



Winter 2015

Naturalists

EXPLORE. LEARN. CONSERVE.

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Mt. Shuksan viewpoint near Mt. Baker Lodge

Fellow Naturalists:

November and December are the quieter months for outdoor activities in our area. A quick look at, for example, the Washington Native Plant Society's field trip listings reveals a common theme – “check back in the spring”. Meanwhile, the Naturalist Committee is deep into the process of planning our courses, lectures, workshops, and field

trips for 2015. Rose O'Donnell has organized 4 lectures, the Introduction to the Natural World course is in the final planning stages spearheaded by Gordie Swartzman and Dave Shema, and the indefatigable Gordie Swartzman has us working on a new leadership course for trip leaders to start on January 20, 2015





Naturalists Lecture Series 2014-15

John Bishop, associate professor, School of Biological Sciences, WSU Vancouver, will review his research into the re-emergence of plants in the Mt. St. Helens blast zone.

Thurs., Nov. 20, 7 p.m., Goodman A

Donn Charnley, longtime geology professor, will explain how plate tectonics caused our North Cascades to be uplifted and formed

Thurs., Jan. 15, 7 p.m., Cascade A-B

Patti Happe, wildlife branch chief for Olympic National Park, will review the project to reintroduce the fisher to its native Olympics Range after being trapped to extinction 80 years ago.

Wed., Feb. 11, 7 p.m., Goodman A

Kathleen Foley, stewardship manager for the San Juan Preservation Trust, will talk about how bird lovers are helping encourage the return of the Western Bluebird to the San Juan Islands' Garry oak ecosystem.

Thurs., March 12, 7 p.m., Goodman A

For more information and updates, go to Mountaineers.org and click on Explore/Exploring Nature.

As you plan for spring and summer activities,

you might want to look at the following websites, a random collection of interesting naturalist sources and events:

Seattle Audubon Society: www.seattleaudubon.org

Seward Park Audubon: www.sewardparkaudubon.org

Slater Museum blog spot: www.slatermuseum.blogspot.com

Burke Museum: www.burkemuseum.org

Wenatchee River Institute: www.wenatcheeriverinstitute.org

Chelan Douglas Land Trust: www.cdlandtrust.org

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge: www.fws.gov/malheur.org

Washington Native Plant Society: www.wnps.org

Methow Conservancy: www.methowconservancy.org

North Cascades Institute: www.ncascades.com

Seattle Aquarium Beach Naturalist training: www.seattleaquarium.org

Ice Age Floods Institute, Puget Lobe Chapter: www.iafi.org

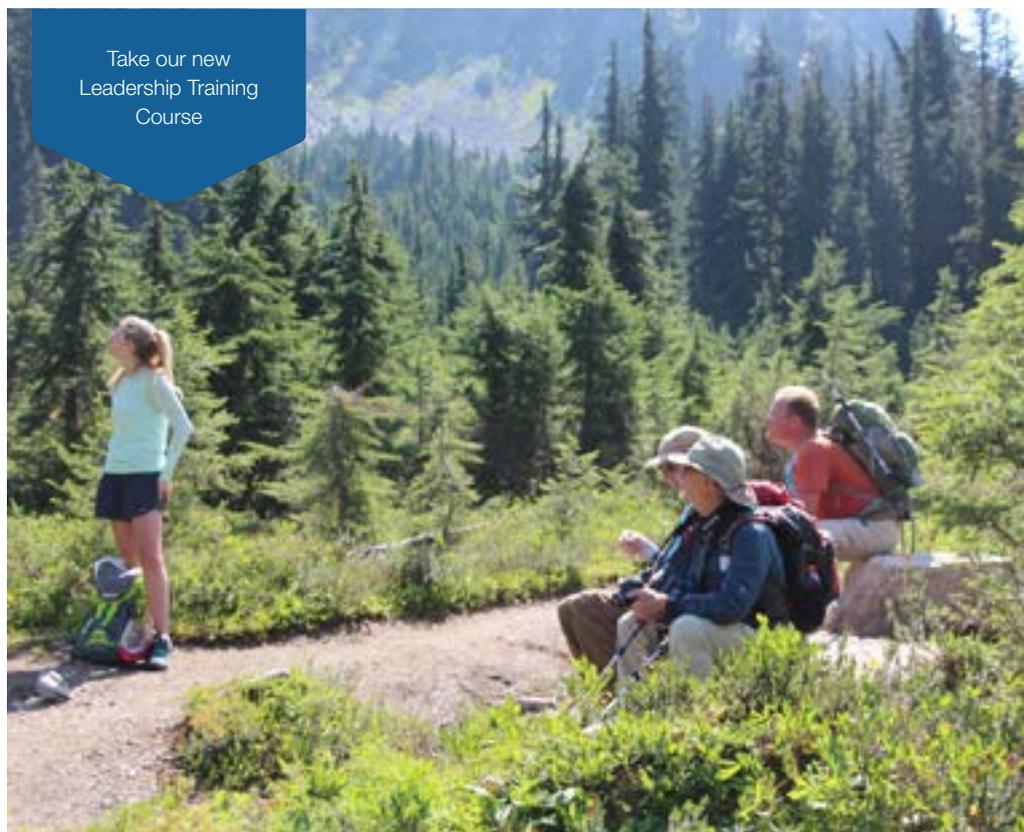
Siskiyou Field Institute: www.thesfi.org

