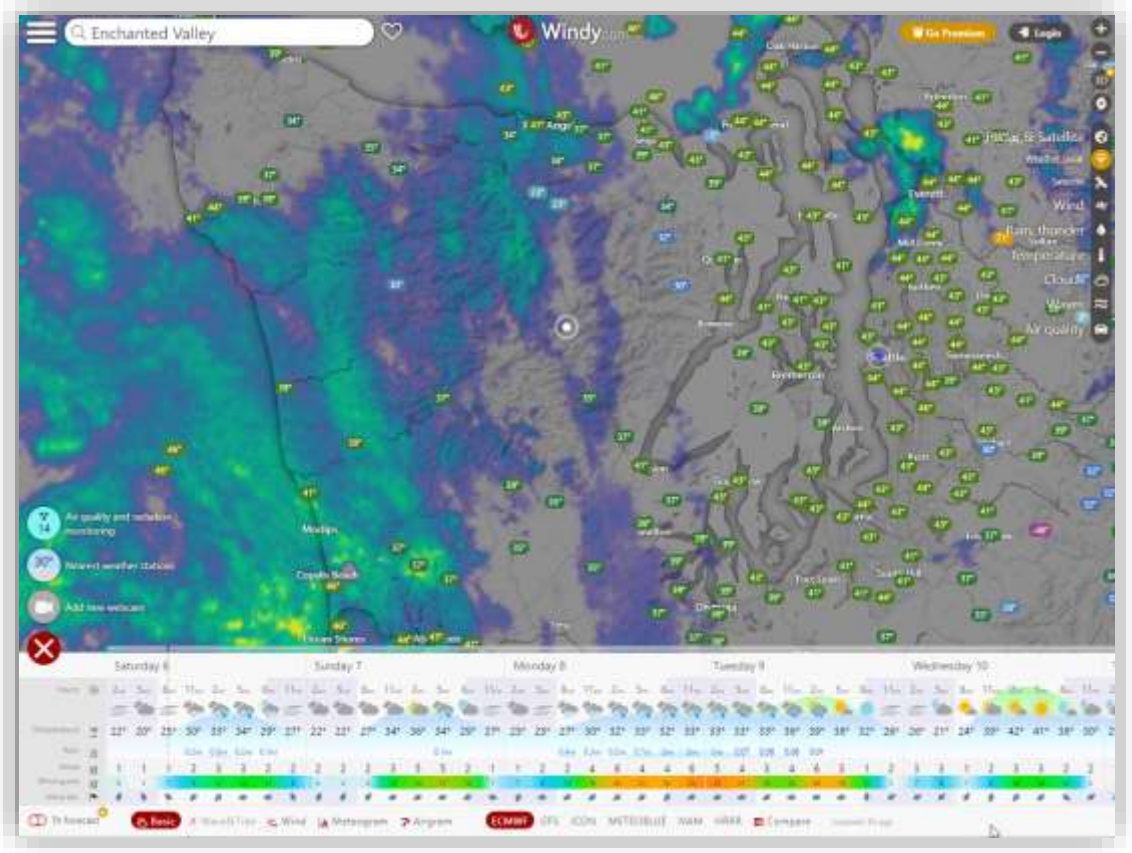
ALWAYS check the actual weather and trail conditions as you get within 10 days of your trip…

Brian

Another great source of actual weather conditions within 10 days of your trip…

Windy.com – forecasts many different variables, allows comparison of several models

Meteoblue – great for alpine environments!



Brian

Fires, Smoke

FWAC Wildfire Map* – *fire, weather and avalanche ctr

IQAir – Air quality monitoring

GaiaGPS Smoke Forecast layer

Brian

Snow Levels

SNODAS* – *Snow data assimilation system

GaiaGPS Snow Depth layer*, Caltopo via Custom Layer
Caltopo Daily/Weekly Satellite Imagery*

Before you go:

- *Call the land manager for the latest info*
- *Join local backpacking facebook groups – ask about conditions*
- *Boots on the ground!*

Brian

Road and trail status
Land Manager Websites, WADOT

- **Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest**
  - Check your trail – passable? Snow free? Trailhead open?
  - Check the access roads, notes about parking lots
  - WSDOT alerts

Now let's plan your specific route!

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- **Use Maps and Map Tools to understand and plan:**
  - Overall route including where to start and end
  - Daily route segments
    - Level of difficulty
    - Camp options
    - Water sources
  - Transport options and travel route-time
  - Emergency exit routes

Paper vs. Online Maps

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- **I always study a paper map before a trip for big-picture planning, and bring it for backup in case my phone fails during a trip**
- But for planning purposes, digital maps offer huge benefits:
  - Many more perspectives, scales and types, and basic mapping and planning functions are free!
  - Can use interactively to map out route options, distances and gains.
  - Can get map information for places, and at scales, for which commercial paper maps aren't available.
  - Most can be printed to high quality.

Digital Mapping Resources

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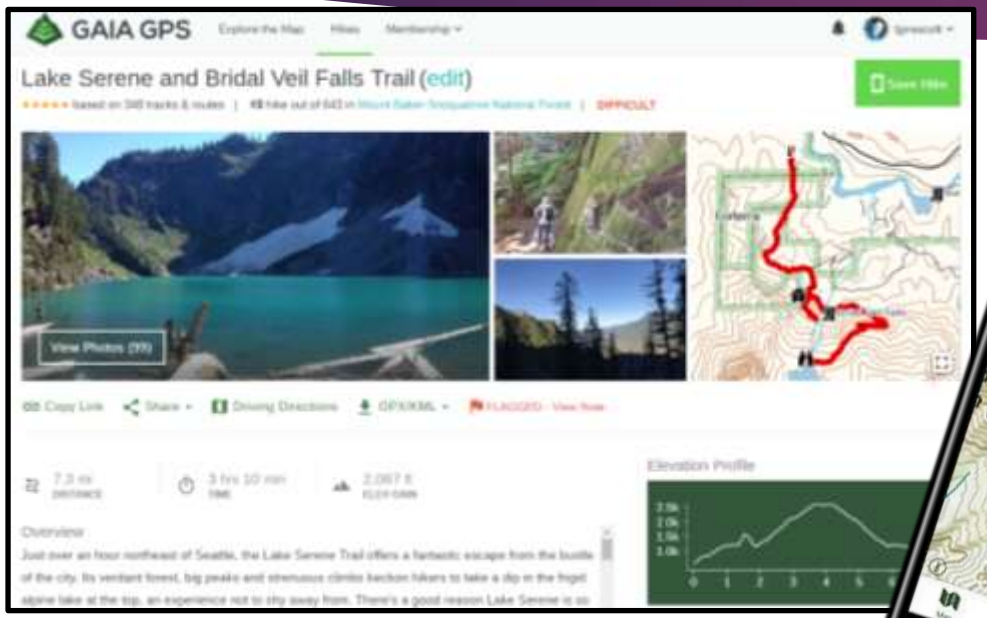

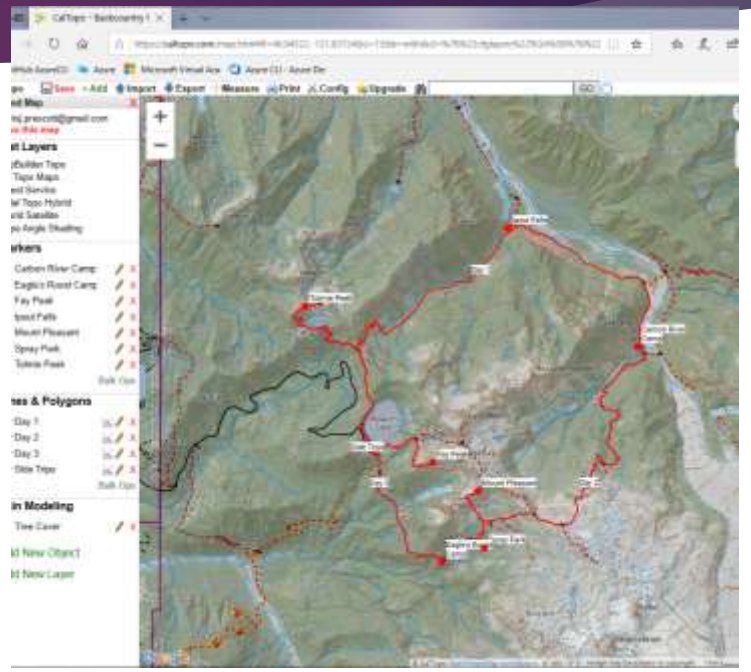

GaiaGPS

CalTopo

GaiaGPS

- Available for iOS and Android.
- Consistently receives the highest praise from Mountaineers navigation committees.
- Base app is free, 40$/yr for Premium plan.
- Mountaineers members receive one year of GaiaGPS Premium subscription FREE. Go to Membership➔Benefits

GaiaGPS.com

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Pros

- **Simple route plotting, with output of distance-elevation profile.**
- **Many helpful map options and layers (especially in Pro version)**
- Syncs automatically with GaiaGPS app for navigation in the field.
- Can export route data easily for use in other devices and apps

Cons

- Inferior map printing.
- Fewer customization options.
- Terrain statistics not as good.
- Can substantially overstate elevation gains and losses

GaiaGPS

- Free Plan: Access to all planning features including creating routes and waypoints that can synch to the phone app, and organizing, backing up, and sharing your data, and more.
- Premium Plan: Adds specialty maps (including NatGeo Trails and weather maps, international maps) and layers (snow level, smoke etc.), the ability to download maps & routes to your phone for offline use, and the ability to print custom maps.

