

# Basic Backpacking

## Lecture 3



# Basic Backpacking

## Lecture 3 Agenda: Trips

<i>Updates / Admin</i>	Gearpalooza Reflections Field Trip Update
<i>During the Trip</i>	Food Storage
	Presentation - Leave No Trace (LNT)
	Table Discussion - LNT
	Trip Etiquette
<b>B R E A K</b>	
<i>During the Trip</i>	Presentation - Wildlife
	Table Discussion - Wildlife
<i>After the Trip</i>	Getting Home Safely
	Gear Maintenance
<i>Next Steps</i>	



# Thank You, Gearpalooza Instructors!

Nicole Deflaux  
Gail Buquicchio  
Linwen Huang  
Melissa Mossar  
Charles Grant  
Alex Whitlow  
Erik Benson  
Ashley Stroud

Rebecca Bova  
Lindsey Hesseltine  
Jill Gresham  
Daniel Hass  
Patrick Van Der Hyde  
David Bradley  
Allegra Campbell  
Jim Griffing



# Gear: Your Next Steps

- Build your “shopping list”
  - See “Typical Backpacking Checklist”
- Prioritize “core” gear
- Rent or borrow first if unsure
- Explore used gear

**Allow sufficient time to plan and procure!**



# Gear: Avoid Common Mistakes

- Too heavy, large, or bulky
  - Tents
  - Backpacks
  - Sleeping bags
- Unsafe old stoves
- Insufficient warm clothing for idle time
- UL pack for non-UL gear



# Field Trip Registration Update

- Contact course leader ASAP if no trip dates work for you
- Status as of April 23rd:
  - All but one student successfully registered!
  - Two spaces on June 7-9th trip to Marmot Pass
  - Three spaces on June 8-9th trip to North Fork Skokomish River



# Field Trip Registration Update

- Next steps:
  - You may *optionally* get on the waitlist for at most one additional trip, but only if it is earlier than the one you are signed up for.
  - Be ready to go on your waitlisted trip if you are called.
  - Cancel off the waitlist if you are no longer available on that date.



# Food Storage





# Food Storage

Why worry about securing your food?



1. Critters instinctively gather food!
2. Easy-to-get human food = more aggressive critters
3. Essential “Leave No Trace” practices
  - a. Secure food storage
  - b. Diligent camp sanitation



# Food Storage

## Permanent Installations

### Bear Locker



### Bear Pole



# Food Storage

## Portable Solutions

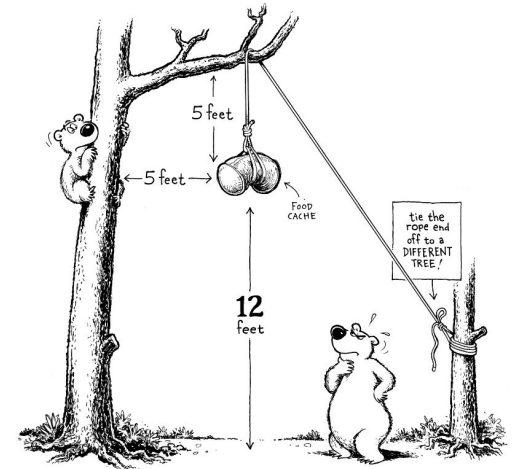
### Ursack



### Bear Can



### Hanging



- Store all food/scented items inside (no food in tent!)
- 100+ feet from campsite

# Food Storage

## Ursack

- Bear and/or critter “resistant” bags
- Pair with odor-proof bag (OPSak)



# Food Storage

## Ursack

- Bear and/or critter “resistant” bags
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### Pros

- Beginner friendly
- Lightweight
- Collapsible, easy to pack



# Food Storage

## Ursack

- Bear and/or critter “resistant” bags
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### Pros

- Beginner friendly
- Light weight
- Collapsible, easy to pack

### Cons

- Bears can chew on bag, crushing contents
- Critters can chew through Ursa Major Bags
- Requires sturdy tree trunk
- Not approved many National Parks
- Expensive



# Food Storage

## Bear Canister

- Bear and critter-proof canister



# Food Storage

## Bear Canister

- Bear and critter-proof canister

### Pros

- Beginner friendly
- Safest storage option
- Can use in any ecosystem, no trees required!