AND A FEW MORE USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.wildflowersearch.com

www.gynesom.com

Take our new
Leadership Training
Course



Mountaineer Naturalists Leadership Training Course

January-April 2014

We are offering a course for Mountaineer Naturalists as a training for nature hike leadership.

The course will be mentored by Naturalist leaders with expertise in nature study and experience in nature hike leadership. There will be three monthly lectures and 4 field trips over the 4 month period, with an emphasis on using the tools which make identification of plants and animals easier and more accessible. Course lectures will be on the third Tuesdays of January-March (7-9 PM). Field trips will be on the weekends after the lectures for the first 2 months and on weekends in late March and early April. The course goal is to have each course participant prepare to lead and later lead a nature hike and have them continue to lead hikes into the future. Certification as a naturalist leader can result when the participant also takes a 2 hour mini-course on hike leadership through the hiking committee.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Develop confidence in the use of guidebooks and guide apps
- Learn to use plant and bird lists for specific hikes or regions
- Learn to list mountaineers activities on the web and how to use these lists
- Brush up on plant, bird and insect identification
- Share a variety of hiking and naturalizing activities together to develop core group spirit
- Have a chance to lead or co-lead a hike with mentorship

The course will be hands-on. Participants are asked to bring laptops or smart pads to class and pads or smartphones on field trips, though this is not mandatory. The three lectures evenings will focus, consecutively, on what you can do **before, during** and **after** a nature hike to make it successful. The training will be facilitated by **Gordie Swartzman** and run by a committee consisting of **Stewart Hougen, Will Peterman, Sandy Bowman, Jeff Nystuen, Bruce Barcklow, and Kay English.**

You Will Be Amazed-

at how many tools are available on the web and for smartphones and pads to help with identification.

LECTURE DATES 2015

January 20
February 17
March 17

FIELD TRIP DATES 2015

1	January 24	Discovery Park &/or
1	January 25	Schmitz Preserve Park
2	February 21	Seattle Waterfront &/or
2	February 22	Cougar Mountain
3	March 28&29	TBD
4	April 11	TBD

Introduction to the Natural World Course 2015

APRIL 15
MAY 20
JUNE 17
JULY 15

Topics will include a series of plant and bird ID lectures, conifers, ferns, life zones,, geology, butterflies, reptiles, mammals, insects and beach animals.

Field trips, in general, will be the week and weekend after the first two lectures. The Teanaway field trips are usually at the end of June or the beginning of July, and the Mt. Rainier field trips are usually early in August. Dates have not yet been chosen.

SEPTEMBER 23, 2015

Graduation Potluck and Slide Show



Scouting Boulder River Trail

Spring Rush, Spring Fever, Spring Into Action

Contributed by by Gordie Swartzman

Spring! Redolant of salad days, of holding hands on an amble, of love! For me, spring begins before the trillium graces our woodlands in the early cherries and camellias that pop out as if from nowhere. The trails beckon. What I like best about spring hiking is that I feel like I'm cheating, by going places where there are flowers in (relative) abundance, birds to listen to and (try to) identify, and good views, while it is still snow covered in our west side mountains. The only down side is the drives. Also, because the weather in spring is nip and tuck, planning is rather last minute, which accounts for the large number of unlisted hikes that I did this spring.

I started in mid April with Deception Pass (actually a west side hike), featuring many early spring flowers (camas, sanicle, desert parsley and sedum etc.) and great seabird sightings (the best being a rhinoceros auklet) but also great views of oystercatchers and harlequin ducks.



Oyster Catcher

The next hike, also in April, was a recon up Manashtash Ridge, a midweek hike in mist and rain much of the time. The flowers were glowing in the rain. East side hikes feature so many flowers that are related to, but different from the species we get



Daggerpod

later in the summer on the west side mountains, like showy phlox instead of diffuse phlox and a lower form of bluebells. One of my favorites is daggerpod, an early spring mustard.