CalTopo.com

THE MOUNTAINEERS

Pros

- **Superior map printing**
- **Detailed statistics and overlays**
- More robust drawing and editing
- More drawing primitives (shapes, bearing lines, etc)
- Many useful layers
- Greater accuracy for elevation gains and handy terrain profile detail

Cons

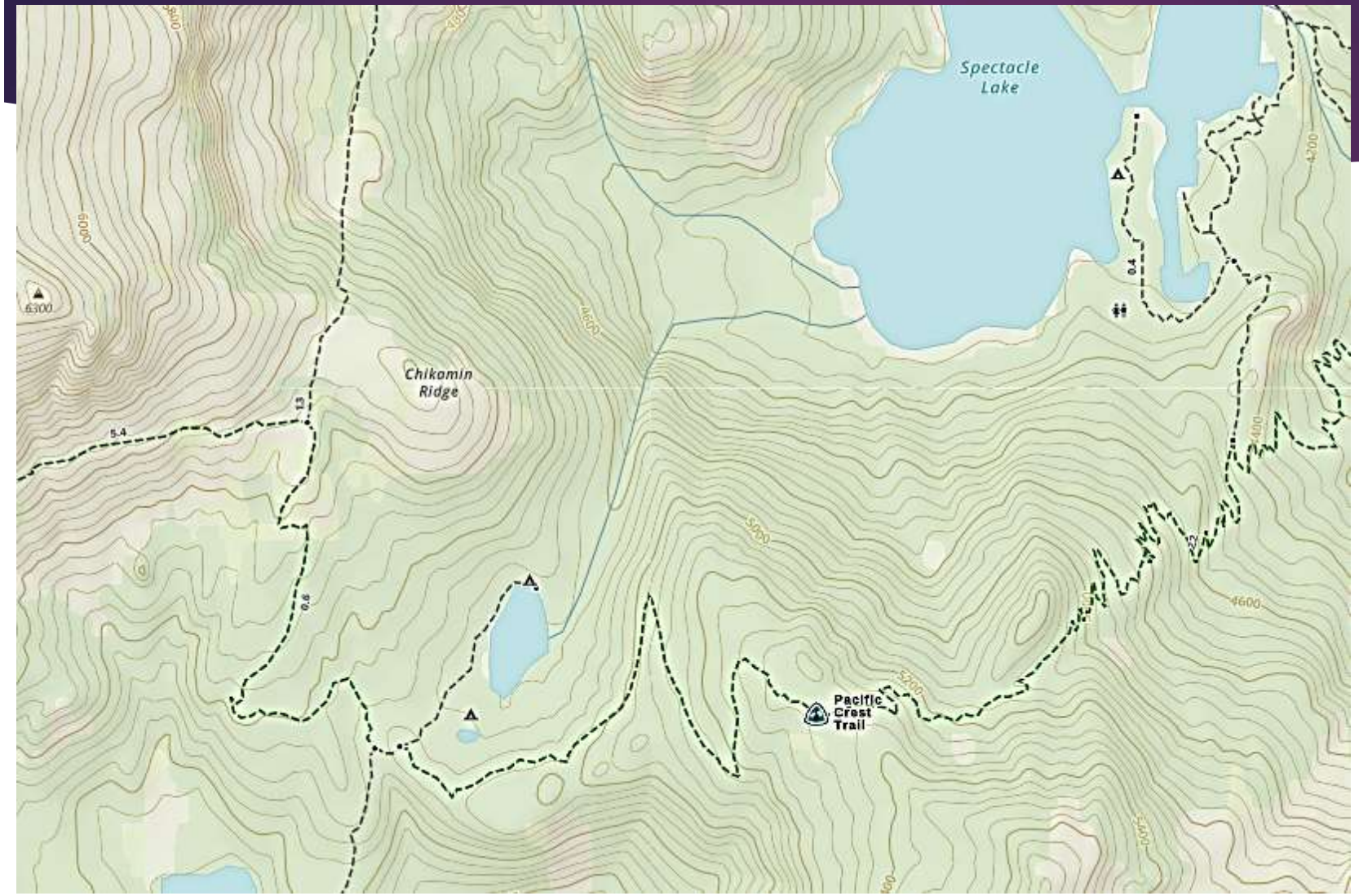
- Less beginner-friendly.
- Fewer layers and overlays than Gaia.
- Free account limited to 5 saved maps.

Map Layers and How they Differ

- Take advantage of multiple map layers to examine the terrain for different features

Map Layers and Advantages

THE MOUNTAINEERS

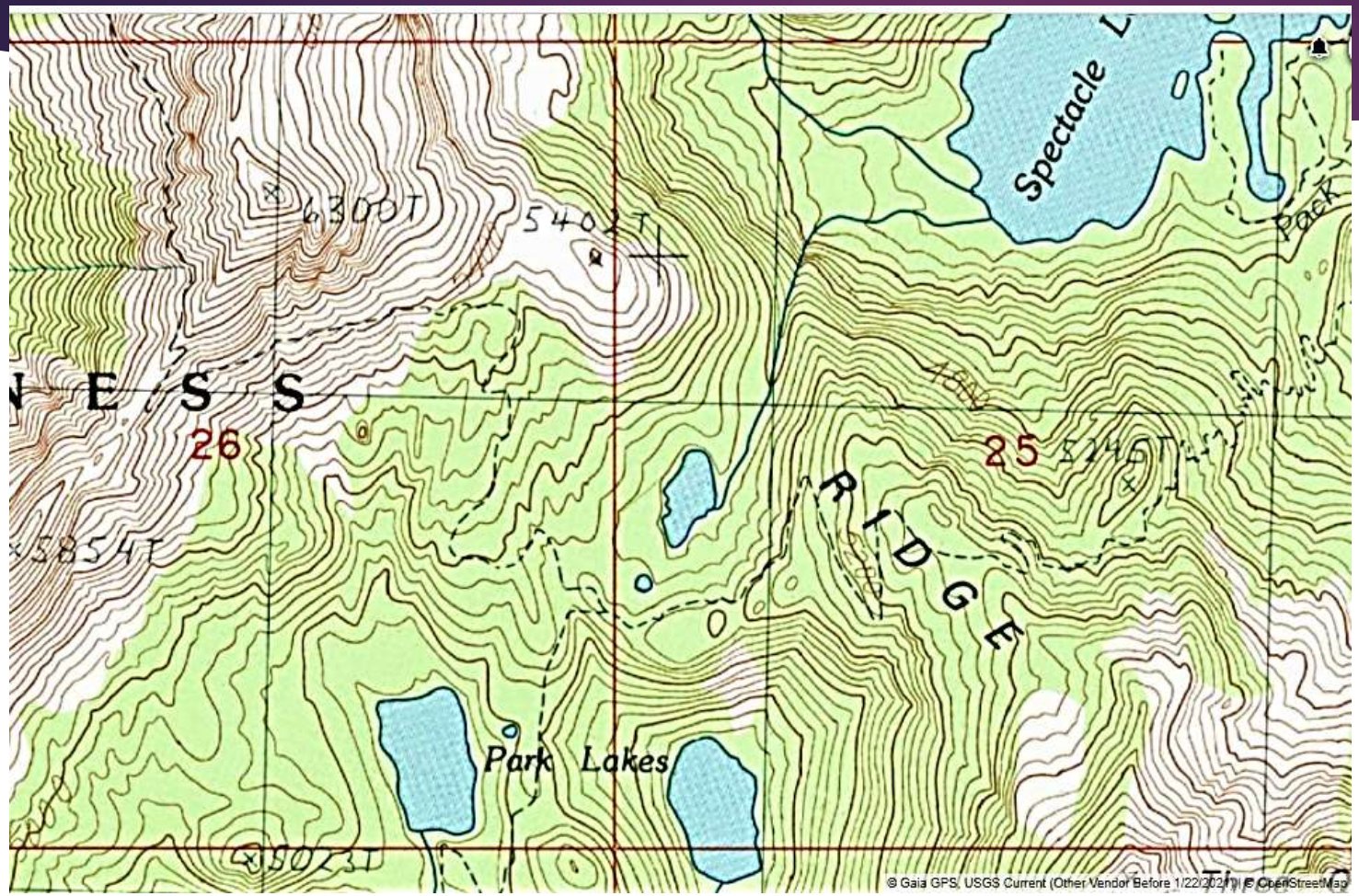


Gaia Topo

- Default
- Helpful details including trail distances and camp locations
- Good topo
- International

Map Layers and Advantages

THE MOUNTAINEERS



USGS

- The most topo detail → ideal for off-trail navigation
- But little or no trail, camp detail
- No international coverage

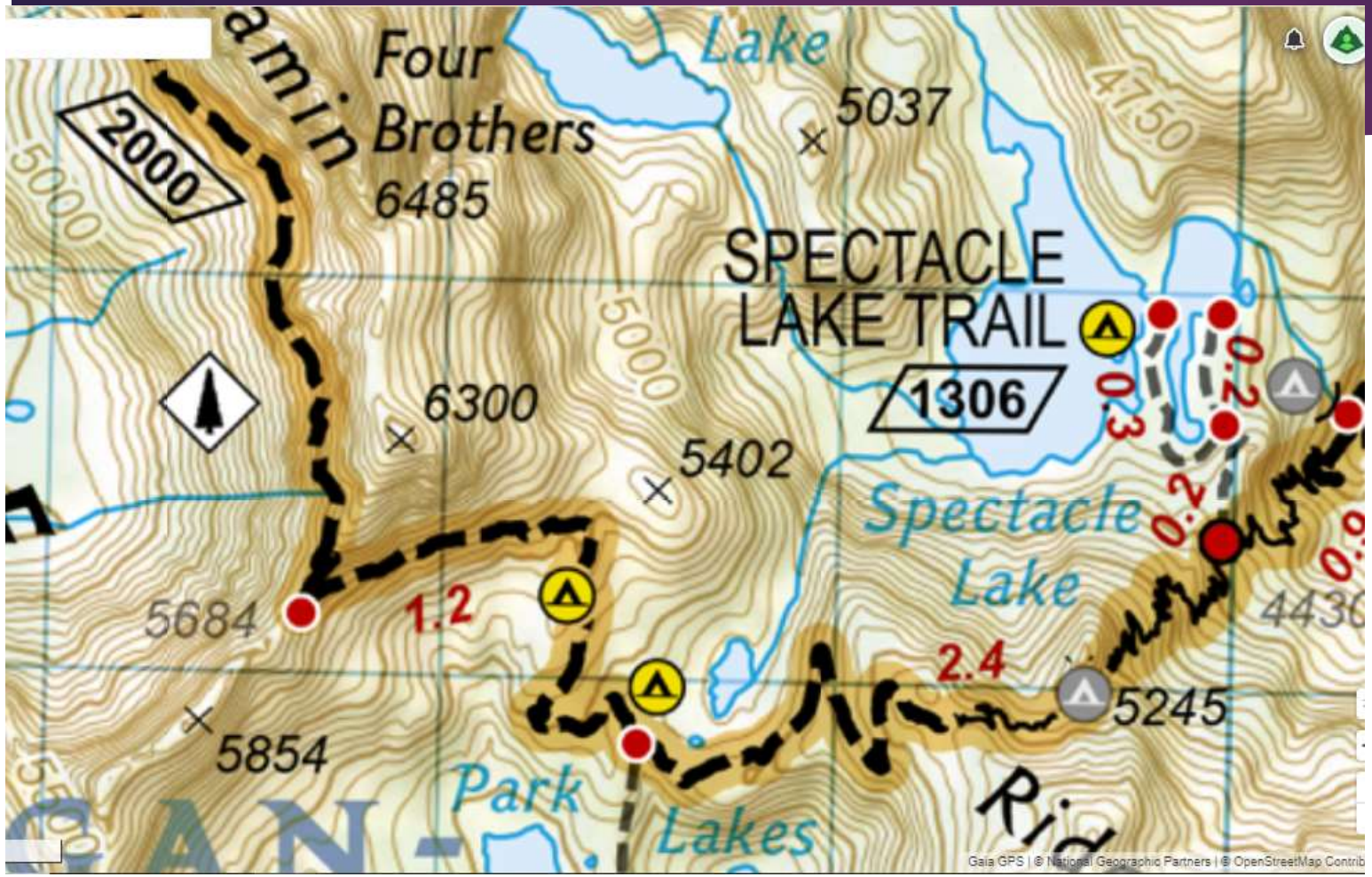
Map Layers and Advantages!

NatGeo Trails Illustrated:

- Excellent detail for some areas, absent for others

Map Layers and Advantages!

