



# Introduction to Backpacking

2026



# Land Acknowledgement

*The Mountaineers acknowledge that we are on the lands of the Pacific Northwest Indian tribes, who live here and steward these lands and waters as they have since time immemorial. As we pursue our mission, we strive to listen to and amplify Native traditions and values through respectful engagement.*

# Welcome Course Leaders 2026



Lisa Elliott  
(she/her)



Haley Reeves  
(she/her)

# Course Leaders and Instructors

- Combined backpacking experience: **200+ years**
- In addition to backpacking our combined leader experience includes winter camping, climbing, scrambling, bikepacking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing
- Ask us anything!

## INSTRUCTORS



**CAROLYN READ**  
*Instructor*



**JEFFREY EDWARDS**  
*Instructor*



**DIANN SHELDON**  
*Instructor*



**MONICA MONK**  
*Instructor*



**CAROLYN CARBAJAL**  
*Instructor*



**MONTE WINDSOR**  
*Instructor*



**CHRIS NELSON**  
*Instructor*



**GEOFFREY WICKES**  
*Instructor*



**BRIAN CARPENTER**  
*Instructor*



**HENRIQUE CASTRO**  
*Instructor*



**LARA LINDE**  
*Instructor*



**VANESSA PHILLIPS**  
*Instructor*



**DAVID HYDE**  
*Instructor*



**JERRICK LINDE**  
*Instructor*  
*Qualified Youth Leader*



**COY HOWARD**  
*Instructor*



**ROYCE POETTER**  
*Instructor*



**ASHLEY NAGY**  
*Instructor*



**SHANNON ROLBIECKI**  
*Instructor*  
*Qualified Youth Leader*



**DEANNA NUTTBROCK-ALLEN**  
*Instructor*



**LISA MCFEAK**  
*Instructor*  
*Qualified Youth Leader*



**TOM UTTERBACK**  
*Instructor*



**KURT MALLERY**  
*Instructor*



**CARY DOUSSETT**  
*Instructor*



**VALERIE LORFELD**  
*Instructor*



**STEPHEN OLIVER**  
*Instructor*



**ANGELA HESSMAN**  
*Instructor*



**LUCIANA (LU) WRIGHT**  
*Instructor*



**FRANK MCCRACKEN**  
*Instructor*  
*Qualified Youth Leader*



**BETH LOWE**  
*Instructor*

# Introduce Students

- Warm Welcome
- We're glad you're here

## PARTICIPANTS



KRISHNAN RANGANATHAN



RENEE LARKIN



COLLEEN CHAN



RANDY EAKIN



JESSICA WOLF



JODI KRAMER



ELANIA CAMPOS



BRETT OZOLIN



SWASTIK CHAKI



VICTORIA SHOMO



BRIAN EAKIN



MICHAEL STRATE



DEE THOMAS



BEI ZHU



JANE YOUNGE



ANIESKA TIMMS



ANNETTE OH



MARISA CLARK



ANKUSH CHALLA



SAMANTHA FRANKUM



ALYSSA TATRO



LOGAN DEGRAND



# Introduction to Backpacking

## Important Attendance Dates



3/19

WELCOME  
ZOOM MEETING



4/4

GEAR DAY



4/25

PRACTICE CAMP



4/8

FIELD TRIP #1  
REGISTRATION

# Today's Agenda

9:00- 9:40 Welcome Introductions and Reminders

- Reminder to take 10 Essentials Quiz Online
- Review Leave No Trace Ethics
- Reminder to Take Low Impact Recreation Quiz for Badge

9:45 Logistics Breaks, Lunch and Bathroom Locations

9:40- 10:15 Stove Demo Outdoors

10:15- Passport and Session Breakout Locations- Upstairs, Lower Level

10:30-11:00 Passport Session 1

11:00-11:30 Passport Session 2

Lunch 11:30-12:00

12:00-12:30 Passport Session 3

12:30-1:00 Passport Session 4

# Today's Agenda

1:00-3:00 Food Planning, Storing Food, Animal Encounters, Mentors

# Leave No Trace Ethics

## ▶ 7 Principles

- ▶ Plan Ahead and Prepare
- ▶ Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- ▶ Dispose of Waste Properly
- ▶ Leave What You Find
- ▶ Minimize Campfire Impact
- ▶ Respect Wildlife
- ▶ Be Considerate of Others
- ▶ Recent changes to our national park and USFS staffing levels mean we need to be even better stewards



leave no trace

CENTER FOR OUTDOOR ETHICS

# Low Impact Recreation

## Skills Include

- ▶ Camping on durable surfaces
- ▶ Management of human waste in different outdoor environments
- ▶ On and off trail etiquette
- ▶ Food management: food storage techniques, microtrash, & not feeding wildlife