# Food Storage

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### Cons

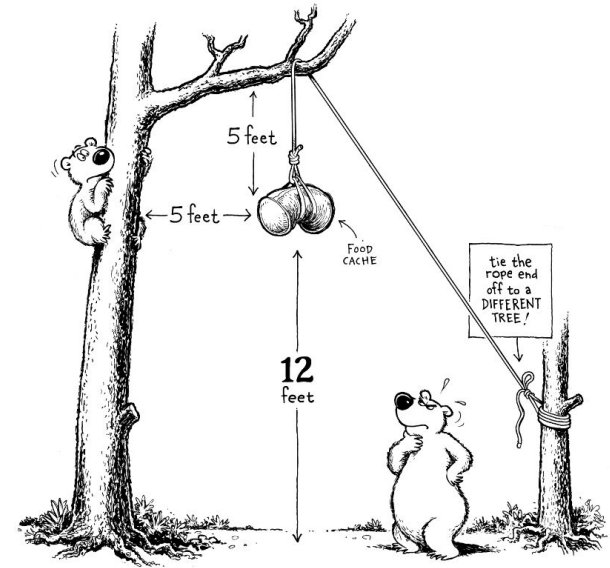
- Heaviest option
- Hardest to pack, bulky and awkward shape



# Food Storage

## Bear Hang

- Technique for hanging food in a sack
- **NOT** recommended for beginners



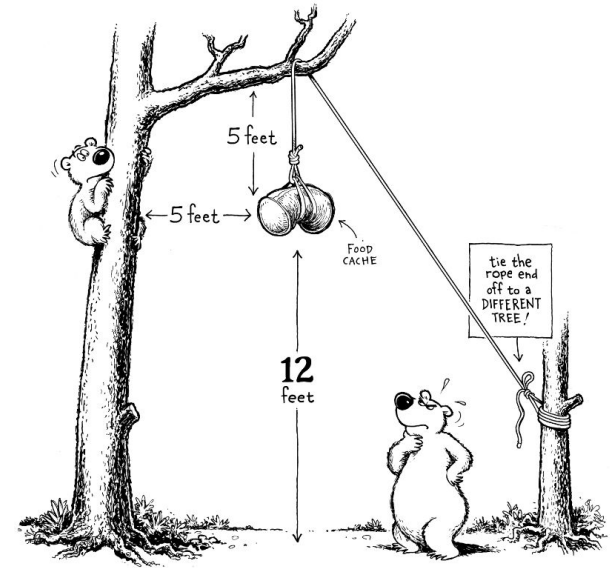
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## Bear Hang

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### Pros

- Lightest weight
- Collapsible, easy to pack
- Most affordable



# Food Storage

## Bear Hang

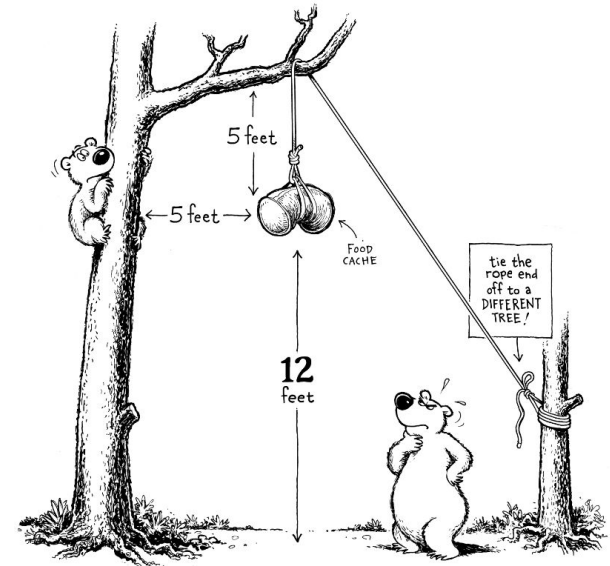
- Technique for hanging food in a sack
- **NOT** recommended for beginners

### Pros

- Lightest weight
- Collapsible, easy to pack
- Most affordable

### Cons

- Very difficult, requires lots of practice
- Trees in PNW are not conducive to this method
- Time consuming
- Your bag/rope can get stuck in the tree



# Leave No Trace



# Low Impact Recreation



- Reminder: Complete the ["Test Your Low Impact Recreation Skills" eLearning Course.](#)
  - Four short videos and quizzes
  - Good content



# Low Impact Recreation

## Low Impact Travel



- On Trail (Best)
  - Walk single file
  - Walk through (not around) wet areas
  - Don't cut switchbacks



# Low Impact Recreation

## Low Impact Travel



- On Trail (Best)
- Off Trail
  - Watch your step
    - Avoid damaging fragile alpine and desert flora
  - Spread out
    - Avoid creating a new trail





# Low Impact Recreation

## Low Impact Eating



- Pack **everything** out
  - Even orange and banana peels
- Possible risks of “introduced” food
  - Animal dependency on unreliable food source
  - Animal behavior changes = potentially dangerous human interactions