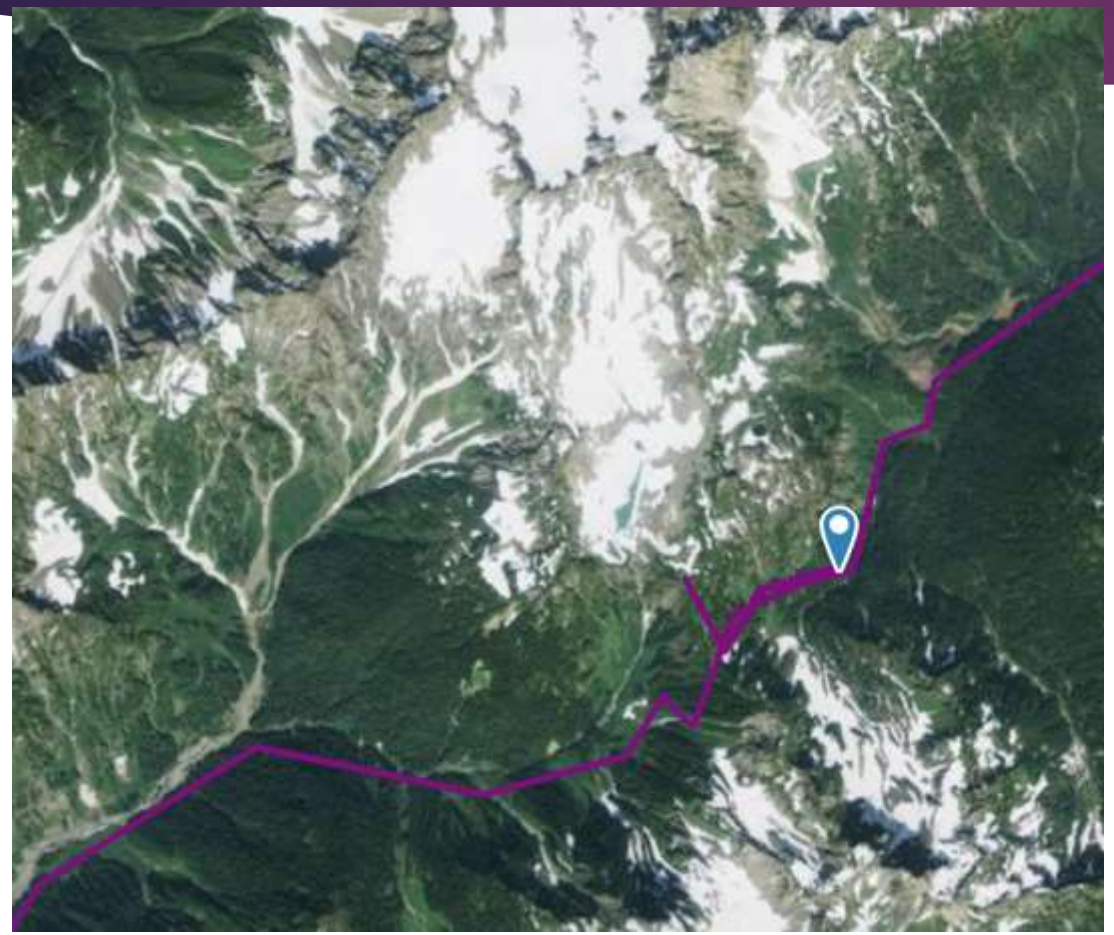
THE MOUNTAINEERS



NatGeo Pacific Crest Trail:

- Best detail along the PCT, none elsewhere

Map Layers and Advantages



Satellite:

- Sometimes offers insights on terrain, snow if cloud-free

Map Layers and Advantages

Google Earth:

- Best terrain visuals – 3D
- Not a Gaia Layer but can export Gaia routes to Google earth easily! (.kml)

PCT Section J: Snoqualmie to Stevens Pass

THE MOUNTAINEERS

STEP 1: PLAN DAILY ROUTE AND CAMPS

Big Picture

THE MOUNTAINEERS

- ***How long is the trip (distance, gain)?***
- ***Which direction do you want to go?***
- ***How many days should you plan for?***

GaiaGPS for route planning

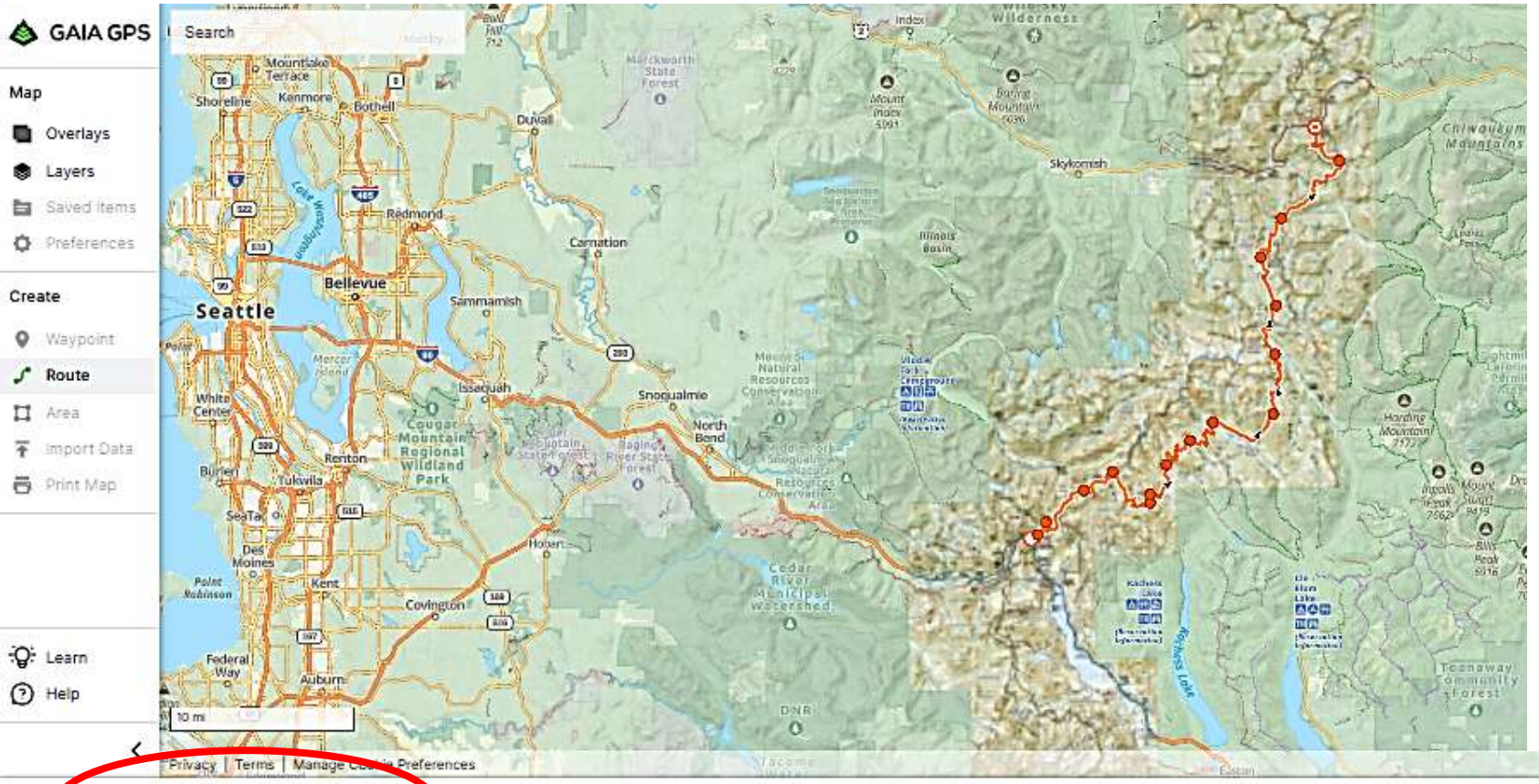
- Let's try this for PCT section J!

THE MOUNTAINEERS

- Start by building a distance-elevation profile using *GaiaGPS*
- Start with base map – find the PCT between Snoqualmie and Stevens Passes

- Then Log in to get premium layers ➔Nat Geo PCT Map
- Trace a route between Snoqualmie Pass and Stevens Pass

First plot a route that covers all of Section J. (arbitrarily started at Snoqualmie Pass)



1. Stevens Pass is higher elevation than Snoqualmie, so less gain going southbound (SOBO)
2. The first few days going SOBO from Stevens (when you have the heaviest packs and are getting in shape) are relatively less grueling
3. ***This profile argues for a SOBO trip*** (if you can work out the transport logistics)

Big Picture

THE MOUNTAINEERS

- How long is the trip (distance, gain)? ***71.5 mi, 23189 ft gain***
- Which direction should we go? ***Southbound***
- ***How many days do you want to take? What daily distance and elevation gain can you handle at your current fitness level? Start with gross averages…..***

Unless you are heavily time-constrained, leave yourself a time buffer!!

Days	avg dist/day	avg gain/day
6	11.9	3865
7	10.2	3313
8	8.9	2899

First Draft 7-Day Itinerary

THE MOUNTAINEERS

- Now let's examine and tentatively select daily routes for a 7-day itinerary using Gaia and the Nat Geo Pacific Crest Trail layer
- Save each day's route to a common folder
- Then go back and edit to find the total trip schedule that you like best

What's Next?

Iterate on your itinerary until you're happy with the cadence of your days

- *Consider that your packs will be heaviest on the first few days*
- *Daily distances/gains are strongly driven by available camps*
- *Evaluate options to reduce longest days or lengthen shorter ones*

Go back to the map….

First Draft 7-Day Itinerary Plotted with Gaia

THE MOUNTAINEERS

DAY	FROM-TO	MILES	GAIN	LOSS
1	Stevens Pass to Mig Lake	7.3	2523	1951
2	Mig Lake to Deception Lakes	10.1	3474	3029
3	Deception Lakes to Deep Lk Jct	11.7	3167	3862
4	Deep Lake Jct to Escondido Ridge	12.1	3384	2527
5	Escondido Ridge to Spectacle Lake	12.1	2897	3900
6	Spectacle Lake to Ridge Lake	10.2	4870	3826
7	Ridge Lake to Snoqualmie Pass	7	1348	3573

Toughest days – within your capabilities?