# Trail Etiquette



- ▶ Be nice to others
- ▶ Yield to uphill traffic
- ▶ Step to the uphill side of the trail and face the trail
- ▶ Stay to the right on wider paths
- ▶ Pass on the left
- ▶ Keep noise levels low
- ▶ Practice “Low Impact Recreation”
- ▶ Stay on the trail
- ▶ Walk through puddles, unless you can do so without going off trail

# DEMO TIME!

*How does that stove work?*  
*Location Outdoors*

# Passport Session Times and Locations

10:30-11:00 Passport Session 1

11:00-11:30 Passport Session 2

Lunch 11:30-12:00 Q&A

12:00-12:30 Passport Session 3

12:30-1:00 Passport Session 4

# Passports

**Passport to Adventure**



DREAM — HAPPY TRAILS — EXPLORE — WONDER —  
2026



Tacoma Mountaineers  
Hiking and Backpacking

## Steps to Graduation

- Stewardship 6 Hours  
Washington Trails Association;  
Mountaineers;  
Nisqually Land Trust;  
Pierce Conservation District;
- Complete Low Impact Recreation  
Mountaineers Website.
- April 4 Attend Gear Day
- April 25-26 Kitsap Forest overnight hike,  
campfire and gear test. (Bring all gear.)
- Participate in 2 overnight Backpack trips.  
(One with Mountaineers)
- Submit Application for Graduation and Basic



Introduction to  
Backpacking

- Course
- Materials
- Trips
- Information

### Stoves and Water Filtration Take Aways/Questions

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### Packs Shelter Sleep Systems Take Aways/Questions

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### Clothing Footwear and Hygiene Take Aways/ Questions

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### Food and Nutrition Take Aways/Questions

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# Today's Agenda

1:00-3:00 Food Planning, Storing Food, Animal Encounters

Meet Your Mentor

# Storing Food

16

*Why worry about securing your food?*



1. Critters are all around us and very motivated to gather food!
2. If animals learn to get easy food from humans, they can become aggressive
3. Habituated creatures almost always lose
4. Good food storage and camp sanitation are an essential part of Leave No Trace backcountry travel.



# Camp Cookware and Dinnerware

17



## **Pot:**

- Only get as big as you really need
- Titanium is lightest, but also most expensive

- ▶ A lightweight long-handled spoon may be the only utensil you need (plus general-purpose knife)
- ▶ Consider eating and drinking out of the same cup/pot
- ▶ Sturdy freezer bags can be used to carry food, rehydrate in & eat out of (eliminating need for bowl)
- ▶ Lightweight collapsible bowls are another option



# Food Planning Fundamentals

18

- ▶ How much food do I need to bring? It depends on terrain, pace, total pack weight, conditions (elevation, temperature), individual size and metabolism
- ▶ Develop a daily food plan, including calorie dense foods. Use a checklist and weigh or measure your meals. Shoot for 2500 to 3000 calories per day
- ▶ Transfer non-perishable foods from store packaging into ziplocks
- ▶ Develop a system to organize your food so that you can find what you want quickly

[Website Food Planning Calories](#)



# Backpacking Food Ideas

19

Grocery store pre-packaged items: meats, cheeses, instant oatmeal, ramen, noodle or rice packets, tuna packets, tortillas, pitas, peanut butter, and others

Freeze-dried prepared meals: Mountain House, Backpacker's Pantry, and others

Make your own with a dehydrator!

