



### Welcome to Leader Lines

It's almost summer! We hope your spring is going well and your courses have been fun. We've already surpassed the number of course participants than last fiscal year! Congrats!

This month we explore the importance of humility, announce some fantastic website enhancements, share our new streamlined youth leader process and throw in our usual array of leadership opportunities. As always, I [welcome your suggestions for future story ideas](#) and thank you for all the ways you support our mission.

Chris Williams,  
Leadership Development Manager



### The Never-ending Battle Against Confirmation Bias

As Leaders in the outdoor industry, we must always remember the importance of re-evaluating our plans in light of new conditions and information. Reinforce this by saying:

- "The student comes before the summit."
- "It's better to wimp out than to limp out."
- "A good traveler has no plans and is not intent on arriving."

Unfortunately, the human brain doesn't always want to operate with this level of wisdom! [A frequently-cited study from 1989](#) showed that Army intelligence experts, when updated with information contradicting their first impressions, were highly likely to discredit the new evidence and embrace their original conclusions *more* fervently. This impulse is referred to as "[confirmation bias](#)" which is the

tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information confirming preexisting beliefs or hypotheses rather than exploring less personally desirable alternatives.

Confirmation bias might play out with dangerous consequences in the backcountry: a difficult navigation issue, assessing an area for avalanche risk, deciding what the weather is about to do - especially when your goal is only 30 or 40 minutes away. In order to stay safe, we have to constantly re-evaluate our circumstances and be willing to change our plans in light of what is happening around us. Reinforce this lesson with your instructors and leaders to support a culture of open-mindedness and inquiry. Read these great strategies referenced in this article [on the Dunning-Kruger Effect](#) that we've sent out before.

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## Enhanced Trip Reports

It wasn't easy, but we finally upgraded the website's trip report function for locations. **Now you can add pictures, rate a trip, explain the road and route conditions, and generally provide all the "beta" and tips you want for our outdoor community!** With much more complete and robust information about a location, trip leaders can plan activities with more precision. This decreases the likelihood of a turn around, matches people's skills and abilities with appropriate trips more accurately, and helps people navigate difficult trail sections. [Check them all out here](#) and start providing reports for your own trips! Here's just [one great example](#) of what you could provide in your next trip report, and don't forget you can update old trip reports by clicking that blue Edit button.


TRIP REPORT [Edit](#)

### Day Hike - Talapus & Olallie Lakes

*We used the Pratt Lake trail head and so extra miles. Woodland flowers are blooming now and the stream crossings are very pretty.*



**BARBARA FOLMER**  
May 26, 2016



- ▶ Date: Wed, May 25, 2016
- ▶ Activity: [Day Hike - Talapus & Olallie Lakes](#)
- ▶ Route/Place: [Talapus & Olallie Lakes](#)
- ▶ Activity Type: Day Hiking
- ▶ Trip Result: Successful

▶ Road Conditions: Road suitable for all vehicles

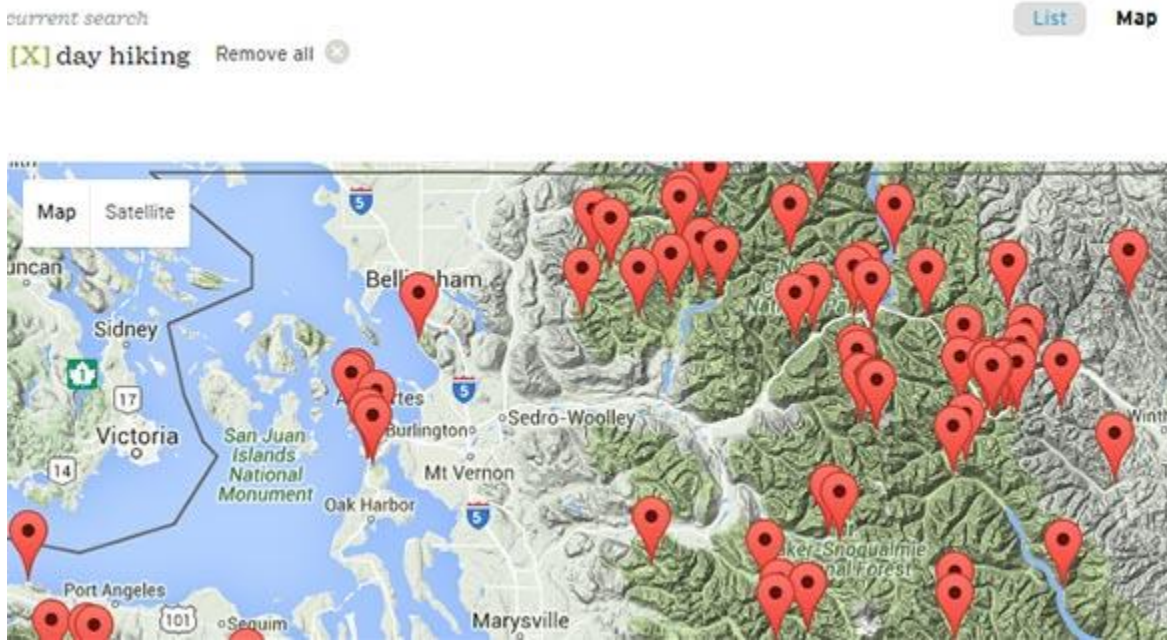
▶ Route Conditions:  
Blow down has been cleared in the first mile of trail - there was blow down to climb over and under further on. Some snow