# Low Impact Recreation

## Low Impact Camping



Camp in **established** (not new) **sites** whenever possible



# Low Impact Recreation

## Low Impact Camping



- When camping outside established sites:
  - Choose durable surfaces
  - 200' from water sources



# Low Impact Recreation

## Low Impact Camping



- **Cooking:** Strain cook water, leave no food particles
- **Washing:** Use soap 200' from water
- **Swimming:** Remove bug spray/sunscreen first
- **Campfires:** Follow regulations
- **Group size:** Keep it small, follow regulations
- **Dogs:** Avoid bringing into pristine wilderness



# Low Impact Recreation

## Low Impact Laundry



- Fill heavy duty zip lock bag (or empty bear canister) with water
  - Leave in sun to warm
- Add biodegradable soap (or don't)
- Add clothes and agitate/soak
- Dump and refill bag to rinse
- Wring out clothes
- Dry on a line, rock, or tree branch

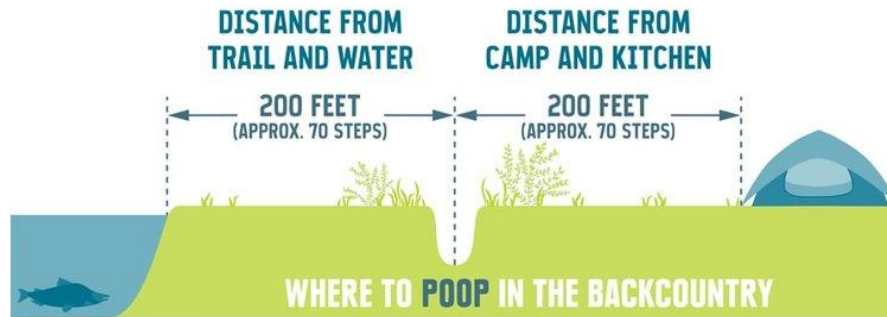


# Low Impact Recreation

## Low Impact Hygiene



- Use outhouse if available, otherwise:
  - Min. 200' (75 steps) from trails, water sources
  - Dig cat hole (6" - 8" deep)
  - Pack out toilet paper, other sanitary items



# Low Impact Recreation

## Low Impact Hygiene



- Pack out all human waste in
  - Protected areas
  - High-use areas
  - Alpine terrain
  - Snow
- “Wag bags” or “blue bags”
- Secondary storage:
  - NyloPro Odor Barrier Bags



# Low Impact Recreation

## Low Impact Hygiene



In alpine environments, **urinate on hard surfaces**

- Goats/deer will dig and destroy fragile ecosystem





# Leave No Trace

## Additional Hygiene Supplies

- Biodegradable soap or hand sanitizer
- Pee cloth (cotton bandana) or Kula Cloth

**KULA CLOTH® is a pee cloth for anybody that squats when they pee.**



# Traditional Outhouse with Solar Upgrade



Sunrise Camp, Mt. Rainier NP



# Box Toilet with A View



Jade Lake, Alpine Lakes Wilderness



# Solar Toilet with A View



Sahale High Camp, North Cascades



# Trip Etiquette



# Etiquette

Informed by “The Expedition Mindset”

- Everyone
  - should strive to be self-sufficient
  - should contribute to group success
  - is responsible for own gear and preparedness
- We are a club, not a guide service



# The Expedition Mindset

## Trip Preparation

- Familiarize yourself with the route
- Bring a map of the area
- Check the weather forecast
  - Know what to expect
  - Be prepared
- Check trip reports and status updates



# The Expedition Mindset

## On Trail

- Remain aware of your location and surroundings:
  - Route
  - Weather
  - People
  - Hazards
- See something, say something
  - Notify leader (or group) of problems and risks





# The Expedition Mindset

## How We Help Each Other

- Physical Assistance
  - Obstacles (water crossing, fallen logs, etc.)
- Awareness and Appreciation
  - Diverse stages of
    - proficiency
    - confidence
    - comfort
  - *Everyone has knowledge to share!*



# Before The Trip

## Cancellation Etiquette

- **Best practice** (participant or waitlist):
  - Cancel online ASAP, **before registration closes**
- **After registration has closed:**
  - Contact leader directly

*Multiple / habitual late cancellations or no-shows may limit your participation on future Mountaineers trips.*



# Before The Trip

## Cancellation Etiquette

- Late cancellation may negatively affect others:
  - Carpooling or car shuttle plans
  - Shared permit fees
  - Shared gear
  - Trip viability / possible cancellation
- Timely cancellation allows waitlisted person to join



