



Enjoy the  
backcountry,  
*but....*



# Danger! Danger! Danger!





# Don't Be Like these guys!





# So what could go wrong and how to stay safe anyway?

- Trailhead access poor
- Trail rough or damaged
- Bridges out or nonexistent
- Tree or rock fall, avalanche
- Trail is or you are lost
- Bad weather – rain, cold, wind, heat
- Out of water
- Out of gas (nutrition)
- Out of time/daylight
- Plant problems
- Animal problems
- Fires or lightning
- Injury or illness

- Preparation
- 10 Essentials
- Skills
- Equipment
- Situational awareness
- Judgement



# Plan Ahead

- **Do I understand this trip?**

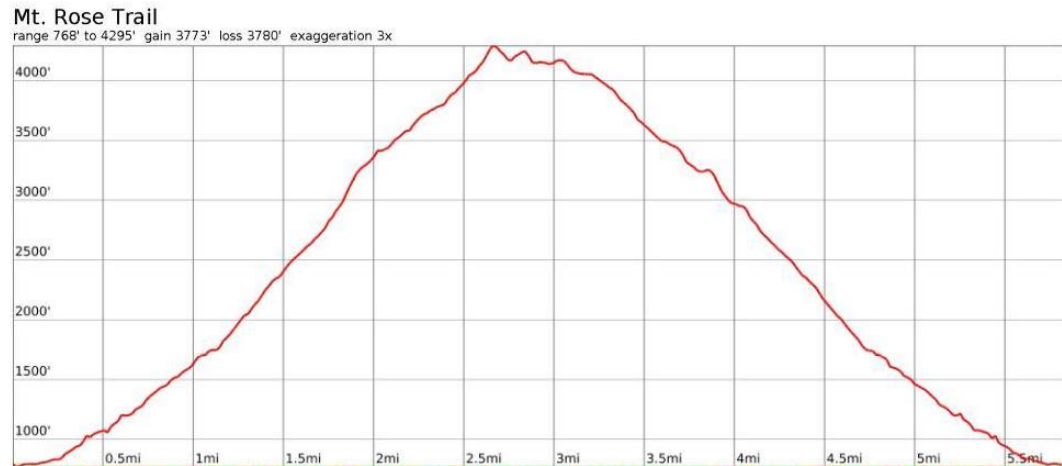
Trailhead access, distance, elevation gain, technical difficulty, current trail conditions, weather forecast, season, time required, other problems?

- **Am I ready?**

Conditioning, skills, mentality?

- **Is my gear right?**

Ten Essentials, plus.....



- **What is my Plan B, backup or bailout?**





# So how do I find information about this trip?

- **Many good sources:**
  - Internet (Washington Trails Association, National Park/Forest Sites, Hiking/Climbing Websites, National Weather Service, Caltopo.com)
  - Guides and Maps (Library, Used Book Stores, etc.)



**The Trip Begins Before You Reach the Trailhead**

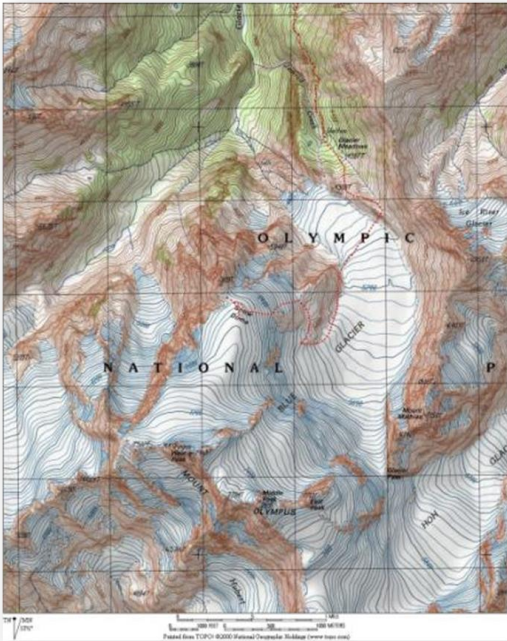
# Survive the trail

- Wear good boots
- Use trekking poles
- Care with rough and wet spots
- Consider the consequences of a fall
- Watch for loose or falling rocks, dead trees
- Pick and manage your stream crossings carefully
- Stay hydrated and fueled



# Stay / get found

This is a map



This is a compass

This is an altimeter





# Stay / get found

- Keep track of where you are
- Stay on the trail/route
- Keep the group together and communicate
- Get bearings before you lose visibility
- If uncertain or lost – **STOP**

*Sit*

*Think*

*Observe*

*Plan*

- *Retrace your steps*
- *Be prepared to spend the night*
- *You did leave a trip plan with a responsible party?*

Where did the peak go?



# Survive the weather

- Study the forecast for the trip (and after)
  - Improved forecast products are now available from the National Weather Service – Forecast discussion, point/hourly graphical forecasts, and they are more accurate than in the past
- Prepare for the forecast, but.....
- Be prepared if it still isn't correct
- Stay dry – add layers early
- Stay warm but not sweaty – cycle layers
- Add protection from the wind



# Beware Hypothermia

- **Bring extra clothing**
- **Replace wet clothes with dry ones**
- **Dress in layers;** adjust layers to match exertion level
- **Be alert to the first signs of hypothermia;** “umbles”, fumbles, mumbles, grumbles, stumbles
- **Stay active to help stay warm**
- **Drink plenty of water, snack throughout the day.**
- **Keep track of your companions;** watch of fatigue, confusion and loss of coordination
- **Warm victims carefully**