Second Draft 7-Day Itinerary Plotted with Gaia

THE MOUNTAINEERS

DAY	FROM-TO	MILES	GAIN	LOSS
1	Stevens Pass to Mig Lake	7.3	2523	1951
2	Mig Lake to Deception Lakes	10.1	3474	3029
3	Deception Lakes to Deep Lk Jct	11.7	3167	3862
4	Deep Lake Jct to midway up Escondido ridge	*10.4*	*2587*	*2343*
5	Mid way up ridge to Lemah Ford	*10.5*	*2329*	*3688*
6	Lemah Ford to Spectacle Lake (lunch) to Park Lakes	*6.7*	*2942*	*1018*
7	Park Lakes to Snoqualmie Pass	*13.4*	*4546*	*6644*

Third Draft 7-Day Itinerary Plotted with Gaia

THE MOUNTAINEERS

DAY	FROM-TO	MILES	GAIN	LOSS
1	Stevens Pass to Mig Lake	7.3	2523	1951
2	Mig Lake to Deception Lakes	10.1	3474	3029
3	Deception Lakes to Deep Lk Jct	11.7	3167	3862
4	Deep Lake Jct to Escondido Ridge	12.1	3384	2527
5	Escondido Ridge to Spectacle Lake	12.1	2897	3900
6	Spectacle Lake to Joe Lake	***8.1***	***3760***	***2893***
7	Joe Lake East to Snoqualmie Pass	***9.2***	***2459***	***4510***

✓

Or could add an 8th day to reduce days 3-5

Now mark your camps and other useful details with waypoints

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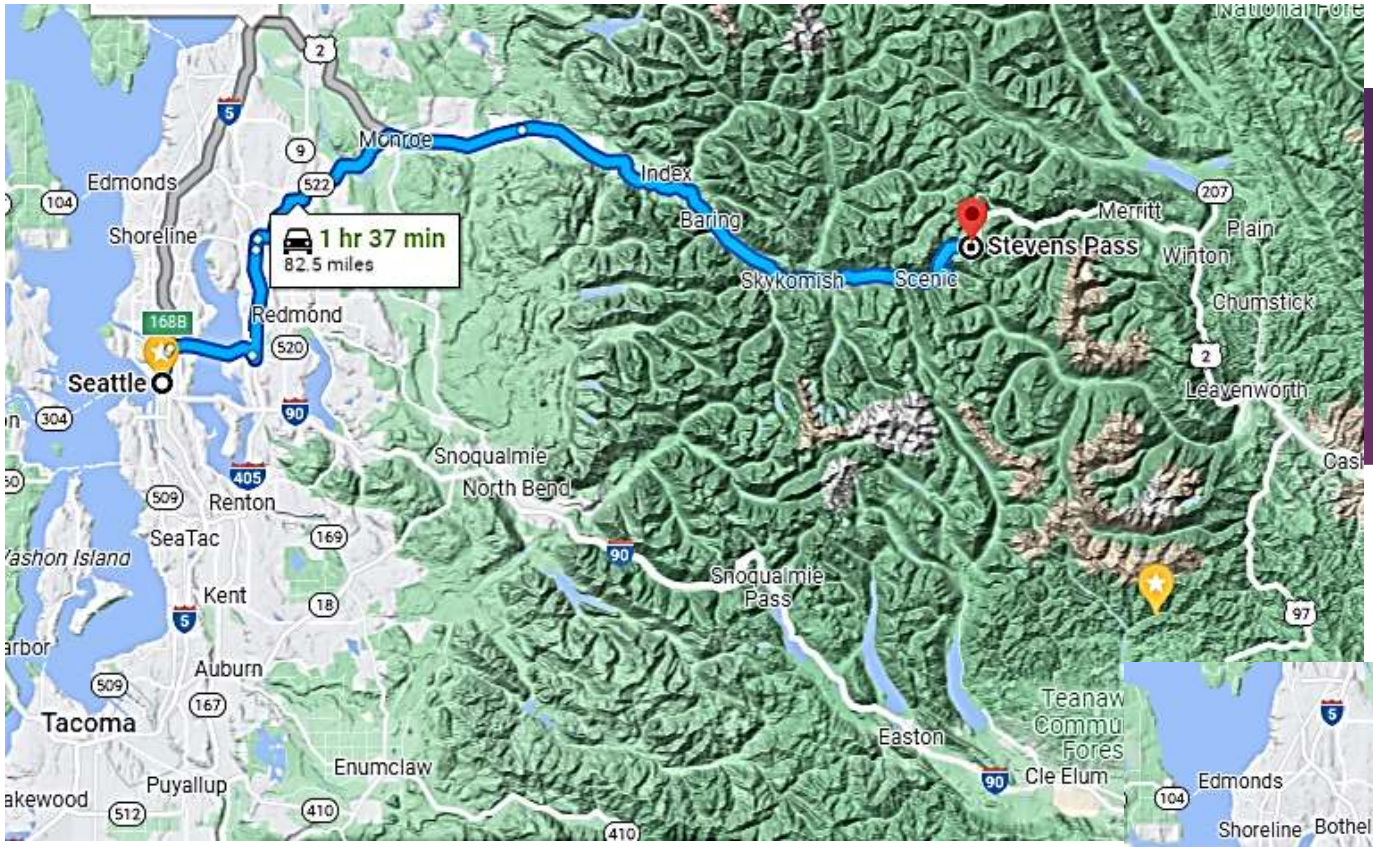
- Save preferred daily Gaia routes into a folder – open daily routes and add waypoints for camps and water
  - *Mark reliable water sources from map and other resources like pctwater.com*
  - *Many different symbols are available*

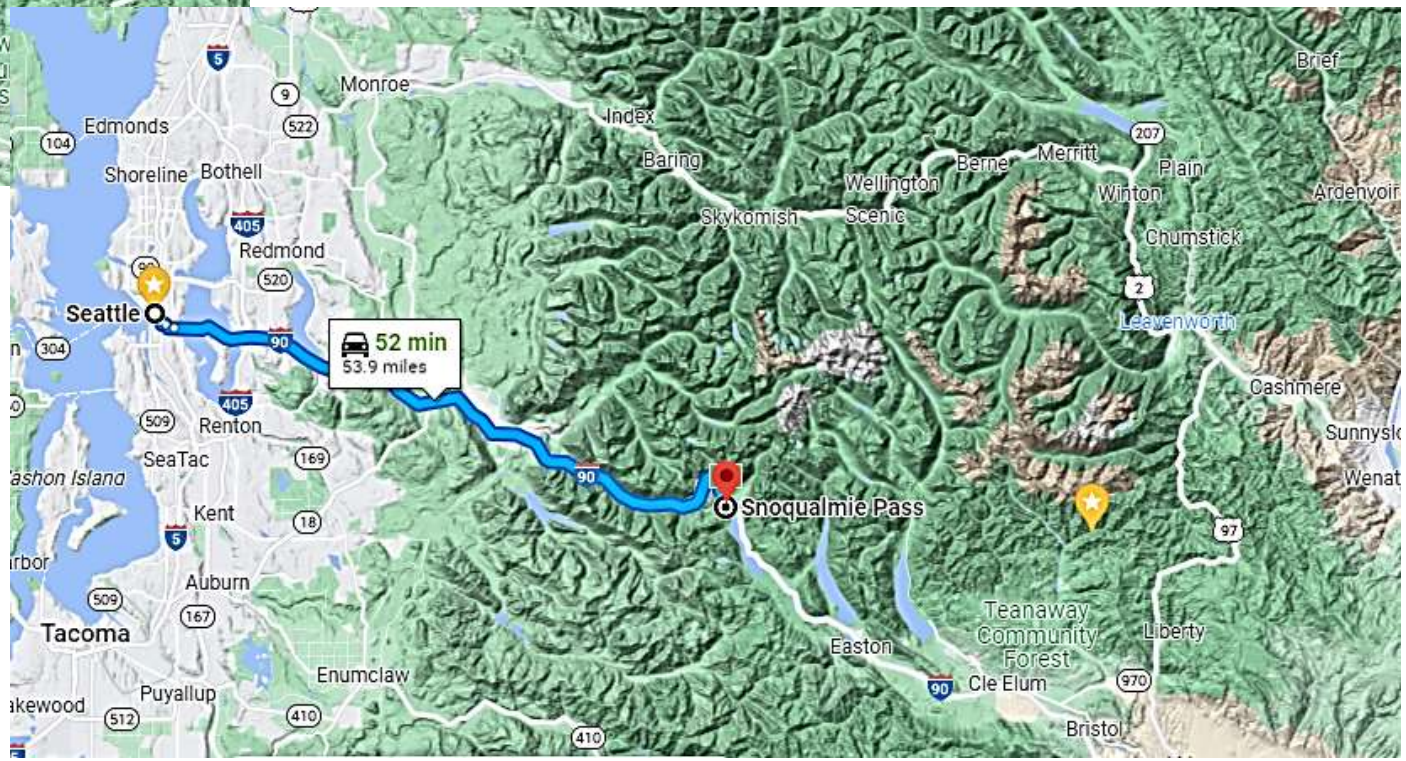
Details, Details!

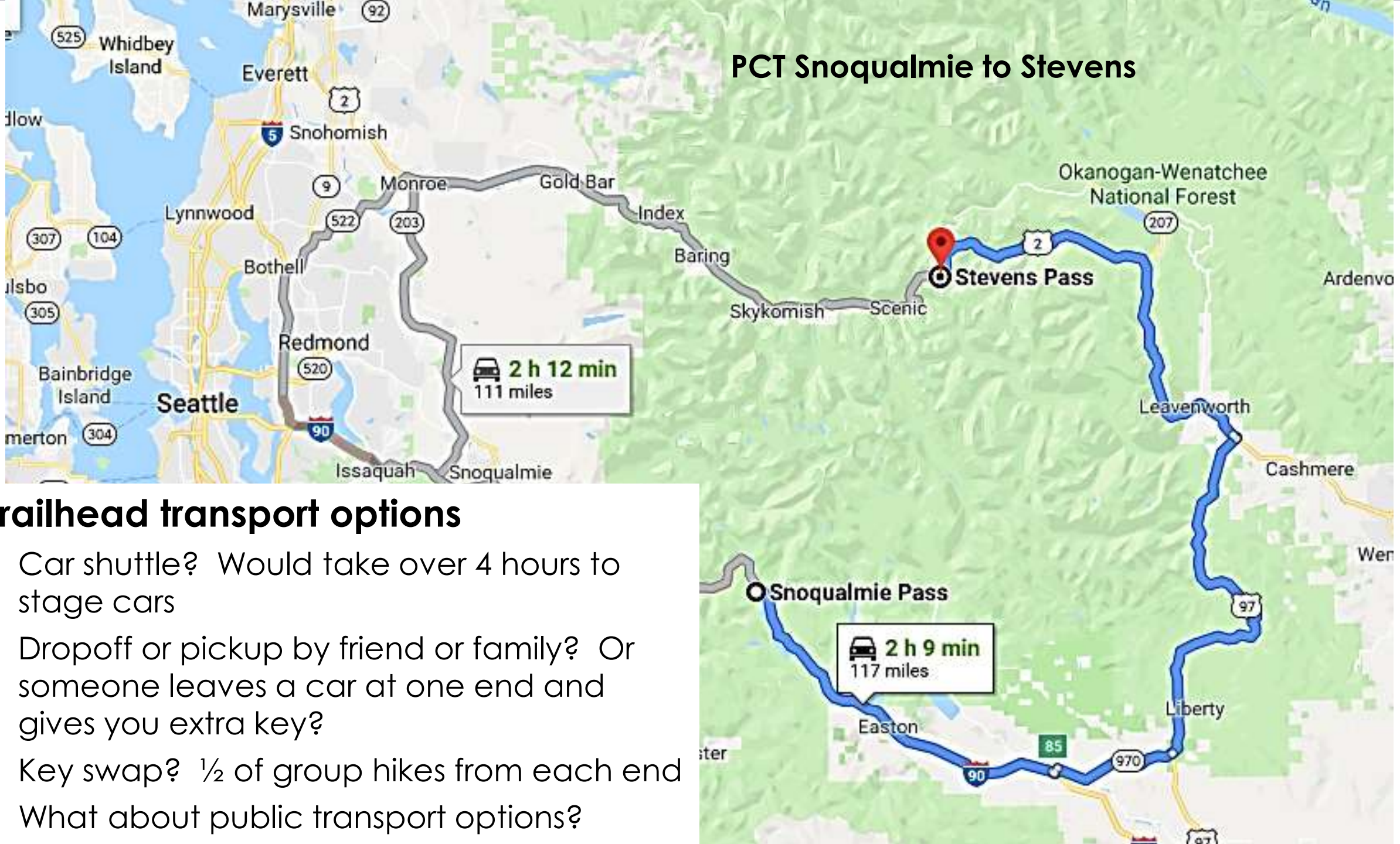
THE MOUNTAINEERS

- ***Next let's work out transportation logistics***
  - ***Google maps*** *gives you a good quick visual with drive times*

Getting to and from the trailhead – google maps







Trailhead transport options

- Car shuttle? Would take over 4 hours to stage cars
- Dropoff or pickup by friend or family? Or someone leaves a car at one end and gives you extra key?
- Key swap? ½ of group hikes from each end
- What about public transport options?

