

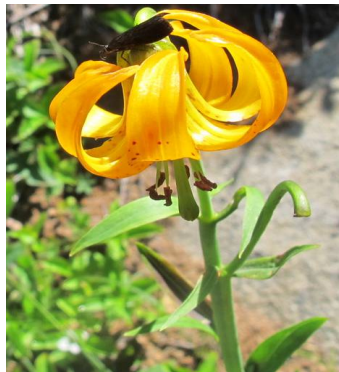
One Step at a Time

Newsletter of the Mountaineers Naturalist Group
August 2016

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Photos from our July naturalist hikes



garter snake, scouler's harebell, group and tiger lily Ira Spring Trail



Nats, pussypaws, field with magenta paintbrush, tufted saxifrage, Berkeley Park and Burroughs Mountain. Wallflower, cold hikers and silky phacelia on Mt. Townsend.



Butterwort, twinflower and beargrass Melakwa Lake hike.

August Field Trips for Mountaineers' Naturalists

This special month, glowing with flowers, melting glaciers and the plenty of berries is upon us. We have several attractive wildflower and berry picking hikes lined out for your enjoyment and learning. The mountaineers Mt. Baker Lodge provides us with a great opportunity to hike in that wonderland without having to drive the considerable distance daily. I've chosen the weekend of August 12-14, since the lodge will be open that weekend, for hiking around Mt. Baker, including Skyline Divide on Friday August 12, Chain Lakes on Saturday August 13 and Yellow Aster Butte on Sunday August 14. These hikes are available to anyone, but I urge you to join us up at the lodge if you can. It is generally affordable, comfortable and a place to enjoy each other – and you can do multiple hikes and not have to drive back to Seattle after each one (yay). You can make lodge reservations for the 12th and 13th or both by going to the mountaineers webpage under EXPLORE and click Lodge Reservations. They use Brown Paper tickets (I saw no fee). If enough people sign up we could add another hike.

Here are the webpage descriptions of naturalist hikes listed so far. There are further details on the website. Also, look for additional listings. Right now Mt. Rainier is very good, especially around Sunrise and the NE part of the park. Hiking in this area will be quite rewarding. There is a hike this coming Sunday to Berkeley park that is on the website. Basically, it is a class trip that did not fill so we opened it up to anybody (It is listed as an exploring nature hike). It is led by Carolyn Appleton and Maggie Willson and they have learned most of the flowers. You will be rewarded if you can go with them.

Day Hike - Annette Lake

EXPLORING NATURE, PHOTOGRAPHY & DAY HIKING TRIP

Waterfalls, wildflowers, sheltering forests, mountain views and an alpine lake on this well-maintained trail within

Difficulty: Moderate/Strenuous

[Sat, Aug 6, 2016](#)

No Prerequisites

Day Hike - Green Mountain (Glacier Peak)

EXPLORING NATURE TRIP

Green mountain is a long haul with lush wildflower meadows and alpine flowers at the

Difficulty: Moderate

[Wed, Aug 10, 2016](#)

No Prerequisites

Day Hike - Skyline Divide

EXPLORING NATURE & DAY HIKING TRIP

Skyline divide is flower full and well worth the climb to get there with the

Difficulty: Moderate

[Fri, Aug 12, 2016](#)

No Prerequisites

Day Hike - Chain Lakes Loop

EXPLORING NATURE, PHOTOGRAPHY & DAY HIKING TRIP

Stunning day hike includes several alpine lakes; views of Mt Shuksan and Mt. Baker; starts

Difficulty: Moderate

[Sat, Aug 13, 2016](#)

No Prerequisites

Day Hike - Yellow Aster Butte

EXPLORING NATURE TRIP

This is a naturalist hike which means frequent stops to enjoy and identify flowers, look

Difficulty: Moderate/Strenuous

[Sun, Aug 14, 2016](#)

No Prerequisites, Leader's Permission Required

Day Hike - Scorpion Mountain

EXPLORING NATURE TRIP

This is a naturalist hike, which means we walk slowly and stop frequently to identify,

Difficulty: Moderate/Strenuous

[Sat, Aug 27, 2016](#)

No Prerequisites

Washington Native Plant Society
Sept. 1, 2016 Program

Whither WNPS...

Clay Antieau

In its 40th year as Washington's strongest voice for promoting the appreciation and conservation of Washington's native plants and their habitats, what does the future of WNPS look like?? Like many non-profit environmental organizations, the relevance and effectiveness of WNPS is being challenged on numerous fronts. In this presentation, WNPS President, Clay Antieau, will share his views on the strengths and weaknesses that characterize WNPS--as well as the opportunities and threats that lie beyond. Come prepared to share your thoughts about the future of WNPS!