# During the Trip

## On-trail and In-camp Etiquette

- Offer to share or help as appropriate
- Respect others' space and quiet time
  - Avoid social / political “hot topics”
  - Leave “shop talk” at the office
- Remember tents aren't soundproof
  - Use earbuds
  - Phone on airplane mode / mute
  - Morning alarms are a necessary exception



# Wildlife



# General Rules of Thumb

- Most animal species you'll see pose no threat
- Some can be dangerous
- Any animal can behave aggressively if:
  - cornered or surprised
  - protecting offspring or food



# General Rules of Thumb

- Animals can become habituated to humans that
  - Give food to animals
  - Don't practice proper food storage
- “A fed animal is a dead animal”



# Wildlife Viewing

- “Relaxed attentiveness”
  - Look and listen
  - Wildlife usually see, hear and smell you first
- View from safe, respectful distance
  - Use binoculars or telephoto lens for better view





# WA Wildlife - Poses Minimal Risk

Raccoon



Deer



Coyote



Marmot



# WA Wildlife - Poses Minimal Risk

Pika



Fox



Marten



Fisher



# WA Wildlife - View with Respect

**Mountain Goat**



**Black Bear**

**Elk**



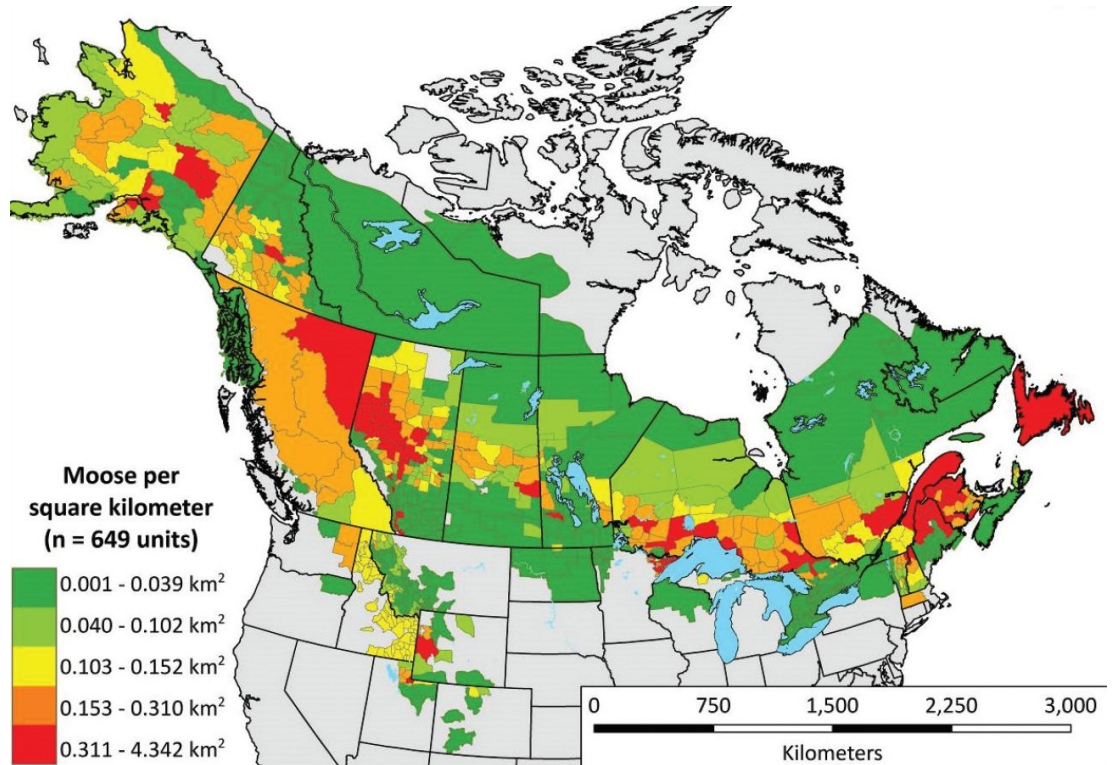
**Badger**

# WA Wildlife - View with Respect



# WA Wildlife - Higher Risk

## Moose



# WA Wildlife - Higher Risk

## What You Can Do

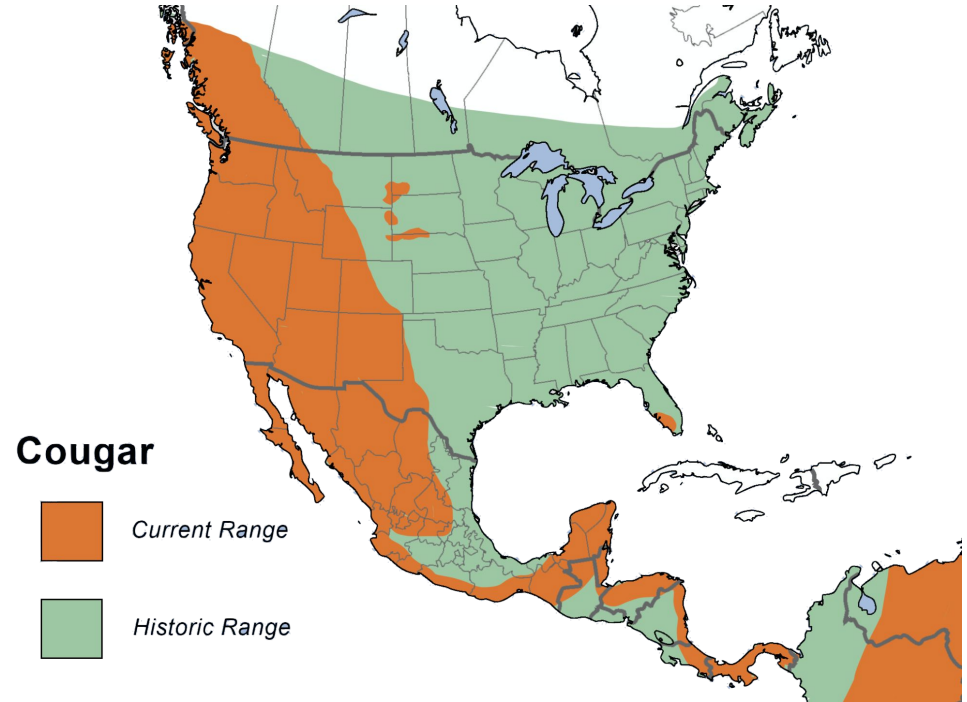


- If it hasn't detected you yet
  - Keep it that way
- If it knows you're there
  - Talk to it softly
  - Move away slowly
- Don't be aggressive
- If you think it may charge
  - Run away or take cover behind something solid like a tree



# WA Wildlife - Higher Risk

## Cougar



# WA Wildlife - Higher Risk

## What You Can Do



- Hike in groups
- **Do not**
  - Run or turn your back
  - Crouch or bend down / appear small
- **Do**
  - Appear large
  - You are not prey
  - Speak loudly
  - Fight back if attacked!



# WA Wildlife - Higher Risk

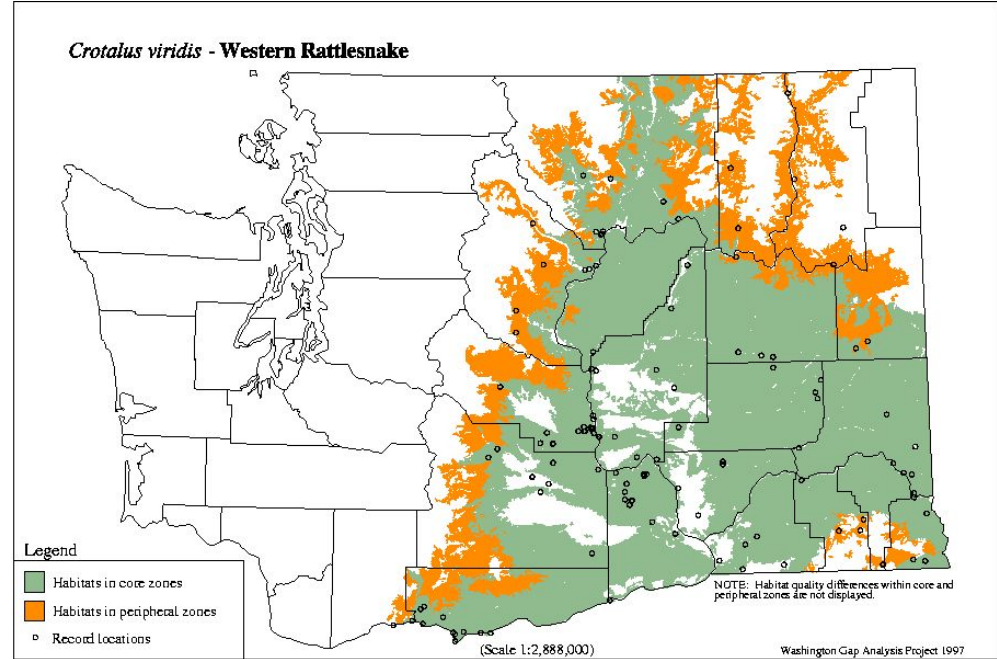
## Know the Stats!