Transport Options between Seattle and Stevens or Snoqualmie Pass?

RomeToRio offers comparison of transport options to or from most points on the globe!

https://www.rome2rio.com/map/Seattle/Stevens-Pass-Ski-Area#trips

Public Transport Options between Seattle and Stevens or Snoqualmie Pass?

Pacific Crest Trail Association offers detail on transport options to or from most points on the PCT!

https://www.pcta.org/discover-the-trail/backcountry-basics/pct-transportation/

Pacific Crest Trail Association | Discover the Trail | Our Work | About Us | Community | Blog | Shop | Volunteer | Donate

Public Transit Options in Washington

- **Columbia Area Transit (CAT)** runs between Portland, Cascade Locks and Hood River.
- **Skamania County Transit** runs between Vancouver and the Pacific Crest Trail at Stevenson, Washington.
- **Mount Adams Transportation Service** runs between Bingen/White Salmon (Amtrak) and Hood River (Greyhound, CAT). Call to see if rural service has space for other destinations.
- **Lewis Mountain Highway Transit** services Packwood, Randle, Centralia (Greyhound, Amtrak, Twin Transit). They do not have a website. Their Facebook page is here. Centralia College has info on the bus here. Phone: 360-496-5405 or 1-800-994-8899.
- **Northwestern Trailways** services much of eastern Washington and connects those communities to Seattle and Spokane. Their Apple Line is described below. The Spokane-Wenatchee-Seattle-Tacoma route includes an "on call" stop at the PCT at Stevens Pass.
- **Link Transit** operates in Chelan county and services Leavenworth, Wenatchee, and Chelan.
- **Lady of the Lake** is the ferry on Lake Chelan, connecting **Stehekin**, Holden Village and the town of Chelan.
- **The North Cascades Lodge at Stehekin** runs the Red Bus between Stehekin village to the PCT trailhead at High Bridge.
- **Okanagan Transit** services Pateros, Twisp, Winthrop, Mazama, Okanogan, Omak and more.
- **Apple Line** services Omak, Pateros, Wenatchee, and Ellensburg.
- **Skagit Transit** has a line to Marblemount, west of the PCT on SR 20.

Private Shuttles/Taxis in Washington

- **Leavenworth Shuttle and Taxi** offers a shuttle service to Snoqualmie and Stevens Pass.
- **To The Mountain Shuttle** has regular summer service to Snoqualmie Pass, and winter service to Stevens Pass, Snoqualmie Pass and Crystal Mountain.
- **Central Washington Airporter** runs between Yakima, Ellensburg, Cle Elum, North Bend, and Sea-Tac but it does not stop as it crosses Snoqualmie Pass.
- **Mountain Motion** services Wenatchee, Bellingham, Sea-Tac, Methow Valley, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, North Cascades National Park, trailheads, and public transit connections.

Additional Route Planning
Other Excellent PCT Resources

THE MOUNTAINEERS

- **FarOut Guides** (used to be Guthook) – ($) great map detail including campsites and water, other trail notes – can install to use on your phone on the fly
- **Halfmile's PCT maps & notes** – (free) GPX and google earth files, trail notes
- Many crowdsourced databases on ***pcta.org*** with info on trail conditions, water, resupply, shuttles, trail angels and more

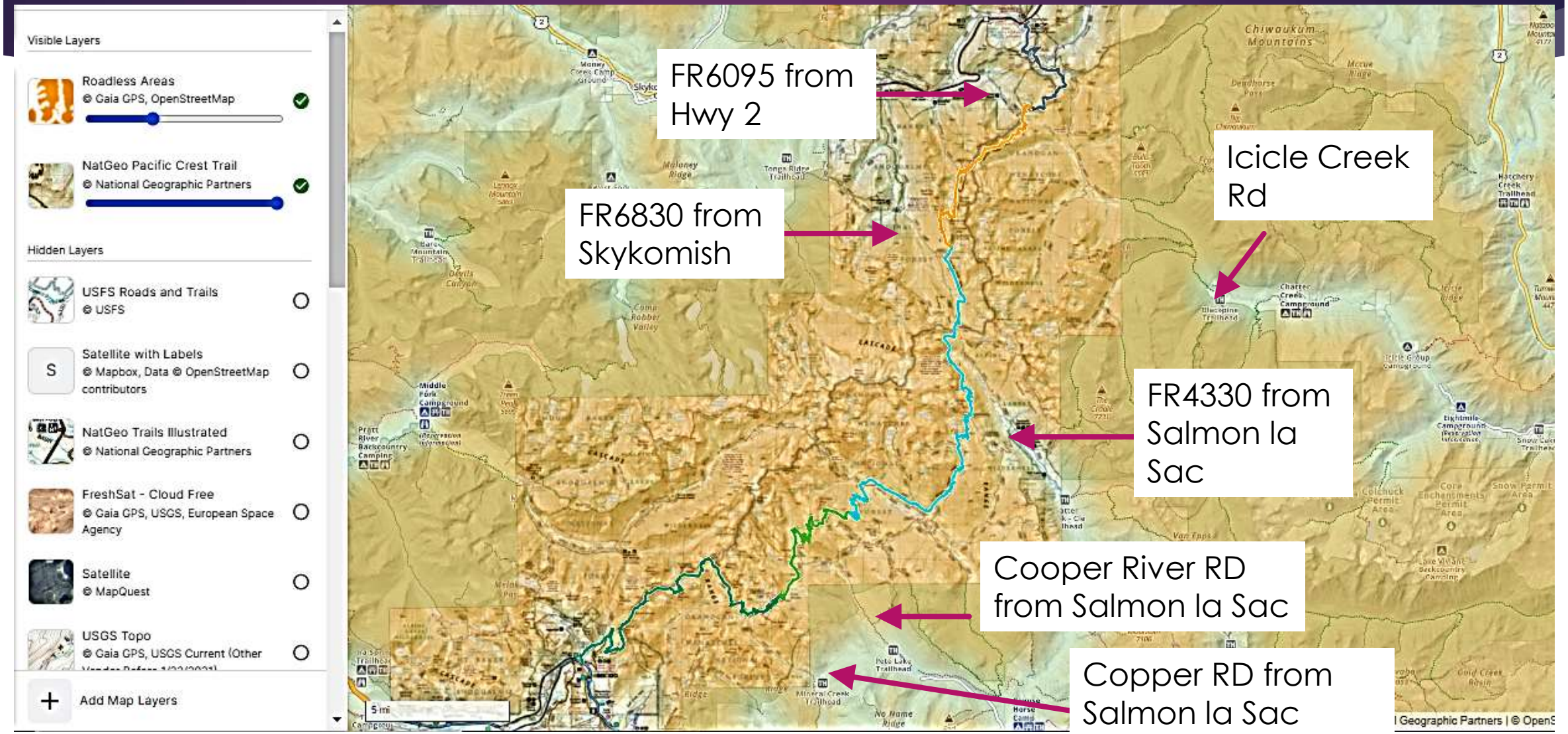
What about Emergency Exit Routes?

- Back to Gaia with some different layers in tandem:
  - Roadless Areas
  - USFS Roads and Trails

https://www.gaiagps.com/map/?loc=11.2/-121.2518/47.4661

Intermediate trail access-exit points

Use Roadless Area and Nat Geo map layers together



Emergency Exit Plan

THE MOUNTAINEERS

Day	From-To	Dist to Start or End	Best Exit Option
1	Stevens Pass to Mig Lake	7.1	7.1 mi to Stevens Pass or 2.5 mi via trail 1061 to FR6095
2	Mig Lake to Deception Lakes	17.1	4.3 mi via trail 1059 to Deception Cutoff TH on FR6830
3	Deception Lakes to Deep Lake JCT	28.5	7 mi via trail 1345 to Tucquala Mdws TH on FR 4330
4	Deep Lake JCT to ridge above Waptus Lake	37.8	6.9 mi via trails 1329 and 1323 to Pete Lake TH and Old Cooper River Rd
5	Ridge above Waptus to Spectacle Lk	25.7	7.3 mi via PCT and trail 1323 to Pete Lk TH and Old Cooper River Rd
6	Spectacle Lk to Joe Lake	16.6	10 mi via trail 1331 to Mineral Creek TH and Cooper Rd
7	Joe Lake to Snoqualmie Pass	8.5	8.5 mi via PCT to Snoqualmie Pass

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Emergency plan

THE MOUNTAINEERS

Your Emergency Plan should include:

- The best exit option(s)
- GPS coordinates for your daily camps and the potential exit trailheads (to help you communicate with rescuers)
- The county you are in and contact info for SAR services
- Where the nearest hospitals / medical facilities are located
- How you will call for transportation from the various exit points

Before your trip, share your detailed route plan and possible exit routes with a trusted person at home – agree on how they can be reached, what they should do and when if they don't hear from you

On a route where you will be away from cell service for days at a time, seriously consider carrying a satellite communicator!