By then I was addicted to hiking the season and went back, this time to Umptanum Ridge (early May). We had better weather, some views and great flowers. Surprisingly, though it seemed early in the season, the poets shooting stars were already past. Flowering is clearly variable from year to year, both in quantity but more in timing. Elevation also plays a major role as what we saw in early May on Umptanum was blooming in mid June on Iron Bear 2000' higher (and farther west).



Sicklepod bittercress in Black Canyon, near Umptanum Ridge

Next I went mushrooming with the Mycological Society (looking for morels). We were skunked in the Teanaway area and Salmon la Sac, but the flowers were good. Many early flowers were there including the yellow fritillary (below) and my first Calypso orchid of the season. I was impressed with the number of tree species around the Beverly Creek Campground (good for the class Teanaway field trip to have a look at these) including engelmann spruce, white pine, larch and black hawthorn.



Yellow Fritillary

The next week was Bird Fest over around Leavenworth, run by the chamber of commerce with participation from many state and national agencies. It's a great gathering and this year I got to lead a (hot and dry) hike up Icicle Ridge. The feature for me of these 3 days of birding and flowering were learning to tell birds by ear. Bird Fest is timed to catch the migration of warblers and there are many vireos and sparrows as well. Birding by ear is a steep learning curve for me, but its informing all my hiking now. I find myself listening more intently as I hike as well as scanning for flowers. A high point for me was a trip on Fish Lake in a catamaran where we saw snipe, yellow headed blackbirds, yellowthroats (many!) and a Wilson's phalarope (close up and personal).



Tweedy's lewisia near Leavenworth WA



Wilson's phalarope on Fish Lake



Marmot in Wenatchee



Birding trip to Mountain Home – bird fest Susan Ballinger, Neil Hedges, Steve Johnson and Peg Swartzman. I'm impressed with their skill, helpfulness, enthusiasm and humor. The hiking trips are the easiest to get onto. I encourage you all to try it and learn east side birds. We saw or heard just about every eastern warbler, lots of water birds, orioles, grosbeaks, finches, hummingbirds and flycatchers, with lots of repetitions to learn them.

THE SPRING CONTINUES AFTER BIRD FEST

Now I am hard to keep back. I want to do all the higher east side hikes, Easton Ridge, Kachess Ridge and later Iron Bear, all great flower hikes, with Mason Lake thrown in (hike with Grandson Kaveh). Seeing few birds I still hear hermit thrushes, olive sided flycatcher, wilsons and yellow rumped warblers, warbling and cassin's vireos. The flower displays are awesome, the views continue to astound. And then there are the low spring tides for tidepooling. Up, up and away!

Oh, and I forgot the week in Michigan and walk in Central Park (identified a wood thrush by sound). Sleeping Bear Dunes is a good place to go in spring for flowers, birds and views. Still, the west is best.



Two Stewarts; Hougen (foreground) and Mt. (background) from Easton Ridge



Snow douglasia on Easton Ridge



Gray jay chatting us up on the Ira Spring Trail near Mason Lake



Rock penstemon and Oregon sedum on Kachess Ridge trail. Another WOW day!