Snacks: mini bars, bulk items, cookies, dried fruit and fruit leathers, candies, chips, nuts and others

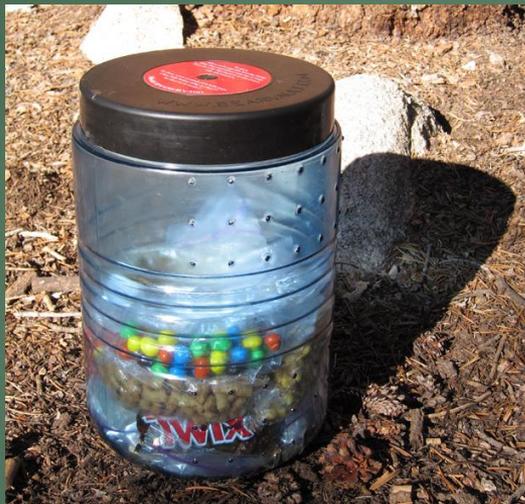


# Storing Food

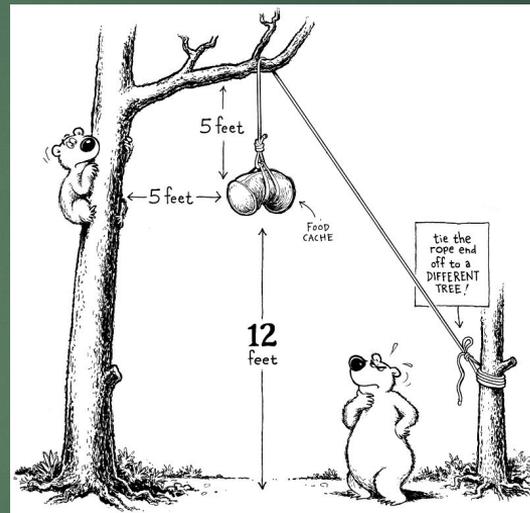
Methods to secure your food and other scented items:



Ursack (often combined with odor-proof bag)



Bear canister  
(we have bear can to barrow. feel free to ask)



Hang stuff sack with 50' paracord

# Keep a Clean Camp

21

- ▶ Try to prepare, eat and store food away from your sleeping area
- ▶ Wash your pot and utensils well
- ▶ Store trash in your food storage container
- ▶ Be careful not to spill food on ground, on clothing or in your tent
- ▶ ***Never leave your camp with food or trash unsecured!***