Olympic Peninsula: Enchanted Valley Round Trip with Anderson Pass

THE MOUNTAINEERS

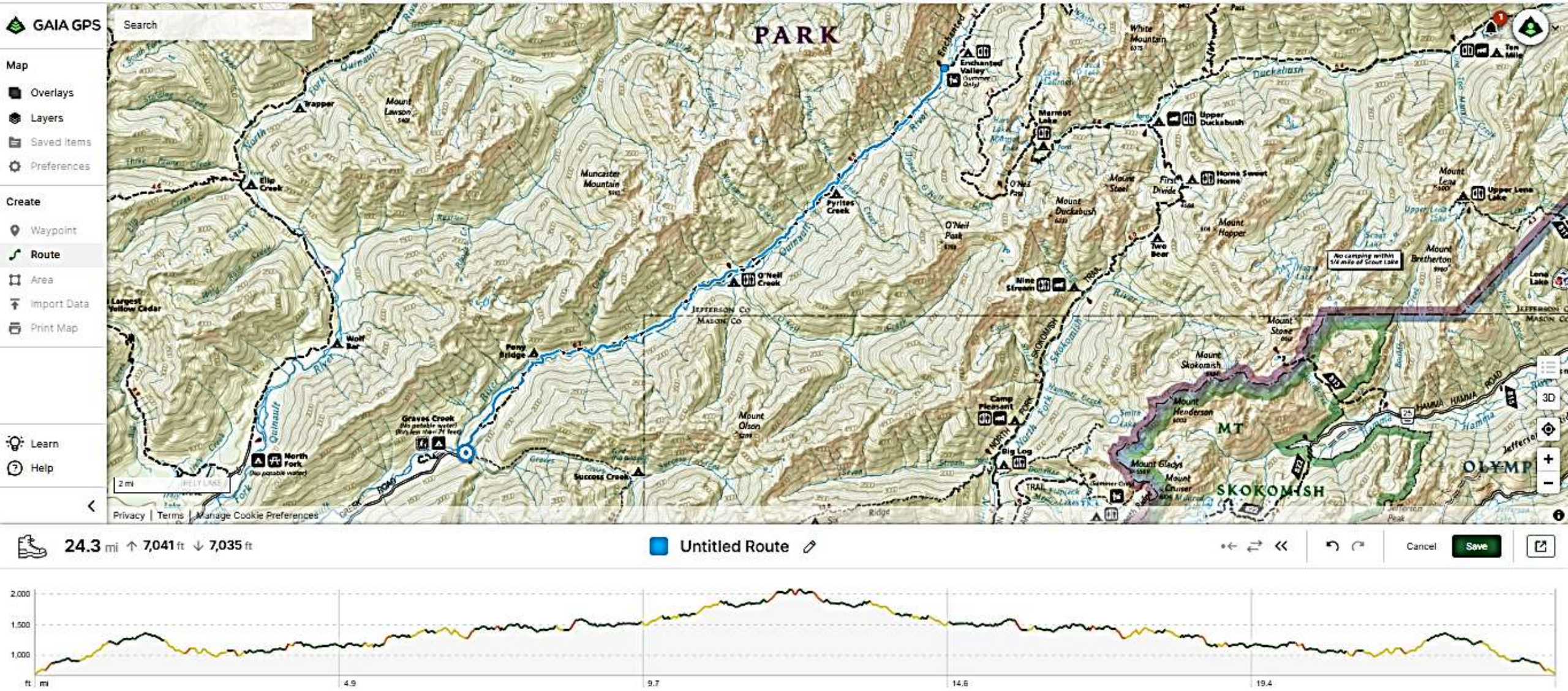
STEP 1: PLAN DAILY ROUTE AND CAMPS

First let's check out the overall route and distance-gain profile on Gaia with Nat Geo Trails Illustrated map.

https://www.gaiagps.com/map/?loc=12.3/-123.5181/47.5965

Big Picture

THE MOUNTAINEERS



Big Picture

- How long is the trip (distance, gain)? ***24.5 miles, 7119' gain and loss (plus optional 11.5 mi, 5252' gain RT to Anderson Pass and back)***

Big Picture

THE MOUNTAINEERS

- How long is the trip (distance, gain)? ***24.5 miles, 7119' gain and loss (plus optional 11.5 mi, 5252' gain RT to Anderson Pass and back)***
- How many days are available? What distance and gain are you prepared to take on?

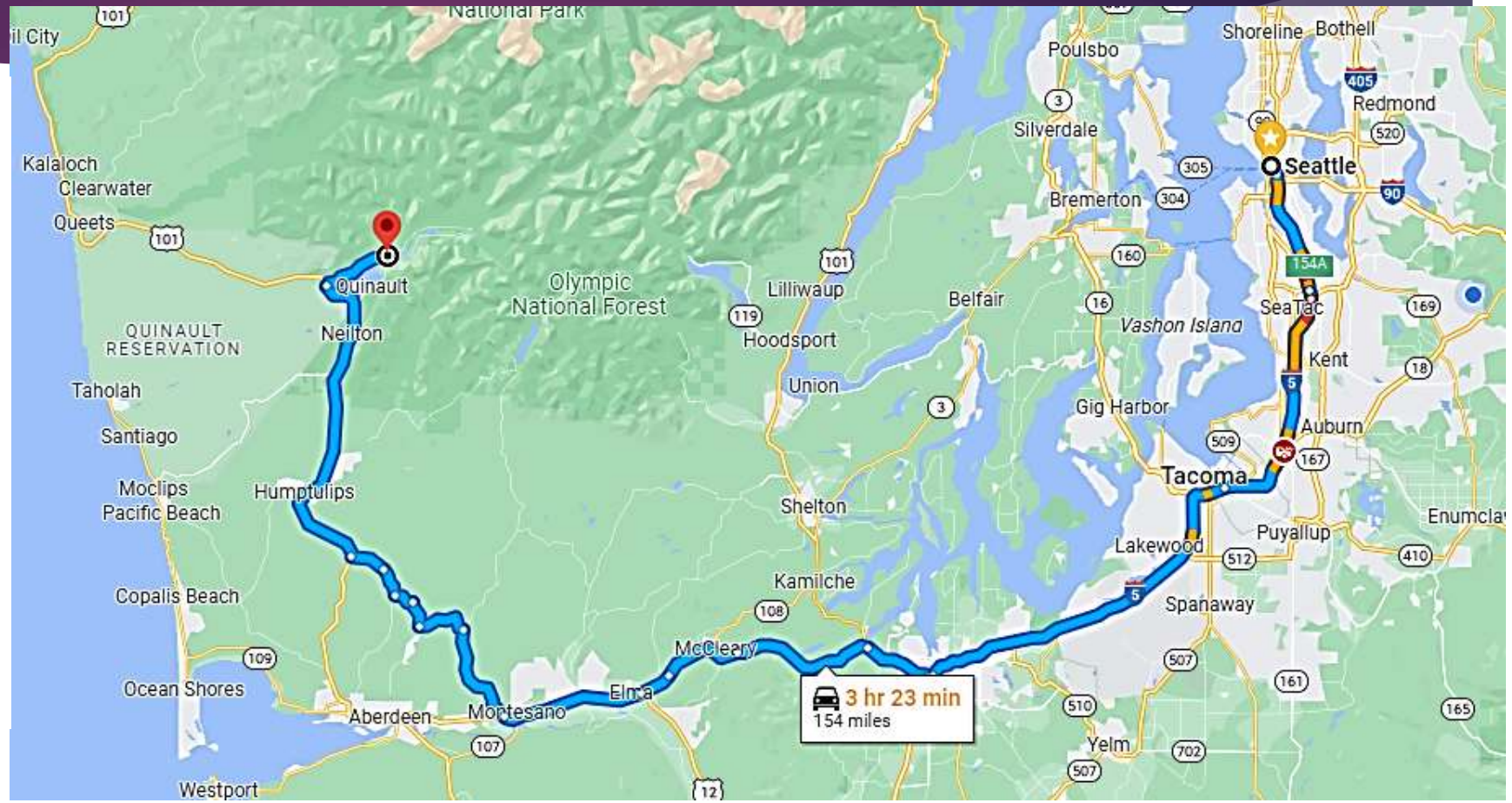
First chart without Anderson Pass side trip

Days	avg dist/day	avg gain/day
2 Days	12.2	3560
3 Days	8.2	2373
4 Days	6.1	1780

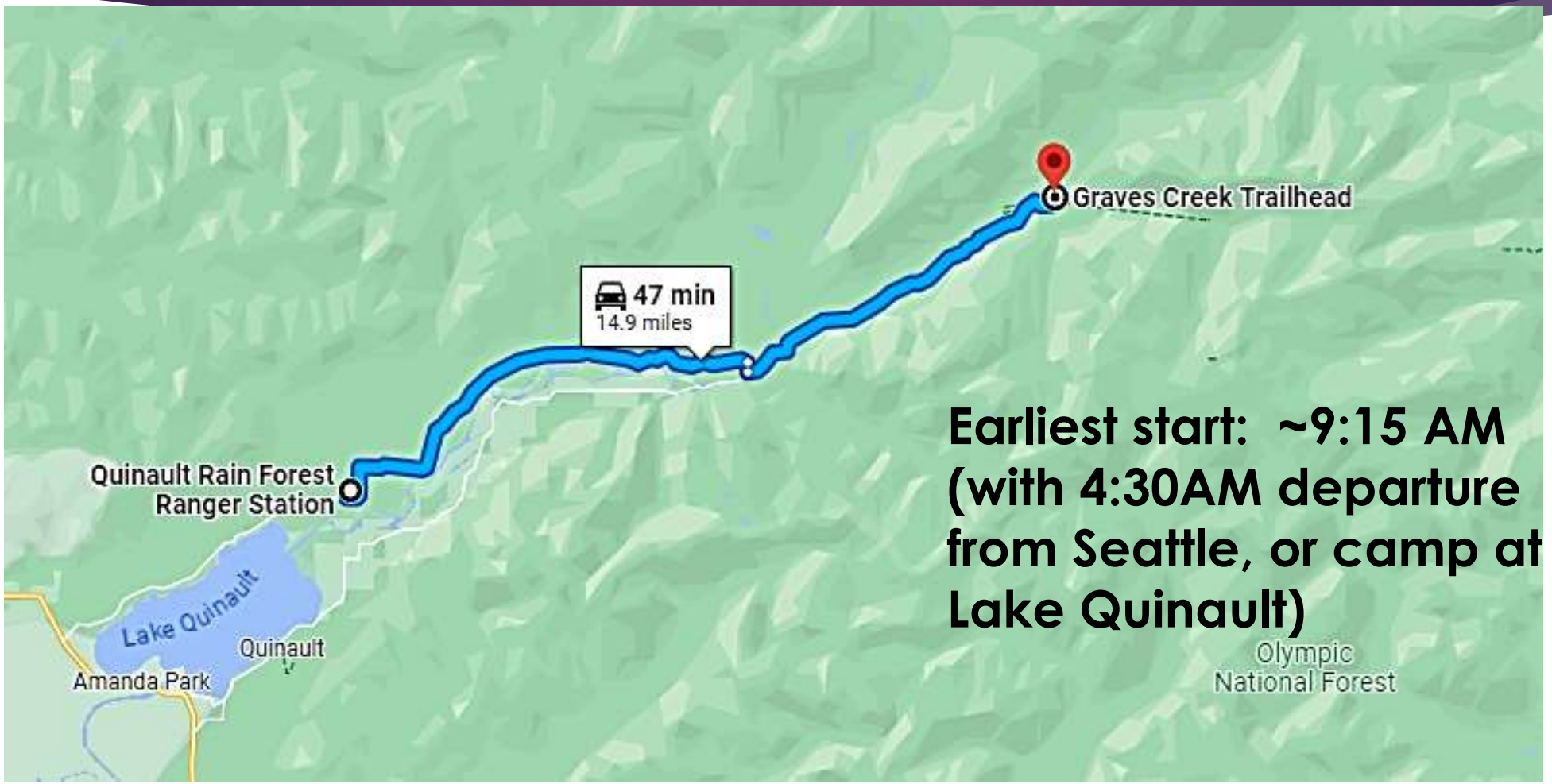
Better check Transport Logistics!

Must pick up permits and bear cans at Quinault Ranger Station!