Bernard DeVoto's West

By Heidi Diem

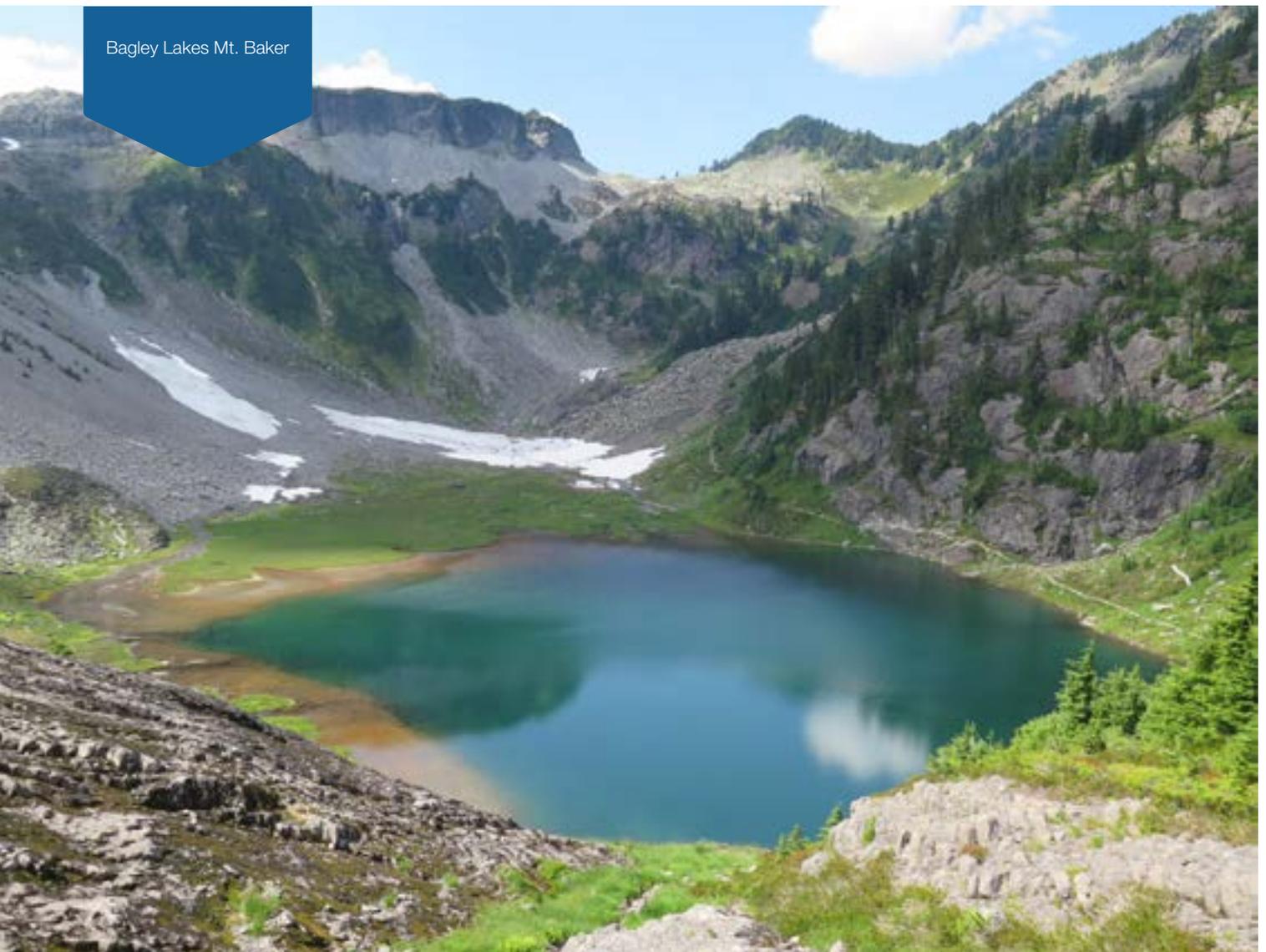
Bernard DeVoto's "Across the Wide Missouri", is a history of the 1830s in the Rocky Mountains and the decline of the fur trade. DeVoto was a giant of history of the American West in the mid 20th century. This book was written in 1947 and has some datedness (he throws about "squaw" and "savage" freely for example) but is still fascinating. The Pacific NW is dominated by the Brits and the Hudson's Bay Company at this time. Mountain men are still

roaming the Rockies, the wagon trains haven't yet arrived, but businessmen, missionaries, and.....naturalists! are starting to show up. I just read about Thomas Nuttall and John Townsend joining a fur trade caravan in St. Louis in 1834 to head up the Missouri to the Oregon territory. I believe they both have birds named after them?

DeVoto detours briefly to describe Nuttall's first venture to the west, in 1811 with an Astor party:

"The wonderland of unstudied plants kept Nuttall in an intoxication just short of frenzy. The voyageurs labored with him in vain, trying to tell him that he was risking not only his life but also Mr. Astor's money when he wandered off through prairies, thickets, and bottom land. But no Indians existed for Nuttall, there were no mischances, no interruptions or delays, no possibility of disaster or death, there was only the flora that no one had seen. So the voyageurs cursed him, decided that he was touched, and kept an eye on him when possible".

Bagley Lakes Mt. Baker





Boulder River Trail in February

Seattle Naturalists Committee and Subcommittee Chairs

Introduction to the Natural World Course	Gordie Swartzman	g.swartzman@gmail.com
Trips and Leadership	Heidi Diem Stewart Hougen Bruce Barcklow	Heidi.diem@gmail.com sehouden@comcast.net bbarcklow@gmail.com
Study Group	Bruce Barcklow	bbarcklow@gmail.com
Continuing Education	Jeffrey Nystuen	jeff.nystuen@gmail.com
Nature's Way Author	Joan Miller	jenskink@gmail.com
Lecture Series	Rose O'Donnell	r.a.odonnell@icloud.com
Set up	Marc and Nancy Provence	mprov@msn.com
Native Plant Garden	Sandra Bowman Rob Stevens	sbowman7@icloud.com robstevens5@comcast.net
Seattle Naturalist Chair	Kay English	kenglish43@gmail.com

We welcome comments, ideas, information to share, original articles (which I may need to shorten) and photos. If you have information you'd like to have appear in the newsletter, please get it to me (kenglish43@gmail.com) for the next newsletter.

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FLICKR SITE:

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