- Documented cougar attacks
  - 126 in last 100 years
  - 78% survival rate
- Sightings rare
- Attacks rarer still and most survive!

# WA Wildlife - Higher Risk

## Rattlesnakes



# WA Wildlife - Higher Risk

## What You Can Do



- Use trekking poles
- Wear long pants
- Stay on clear, open trails
- Avoid brush
- Use popular trails
  - They don't like us either!
- If spotted or heard
  - Freeze
  - Locate snake or sound
  - Move slowly away

# Bears and Their Territory



# WA Wildlife - Higher Risk

## What You Can Do

- **Do**
  - Hike in groups
  - Make noise while hiking
  - Carry bear spray
  - Identify yourself by **talking calmly**
  - Move away slowly and sideways



# WA Wildlife - Higher Risk

## What You Can Do

- **Do**
  - Hike in groups
  - Make noise while hiking
  - Carry bear spray
  - Identify yourself by **talking calmly**
  - Move away slowly and sideways
- **Do not**
  - Scare the bear
  - Run or drop your pack



# WA Wildlife - Higher Risk

## What You Can Do

### Attacks

- If it's brown
  - Lie down (play dead)
- If it's black
  - Fight back
  
- Brown bears (grizzlies)
  - Not a concern in WA
- Black bears
  - Not “higher risk,” can be viewed with respect



# WA Wildlife - Overlooked Animals

## Bugs and Stinging Insects

- Wasps/hornets build concealed nests
  - Usually underground or in dead wood
- Use caution off trail
- If stung... **RUN**





# WA Wildlife - Overlooked Animals

## Bugs and Stinging Insects

- If stung:
  - Watch for “normal”, “moderate” or “severe symptoms” and treat
  - Wash wound well → infection risk



# WA Wildlife - Overlooked Animals

## Bugs and Stinging Insects

- Ticks

- Use repellents
- Wear long and light
- “Seal the cracks”
- Perform tick checks
- Avoid long grasses/plants



# WA Wildlife - Overlooked Animals

## Bugs and Stinging Insects

- Mosquitos
  - Use repellents
  - Wear bug net



# Washington Flora

## Phototoxic Plants

- Giant Hogsweed, Cow Parsnip, Wild Parsnip, and relatives
  - Common in WA in nearly every ecosystem
  - Contain chemicals that are activated by UV light causing blistering and severe sunburns



# Washington Flora

## Stinging Plants



- Stinging Nettle
  - Common in forested regions
  - Have stinging “hairs” that produce painful stinging reaction
  - Culinary delicacy in the PNW

# Washington Flora

## Poisonous Plants

- Poison Oak
  - Uncommon in WA
  - Present mainly in urban areas and along the Columbia River near OR border
  - Oils can contaminate clothes/gear and cause allergic reactions later



# After the Trip



# After the Trip

## At the Car

- Dirty / wet gear (e.g., boots, clothes)
  - Place in large garbage/waterproof bag, especially if carpooling
- Vehicles
  - Check for low/flat tires, add air or change
  - Ensure all start before anyone leaves
- Food / bathroom stops
  - Agree on plan for group





# After the Trip

## ASAP Post-Trip Gear Maintenance

- Tent
  - Hang to dry and air out
  - Clean off dirt
  - Pack with dry poles, stakes, repair kit, rain fly, footprint
- Pack
  - Empty contents
  - Let dry and air out
- Sleeping bag
  - Hang up or lay out to fluff up, dry, air out
  - Store in large cotton bag
- Sleeping pad
  - Clean and dry out



# After The Trip

## ASAP Post-Trip Gear Maintenance

- Stove and cooking gear
  - Clean and repack
- Water bladders, bottles, water filters
  - Empty and sanitize, let dry
- Collapsible trekking poles
  - Separate all sections
  - Let dry before reassembling for storage (prevents oxidation)
- Boots
  - Clean and re-waterproof if needed



# After The Trip

## Broken or Damaged Gear

- Damaged clothing / gear
  - Repair / replace before next trip
- Sticking zippers
  - Clean teeth with Gear-Aid zip lubricant/brush
- Damaged or broken zippers
  - Contact manufacturer for warranty or repair service
  - Take to local service



# Your Future in Backpacking!

What's next for me as a backpacker?