- Open hours: M-F 8AM-4PM year round;
- Sat 8-4, Sun 9-4 after Memorial Day



Better Check Transport Logistics…



Go to full screen

Big Picture

- **Now look more closely at how the daily distances and gains work out considering the available camps…**
  - ***Walk all the way to Enchanted Valley on day 1? Add Anderson Pass the same day to allow 2-day trip?*** *Go to map!*

Big Picture

THE MOUNTAINEERS

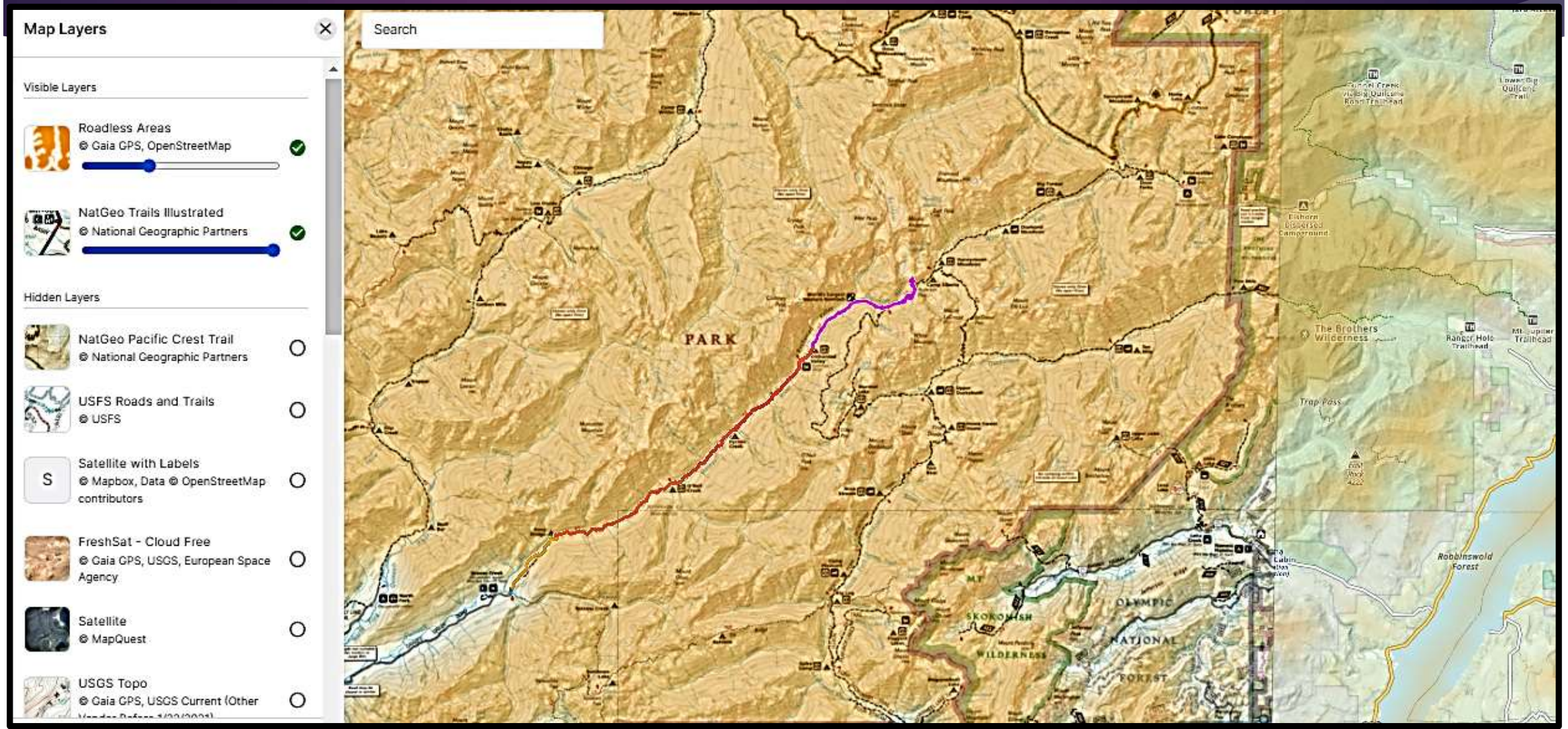
- **Now look more closely at how the daily distances and gains work out considering the available camps…**
  - ***Walk all the way to Enchanted Valley on day 1? Add Anderson Pass the same day to allow 2-day trip?***
    - ***12.1 miles, 4125' gain just to get to Enchanted Valley (maybe not given late start!)***
  - ***Walk to Pyrites Creek camp on day 1, then Enchanted Vly + Anderson Pass on day 2 ending at Enchanted Valley? Back to map….***

Big Picture

THE MOUNTAINEERS

- **Now look more closely at how the daily distances and gains work out considering the available camps…**
  - ***Walk all the way to Enchanted Valley on day 1? Add Anderson Pass the same day to allow 2-day trip?***
    - ***12.1 miles, 4125' gain just to get to Enchanted Valley (maybe not given late start!)***
  - ***Walk to Pyrites Creek camp on day 1, then Enchanted Vly + Anderson Pass on day 2 ending at Enchanted Valley?***
    - ***9 miles, 3042' gain day 1, 14.4 mi, 6184' gain day 2 (mostly with daypacks)***
  - ***Day 3: Go all the way out (12.1 mi), or go to Pony Bridge on day 3 (9.9 mi, 2365' gain) and add a 4th day out (Back to map***

Emergency Exit Options?



Emergency Exit Plan?

THE MOUNTAINEERS

Exit Route	Back To Starting TH	Best Exit?
From O'Neill Creek Camp	6.4 mi	6.4 mi to Graves Creek
From Pyrites Camp	8.8 mi	8.8 mi to Graves Creek
From Enchanted Valley	12.8 mi	12.8 mi to Graves Creek
From Anderson Glacier	23.1 mi	20.4 mi to Dosewallips road end??? Or better to head back to Graves Crk?

What's Next?

THE MOUNTAINEERS

Once you've nailed your itinerary:

- *Mark selected camps with map waypoints*
- *Mark reliable water supplies with map waypoints*
  - *Solid blue lines – major water courses or lakes*
- *Mark alternative camp possibilities with map waypoints?*
  - *If permits required, then you aren't allowed to use alternatives*
- *Save your waypoints to the same folder as your routes*

What's Next?

THE MOUNTAINEERS

Once you've nailed your itinerary (continued):

- *Export to Caltopo to create printed maps (Go to map to show export to .gpx file type which can be imported to Caltopo)*
- *Synch with Gaia app on your phone and download-save the map to use offline to navigate on the trail (only available to Gaia Premium users)*

Disclaimer!

THE MOUNTAINEERS

None of these digital map databases are based on measurements on the ground – they come from other sources, particularly satellites.

- *Elevation and trail locations can be somewhat to significantly off*
- *Trails can also be washed out and/or re-routed; camps and even trailheads may be moved or destroyed.*
- *'Casual' trails and boot paths that show on the database may not actually be visible (or safe!) on the ground*

SO…use the tools with your eyes open – seek out trip reports before you go - be prepared to navigate in the field when your map and reality don't match!

Questions on this section?

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Gear Planning

THE MOUNTAINEERS

- ***The key to having the essential gear while keeping your pack light is to:***
  - *Be intentional and disciplined about what you bring*
  - *Pack based on expected terrain and conditions and the objectives for your trip*
  - *Use a checklist to pack!*
  - *Start assembling your gear at least a week ahead so that you can take your time (and inspect your gear)*

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Gear Planning - Objectives

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- ***What's your primary objective? (fishing, climbing, photography vs. walking)***
  - If your focus is on enjoying camp and hobbies (fishing, photography, camp cooking, climbing), your pack will be heavier – don't expect to go as far each day or in the same total timeframe
  - If your focus is on covering distance, keeping your pack light will help you meet your objective with greater comfort and less risk of injury

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Gear choices based on conditions – a few examples

THE MOUNTAINEERS

What conditions do you expect where and when you plan to go?

- ***Daytime high and nighttime low temperatures***
  - Number and weight of baselayers, midlayers and other warm clothing
  - Sleeping bag temperature rating; bring bag liner? pad R value
- ***Expected precipitation – amount, duration, timing***
  - Lightweight, less waterproof raingear vs. heavier more waterproof hard-shell
  - Rain pants? Umbrella?
  - Pack cover, dry sacks
- ***Terrain – snow conditions: traction, gaiters, stiffer boots, poles; ice axe?***
- ***Water availability, quality: water-carry capacity, treatment method***

Gear Choices for Different Conditions

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Gear Planning – Build a trip-specific gear checklist

THE MOUNTAINEERS

- **Build a checklist from your total gear inventory**
  - Use the provided gear checklist as a template, or try out *Lighterpack*!
- **For any given trip, mark on your checklist which gear items you will need and which you can leave behind given the length of the trip and the weather and terrain conditions you expect.**

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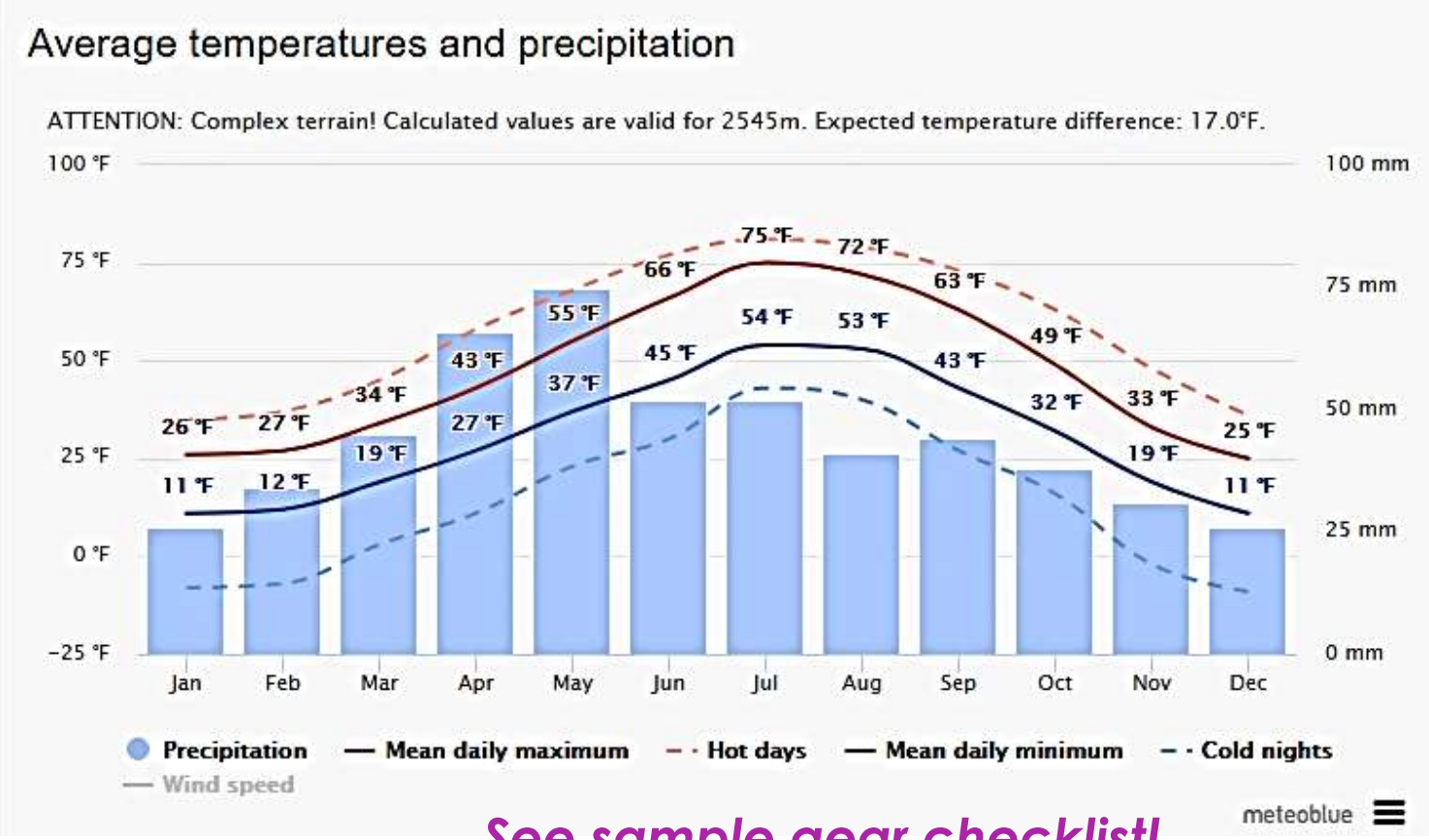
Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Example: Wind Rivers Highline in WY – 11 days, September