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## Map Search for Activities and Locations

Ever think to yourself, "self, let's go explore something along the Mountain Loop Highway off US-2 this weekend?" **Well, now you can search the Mountaineers website by location and find trips or routes/places exactly where you want to explore!** We've added a Map Search to the route/places

and activity search pages of Mountaineers.org. For example, below is a map view of all our current hikes! It visually connects people with trips more easily, AND shows how active our volunteers are across the state! We made a number of other website changes that you [can read about here](#).



### **New Qualified Youth Leader Approval Process**

There is a [new way to apply to become a Qualified Youth Leader](#). We re-vamped the process in an effort to make it clearer to volunteers what policies and rules apply to our many different youth programs AND to increase the retention and knowledge of those policies. We believe this provides more clarity and support for volunteers, while ensuring high quality programming for the youth we serve.

[Apply today!](#) We have growing programs that need your support and when we train youth, they get excited about what they've learned and then go home and train their parents! It's a mission two-fer!

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## Quick Hits

- **Stay up to date!** Seattle Climbing is hosting an evening expo on June 6 for Climb Leaders and Instructors to get hands-on with what's new in the realm of climbing gear, technique, and safety. [RSVP here!](#)
- **Interested in becoming a Climb Leader?** On June 2, Seattle Climbing is hosting a Q&A session to provide details about how the (Seattle) Climb Leader application process works. You'll be able to network with existing Climb Leaders and talk about setting up some mentored leads. Not only is this great for climbers, but both of these events are an excellent model of how to engage our membership in programs that excite them about developing their skills with us. [Sign up here!](#)
- **Mountaineers Leadership - Conference Call for Proposals:** Do you have an idea for a session at this year's Leadership Conference on December 3? Let us know! [Here's how to submit a proposal for you to help inform, inspire, and support our Leaders.](#)
- **Death by GPS?** As these tools become more prevalent and easier to use in the backcountry, we must remember their downsides. Studies are showing that when we actively engage in the act of route-finding and navigation, we are more mindful of hazards. In addition, people remember the details of their journeys better! [There are numerous examples of people ignoring obvious risks](#) because of blind trust in GPS directions. **The takeaway: Use all the tools available to you, but stay vigilant and engaged with your environment.**
- **Reminder - Free Instructor Desk Copies from Mountaineers Books!** Teaching a course? Well you can get a "desk copy" of any text you plan on using from Mountaineers Books! As you post your course online, you can request a free copy of the book and we'll send it to you.
- **First Aid Kit Checkup:** Your First Aid Kit has been in the bag for years now....when was the last time you opened it? Maybe if you need to update what's inside? Uses these lists ([one from the Mayo Clinic](#) and [one from a doctor writing for REI](#)) that provide excellent guidance on staying prepared for the worst.
- **Multiple Names for Similar Places:** In fall 2015, we added the ability to **list alternate route/place titles** to be chosen as part of the activity's title. We now display these in a "Titles" tab on the route/place. The [Silver, Tinkham, & Abiel Peaks](#) route/place is a good example. Learn more by visiting our [Requesting New Routes & Places](#) how-to or [tell us](#) about a route/place that needs some alternate titles or other correction or improvement.
- **We want to hear from you!** We've launched a project we're calling Progressive Climbing Education with the goal to invest significant time and money into figuring out how we can make our suite of volunteer-led Climbing Programs better. Our goal is to truly understand the needs of our volunteers, students, and the community at large. That's why we're conducting three listening sessions in June. [Join us!](#)

## **Stay Safe Out There!**

**Number of Leader Badges Issued in 2016:** 164 (we had only issued 95 at this point last year). Keep up the great work developing these new leaders!

**Total Miles Traveled This Year by Mountaineers:** 50,104

**Total Elevation Gain in Feet This Year:** 12,821,456