# Survive hot weather

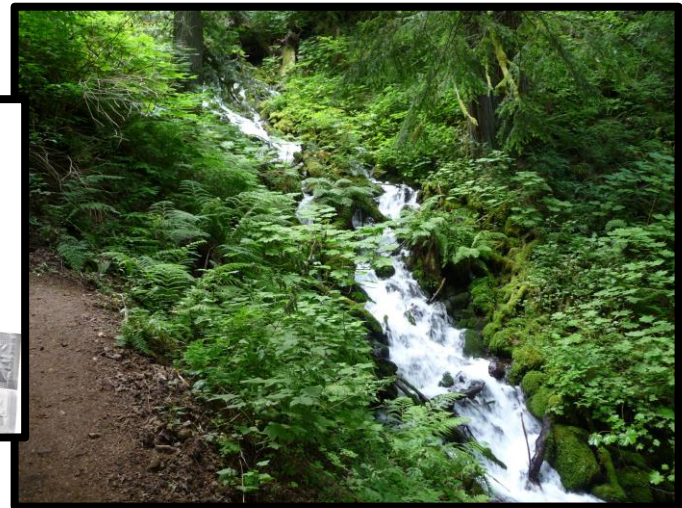
- **Protect from sun with clothing and sunscreen- light colors, brimmed hat, loose layers**
- **Protect eyes from UV – good sunglasses/glacier glasses for snow**
- **Drink water regularly**
- **Altitude and cold can quicken dehydration**
- **Watch for hyperthermia – skin color change, sweating, thirst, nausea, dizziness, confusion, headaches, cramps**
- **Treat urgently - cool**



# Drink Safe Water

**Parasites and bacteria and sometimes viruses are present in backcountry water:**

- **Treat all drinking water** (use filters, chemicals, uv purifiers, or boil ).
- **Practice good sanitation.**
- **Use cat holes** at least 200 feet from any water source. (Pack out toilet paper in zip-lock bags.)



# Avoid Fire / Lightning

- Know the current fire danger level
- Respect campfire closures
- Follow rules – stay out of fire zones
- Fire/smoke: Get out of the wilderness



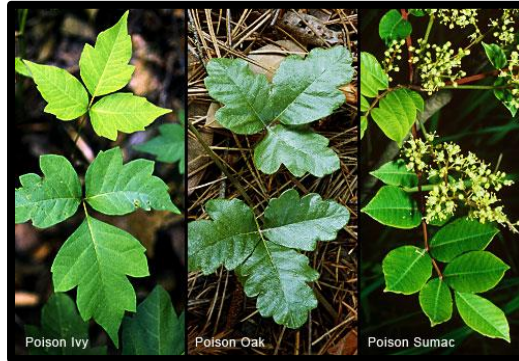
- Stay alert for weather changes
- Get off peaks and ridges
- Avoid open areas, single tall trees, rocky ledges, caves, metal objects



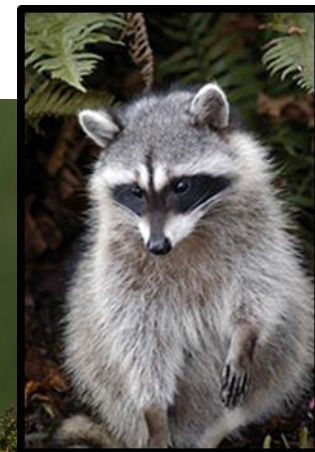


# Watch for Plants & Animals

- **Poison Ivy/Poison Oak**
- **Stinging Nettles**
- **Devil's Club**



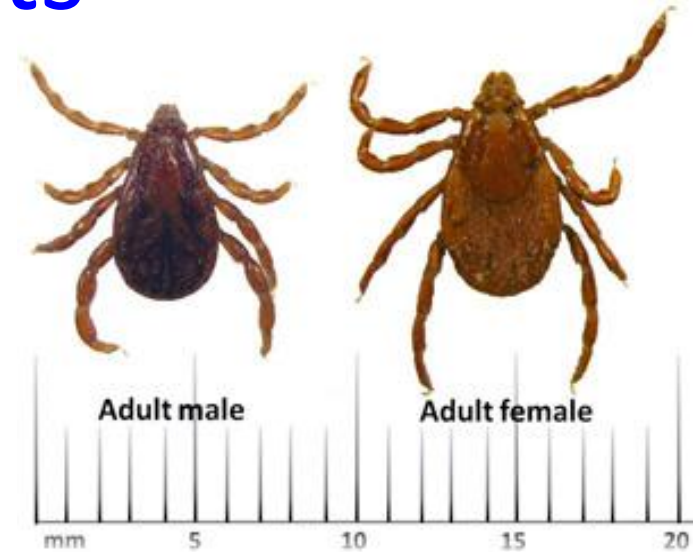
- **Mountain Goats**
- **Bears**
- **Raccoons, fox, mice, birds**
- **Cougars**



## Ticks

# Repel Insects

- Wear long sleeves and pants
- Tuck in cuffs or wear gaiters
- Treat clothes with Permethrin
- Check head, neck, armpits and crotch thoroughly at the end of each day.



## Biting Insects

- Repel with Permethrin on clothes, Picaridin or DEET on skin



## Stinging Insects

- Wasps and bees sting in defense
- Yellowjackets are aggressive  
- late summer & fall





# Treat Injury and Illness



- Learn about the health of your travel companions.
- Don't ignore or hide illness or injury of any extent
- Carry a well-stocked first aid kit.
- Treat injuries promptly
- Seek qualified help immediately - don't guess at first aid treatment
- Carry extra food, water and warm clothing
- Take MOFA – Mountain Oriented First aid



Let's stay safe out there