- Daytime highs in 60s to 70s
- Daytime lows in 20s to 40s
- Moderate chance of precip (PM thunderstorms)
- Could be snow but likely to melt fast
- Rugged very rocky sections
- Bears! (but bear cans not mandatory)
- Lakes and world class fishing



[See sample gear checklist!]

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Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Gear Planning – Finalize a trip-specific gear checklist

- ✓ Build a checklist from your gear list
- ✓ Mark on your checklist which gear items you will need and which you can leave behind given the length of the trip and the weather and terrain conditions you expect.
- ➢ **Inspect your gear – identify anything that needs to be replaced – identify any essential gear gaps that need to be addressed.**
- ➢ ***USE YOUR GEAR CHECKLIST EVERY TIME YOU PACK!***

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Food Planning Fundamentals

THE MOUNTAINEERS

#1. Think of food as the fuel to power your trip. Plan for enough to get the job done.

- 300 to 600 calories per hour of vigorous walking with a pack is a good rule of thumb (2500-5000 cals for an 8 hour day)
  - more for bigger people, very strenuous, cold or high altitude trips, less for smaller people, less strenuous trips

Everyone is different! Work out for yourself how many calories YOU need for particular types of trips!

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Food Planning Fundamentals

THE MOUNTAINEERS

- **Short Trip? Short mileage with base camp? Love gourmet cooking at camp? ➔ *Food weight is a lower priority.***
- **For longer trips (4+ days) and trips requiring a bear can, the weight and volume of your food will add up ➔ *Essential to make a food plan!***
  1. ***Sufficient calories***
  2. ***Food you love to eat***
  3. ***Minimum weight and bulk***

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Food Planning Fundamentals: Calorie Density

THE MOUNTAINEERS

How to get all those calories and keep your pack light??? *Pack as many calories as you can into the fewest pounds of food!*

➔ By packing more calorie-dense foods, you can deliver your target daily calories in less than half the weight!!

This means…

- **Increasing the percentage of fat of the trail foods you carry**
- **Reducing the water content of the trail foods you carry**

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Food Planning Fundamentals: Calorie Density

THE MOUNTAINEERS

A good calorie density target is 4.5 cals/gram, or 2000 calories per pound of food weight.

- 1.5-2.5 lbs/day (3000-5000 calories/day) to fuel a strenuous extended itinerary.
- 1-1.5 lbs/day (2000-3000 calories/day) for shorter, lower-intensity trips

Example – Chunky Peanut Butter

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 2 tbsp (32.0 g)

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 188	Calories from Fat 144
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 16.0g	**25%**
Saturated Fat 2.6g	**13%**
Polyunsaturated Fat 4.7g	
Monounsaturated Fat 7.9g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 156mg	**6%**
Total Carbohydrates 6.9g	**2%**
Dietary Fiber 2.6g	**10%**
Sugars 2.7g	
Protein 7.7g	

- Calorie density: 188/32 =

  5.9 cals/gm

- % wgt in fat = 16g/32g = 50%

Examples of Calorie-Dense Trail Foods

- **Flavored olive oil** – 9 cals/gram, 100% fat
- **Macadamias** – 7.3 cals/gram, 86% fat
- **Trailtopia Egg Scramble** – 6.6 cals/gram, 49% fat
- **Almond butter** – 6.5 cals/gram, 59% fat
- **Peanut M&Ms** – 5.8 cals/gram, 37% fat
- **Banana chips** – 5.1 cals/gram, 39% fat
- **Whole powdered milk** – 4.8 cals/gram, 31% fat

Examples of Less Calorie Dense Trail Foods

- **Tuna or chicken in pouch** – 1.2 cal/gram, 14% fat
- **Full-fat tortillas** – 2.8 cals/gram, 14% fat
- **Teriyaki beef jerky** – 2.9 cals/gram, 5% fat
- **Dried blueberries** – 2.9 cals/gram, 4% fat
- **Black Cherry Almond Clif Bar** – 3.5 cals/gram, 9% fat

☆ **These foods aren't "bad"!! Just less efficient in energy for their weight. Remove the water, or 'boost' with more calorie-dense ingredients.**

Food Planning Fundamentals

Check out the handy calorie density lookup tables in your food class resources!

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Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

Making your food plan 1. Make a meal calendar

Location	Date	Camp	Breakfast	Lunch-Snacks	Dinner
Start - Rivera Lodge Pinedale	5-Sep	0			
Beaver Park - Granite Lk trail jct	6-Sep	1		1	1
Elbow Lake	7-Sep	2	1	1	1
Island Lake - 2 nights	8-9 Sept	3-4	2	2	2
Baldy Lakes Jct - out	10-Sep		1	1	
		TOTALS	**4**	**5**	**4**

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Making your food plan 2. Build your food checklist

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- **What are your favorite food options for each trail meal?**
- **What is the serving size you are likely to consume?**
  - *Use the serving grams on the package label as a starting point*
  - *Weigh or measure it out on the counter – adjust if you bring some home*
- **How many calories are associated with each serving?**
  - *From package label as starting point*
- **Make a checklist of the servings of each food you need to bring to satisfy your trail meal calendar.**

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2. Sample food checklist - breakfast

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Food	Serving (gms)	Calories	Calories/Gram
Via packet	1	0	0
Cocoa mix+Coffee creamer (4tsp)	37	180	4.9
Full-fat granola with nuts & fruit (3/4C)	93	433	4.7
OR: Instant oatmeal with flaxseed, coconut, raisins and seeds (1C)	100	375	3.8
Whole milk powder (1/4C)	30	144	4.8

Start with a list for a single day and meal.

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2. Sample food checklist – lunch/snacks

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Food	Serving (gms)	Calories	Calories/Gram
Almond butter (2T packet)	31	201	6.5
Jelly packet	10	35	3.5
OR: Hard cheese (2 oz serving)	56	218	3.9
WITH: Mustard and mayo packets	18	90	5.0
ON: Oroweat english muffin 2 halves	59	134	2.3
Almond-cashew-walnut-sesame sticks mix	18	113	6.3
Macadamia nuts (2 oz)	56	416	7.4
Peanut or almond M&Ms (15 pcs)	36	203	5.6

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2. Sample food checklist – dinner/dessert

Food	Serving (gms)	Calories	Calories/Gram
Dehydrated dinner (1 svg dry)	100	455	4.6
Instant cream soup mix (1 pkt)	25	90	3.6
OR: Packaged Strawberry Harvest salad with dressing	85	160	1.9
Stonefire Naan bread (1/2 piece)	49	190	3.9
OR: Jalapeno-cheddar wrap - large (1)	55	210	3.8
Almond Roca 3-pack	36	200	5.6
OR: Keeblers Samoa cookies (3)	39	210	5.4

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2. Sample food checklist – *add # servings to pack*

Dinner Example – calendar says we need 4 dinners				
Food	**Serving (gms)**	**Calories**	**# Servings to pack**	**Total Gms to Pack**
Instant cream soup mix (1 pkt)	25	90	4	100
Dehydrated dinner (1 svg dry)	100	455	4	400
Packaged Strawberry Harvest salad with dressing	85	160	2	170
Stonefire Naan bread (1 piece)	98	380	2	197
Jalapeno-cheddar wrap - large (1)	55	210	2	111
Almond Roca 3-pack	36	200	3	108

Now put all the meals together and look at the bottom line…

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2. Sample food checklist – *bottom line for this menu*

calories per day for 4.5 days (check)	*2467*
food weight per day for 4.5 days (lbs) - check	*1.3*
average calories per gram for total menu	*4.2*

- Calories barely enough for a full day of strenuous backpacking
- Opportunity to reduce the weight per day by 1/3 pound by increasing the average calories per gram to 4.5
- Go back and modify the amounts of high and low calorie density items
- Then make your food sheet into a checklist and use it to pack!

Backpacking Trip Planning Clinic
Menu Planning for a Trip with a Resupply

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See multi-day example with a resupply

Follow your plan!!

- ***Use your meal checklist when you pack!***
  - *Measure your portions when you pack ➔ bring only what you need!*
  - *Take food out of its packaging to be sure it's the right amount for you (and to minimize trash)!*
- ***Many people package their individual meals in separate bags for each day to make it easy to keep track.***

Don’t forget to plan your fuel use!

- ✓ ***1 oz of canister fuel will heat ~8 cups of water*.***
  - *How much water will you heat per day?*
  - *Use this ratio to determine how much fuel you will need*
  - *Share with others to get fullest use of whole canisters if you won’t use a whole one by yourself.*

**** More fuel will be needed if windy, or at high altitude, or if water or air is very cold***

Key Take-Aways

- **Choose a destination that fits your abilities and is safe during the time of year you want to go.**
- **Build a route plan based on your objectives, available time, terrain**
  - *Lots of great digital tools are available!*
- **Make sure you include your transport and emergency exit plans!**
- **Understand the near-term weather and other trail conditions to expect – build your gear checklist accordingly, and use it!**
- **Make a food plan to ensure enough calories at the lowest weight with food you love to eat**

Key Take-Aways (continued)

- Organize and archive the info you've created (shareable drives are handy)
- Don't forget to share your trip plan and contact info to your friends and family at home
- Consider your emergency communication options – PLB, InReach

Essentials of Trip Planning for Backpackers

What's Next?

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We will email a link to you to a google drive with the class recording, presentation pdf and all the handouts.

Instructors Cheryl Talbert (cascadehiker12@gmail.com) and Alina Kremnova (alina.kremnova@gmail.com) would be glad to help you apply the lessons from this seminar to your own trip plans!