# Your Future in Backpacking

## Next Steps

- Graduate from this course! (More on that later)
- Go on more trips!
  - Different regions / ecosystems
  - Different leaders
  - “Camping oriented” vs. “hiking oriented” trips



# Your Future in Backpacking

## Next Steps

- Assess your gear
  - Dislikes
  - Missing items
  - Unnecessary items
- Experiment with food, how you cook
- Set backpacking goals!
- Always. Be. Conditioning. (ABC)

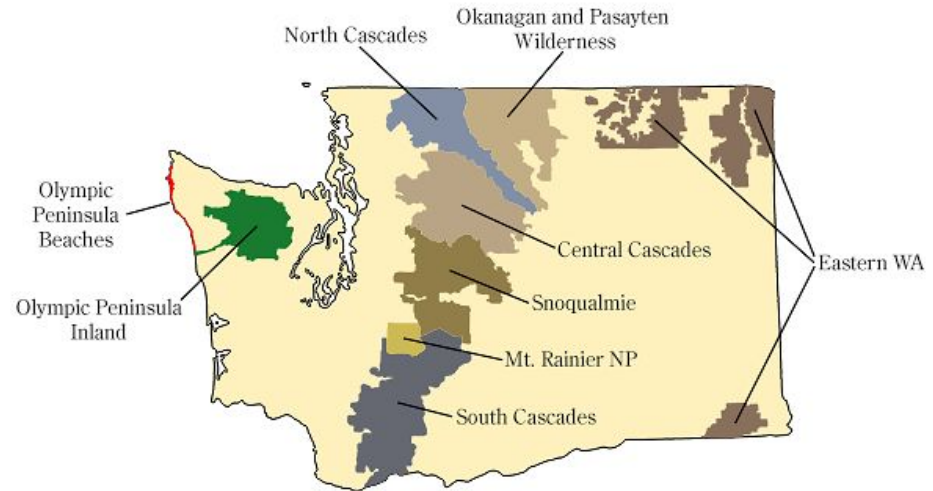


# Your Future in Backpacking

Consider working towards a Backpacking Award Badge!



- Tiered badges
- Curated trip lists
- **Search for “Gold Backpack”**



# Your Future in Backpacking

## Mountaineers Wilderness Navigation Courses



NAVIGATION COURSE

**GPS Navigation: Using CalTopo  
and Gaia GPS**

NAVIGATION COURSE

**Introduction to Map & Compass**

NAVIGATION COURSE

**Wilderness Navigation Course**





# Your Future in Backpacking

## Mountaineers Wilderness First Aid Courses

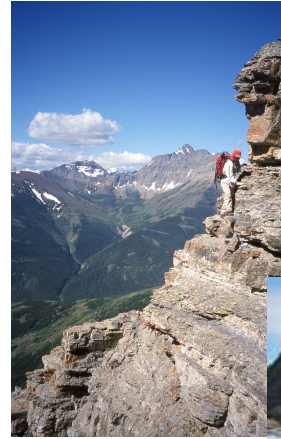


# Your Future in the Outdoors

## Other Activities with The Mountaineers

### Skills / Experiences

- Scrambling
- Climbing
- Sea Kayaking
- Snowshoeing
- Winter Camping
- Family Backpacking
- Trail Running/Fastpacking
- Skiing (Backcountry, XC)



# Your Future in the Outdoors

## Other Activities with The Mountaineers

### **Volunteering**

- Instructing
- Trip Leadership
- Committee Involvement



# Finishing the Course





# Course Requirements



## Activities **within** this Course:

1. Attend all **three lectures**
2. Attend **Gearpalooza**
3. Attend the **Gear Practice Trip** OR practice setting up and using your gear **on your own**
4. Successfully complete **one field trip**

## Activities **outside** this Course:

5. Complete the [Low Impact Recreation](#) e-learning class (1 hr)
6. Go on two more Mountaineers backpack trips (at least one must be multi-night)
7. Get your **Stewardship Badge**