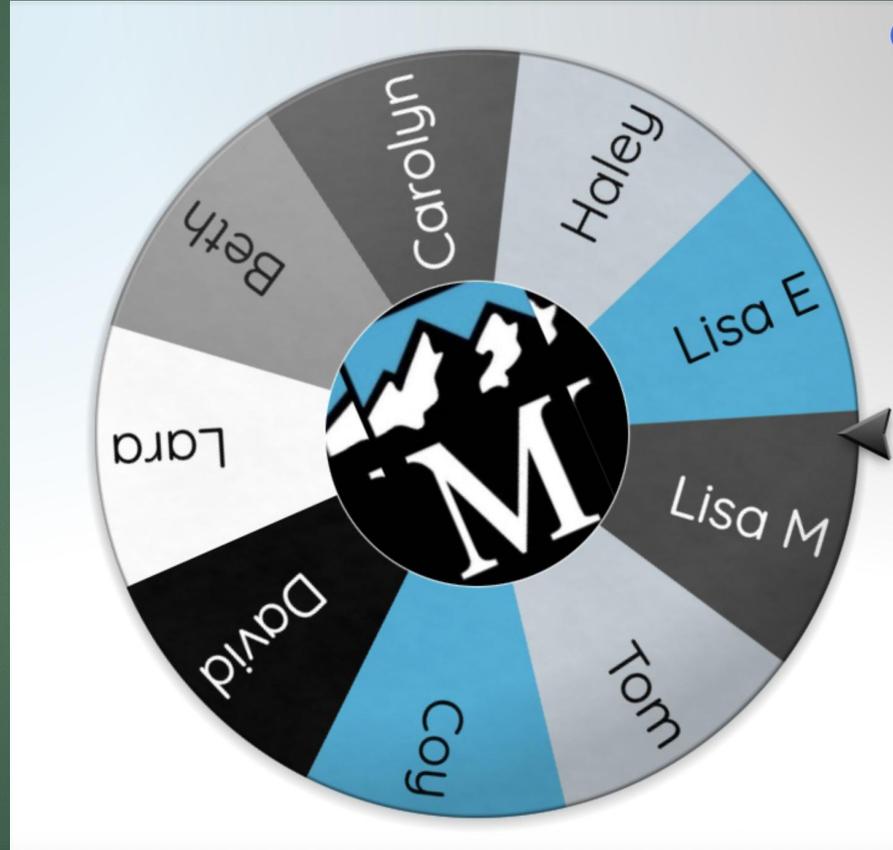


# Comfort Items



# Comfort Items

23



# Most Common Animal Encounters

24



Be Bear Aware!

- ▶ Don't look a bear in the eye or get between a mother and her cub
- ▶ Don't turn your back to a bear
- ▶ Do make noise when hiking to reduce startling a bear
- ▶ Do walk slowly backwards, talk calmly, give the bear some space

Use the Thumb Trick to reduce encounters



- Do give goats the right-of way
- Do keep your distance, retreat if needed
- Do make noise, scream, wave at a goat that is getting too close
- When hiking in goat territory, urinate 50 feet off trail and preferably on rocks

# Trip Planning/How to Choose a Trip

What type of trip are you looking for?

- ❖ Basecamp, thru-hike, out and back, loop, lollipop
- ❖ Overnight vs. multi-day
- ❖ Relaxed vs. intense

What do you want to see/do?

- ❖ Ocean
- ❖ Desert
- ❖ Alpine lakes
- ❖ Mountain views or ridge walking
- ❖ Wildflowers
- ❖ Swim, pick berries, sunrise/sunset

# Trip Planning/How to Choose a Trip

26

## Pace & Distance

- ❖ Consider your fitness and conditioning
- ❖ Sign up for a few Weighted Wednesdays
- ❖ How long do you want to carry your gear uphill for?

## Special Considerations

- ❖ Research the time of year and expected weather conditions. Will it be hot, cold, wet, smokey, high water levels for trips with water crossings?
- ❖ Choose clothing and gear specific to the expected trip conditions

# Trip Planning / Resources

## Where to Go

- ❖ Trip reports and online hiking guides: [www.wta.org](http://www.wta.org), [www.mountaineers.org](http://www.mountaineers.org), [www.nwhikers.net](http://www.nwhikers.net)
- ❖ Guidebooks
- ❖ Do you have the right pass or permit?

## When to Go

- ❖ Has the snow melted?
- ❖ What about the road conditions?
- ❖ What will the weather be like?

# To Do Before You Go



28

- ▶ Gather and organize your gear and most food in advance. Use a checklist!!
- ▶ Make contingency plans for trail hazards, road closures.
- ▶ Re-check the near-term weather forecast.
- ▶ Leave route info and ranger station phone number with a responsible friend or family member.
- ▶ Get the necessary permits including parking (may need to apply far in advance!).
- ▶ Leave valuables at home. Don't leave food in your car at the trailhead unless it is in a critter proof container.
- ▶ Consider bringing an extra car key and have a carpool member carry it.

# Optional in-depth classes

The Mountaineers offers a variety of in depth / specialized classes related to backpacking such as:

- ▶ [“Staying Found”; Intro to Map & Compass; Basic GPS](#)
- ▶ [Wilderness First Aid & Trail Emergency Preparedness](#)
- ▶ [Specific Topics: food prep, ultralight, long distance](#)

Check the web page under “Learn” / “Find Courses, Clinics and Seminars”

# Questions?

30



# Today's Agenda

Meet Your Mentor

# Next Session: Practice Camp

## 4/25-26

- ▶ Bring your gear and ask questions!
- ▶ Get help loading and fitting your pack.
- ▶ Let's go hiking! A short trip to see what it feels like walking with your fully loaded pack. This a great time to make adjustments and test out your gear!
- ▶ Set up your camp, filter water, and make a meal.
- ▶ Staying overnight is optional.
- ▶ **REMINDER: Field Trips Open April 8-April 27th**

# END 2026 Gear Day