Items 1-5 must be completed **during this course period**

You have **up to 2 years** to complete items 6 & 7





# Course Requirements



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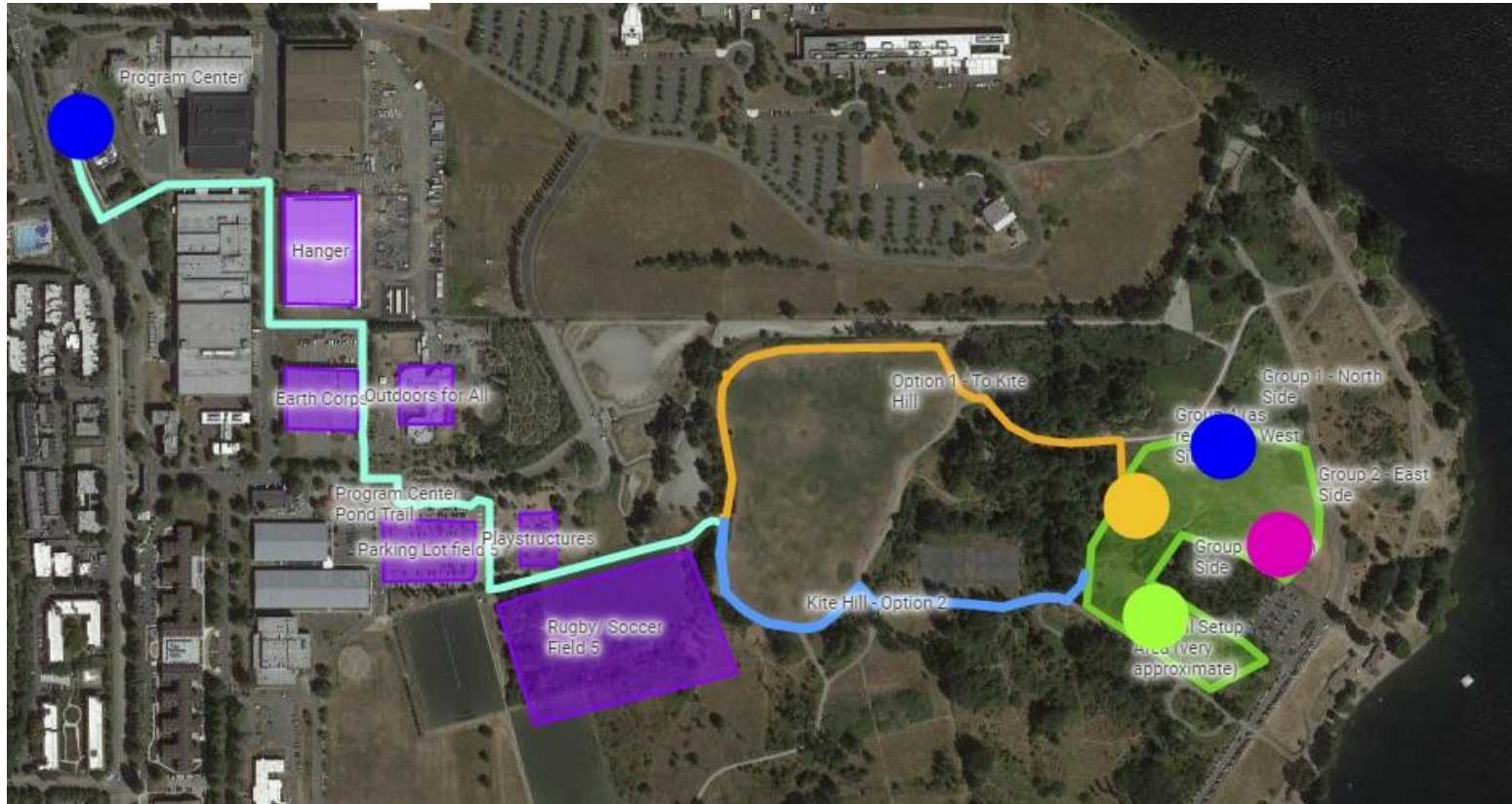
# Practice Run with Your Gear

## Before the Field Trip!

1. Fully pack your pack.
2. Walk in your boots carrying your loaded pack.
3. Set up tent and move sleep system / other gear into tent as if to stay overnight.
  - Do you fit and have everything you need?
4. Filter water.
5. Prepare a meal using stove and cook kit.
6. Practice cooking clean-up.
7. Tear down “camp” and put back into pack.



# Gear Practice Trip



Optional Activity - Saturday, May 11th





# Stewardship Badge

- **Need 6 Hours of Stewardship Credit**
  - Mountaineers Stewardship activities
  - WTA trail work
  - Issaquah Alps Trails Club
  - Mountains To Sound Greenway
  - Northwest Avalanche Center
  - Green Seattle Partnership



**Badge lasts for 1 year and valid for multiple courses**

# Final Thoughts

- Go on multiple trips to form your opinion
  - Early season trips are about practicing with gear
  - Peak season trips are about the experience
  - Weather and season affect a trip as much as location
  - Not every trip is awesome



# Final Thoughts

- Things that make everything better:
  - Be organized with your gear and preparation (checklists, gear storage)
  - Good physical conditioning
  - Experience
  - Share knowledge and experience with others



End of Lecture 3