Clay Antieau M.S., Ph.C. is a Horticulturist, Botanist, and Environmental Scientist who enthusiastically combines these disciplines to offer unique abilities and perspectives in project work and environmental education. Clay currently works for Seattle Public Utilities as an environmental permit specialist. He's a Fellow and current President of the Washington Native Plant Society (WNPS), a Past President of WNPS, a Past President of the Northwest Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration, and a former Director of the Washington Trails Association.

Special note: As you may be aware, one of the founders and major supporters of WNPS, Dr. Art Kruckeberg, died on May 25th. **At 7:15, before our speaker,** we will spend some time remembering Dr. Kruckeberg.

David Huchinson, a WNPS member and proprietor of **Flora and Fauna Books** will have his usual amazing collection of natural history books available for sale before our meeting, including some of Dr. Krukeberg's titles.

Thursday, Sept 1, 7:15pm,

UW Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st St, Seattle

(Doors Open at 6:00 PM for the Native Plant Identification Workshop; Program begins at 7:30 PM.) For details, see wnps.org

Refreshments, Public Invited, Admission is free.

Please Post

Audubon Society Field Trips

Monday, August 1, 2016 - Limit 11

Vashon Island

Leader: Ed Swan (206-949-3545)

8:00 AM, south parking lot of Lincoln Park to catch the 8:25 AM Fauntleroy ferry

We may check the tidepools under the dock on the Vashon side for sea creatures if the tide is low enough. We'll go to Fisher Pond to look for Wood Ducks, shorebirds, and passerines and then out to Fern Cove to look for shorebirds and gulls. Several gull species will be just coming back and resting on the beach. Bring lunch and water. We'll aim to return on the 2:20 or 3:30PM ferry. Ed will contact all participants before the trip to coordinate parking and carpooling. NOTE: Be sure to leave your email address and phone numbers when signing up. Double-check to make sure they are correct. Carpool costs: \$9 shared equally by riders plus cost of ferry.

Tuesday, August 2, 2016 - Limit 6 in 2 cars

Birding the High Country! Fremont Lookout and the Burroughs

Leaders: Jon Houghton and John White (206-200-3012, day of trip only)

6:45 AM, Green Lake (Ravenna) P&R

This will be a rigorous hike through some of the most accessible and scenic highlands in the US!! We'll start at 6,400 feet at Sunrise and head for Mt. Fremont. It's a 5.6-mile round trip with 800 ft elevation gain and we'll hope to add a couple of more miles, returning via First or Second Burroughs. Expect fabulous views and summer flowers! Probably not a lot of birds, but they'll be high altitude specialists with some pretty hard to find possibilities. We'll be birding subalpine parkland and alpine tundra for things like American Pipit, Gray-crowned Rosy-finch, Clark's Nutcracker, White-tailed Ptarmigan, and Pine Grosbeak. Several other more exotic possibilities. This will be an all day trip. Bring your valid Interagency Access or a Mount Rainier Annual Pass if you have one. Carpool cost: \$50 shared equally by riders + \$25 per car for park entrance fee.

Saturday, August 20, 2016 - Limit 12

Skagit WMA, Fir Island

Leaders: Jan Bragg (206-234-7196, day of trip only) and Travis Keay

8:30 AM, Green Lake (Ravenna) P&R, or 8:45 AM Ash Way P&R, SE corner

(Indicate at time of sign-up where you will meet leaders)

August is a quiet time for birding, but the Wildlife Management Area on Fir Island can be interesting almost any time of year. There may be some ducks around or a shorebird migrating south. Flycatchers, warblers or waxwings could be lingering. Expect a non-shaded walk over relatively level although uneven ground. Drivers will need a current Discover Pass. Back late afternoon. Carpool cost: \$25 shared by rider.

Tuesday, August 23, 2016 – Limit 10

Union Bay Natural Area (Montlake Fill)

Leader: Jen McKeirnan

7:30 AM, Meet at the Center for Urban Horticulture east-side parking lot

The Union Bay Natural Area is distinguished for diverse habitats including grasslands, woods, ponds, marshland, and lake shoreline. It attracts a wide variety of resident and migratory birds. Expect to walk up to 3 leisurely paced miles on level ground. Bring binoculars. Over by

Friday, August 26, 2016 - Limit 11 in 3 cars - **NOTE NEW DATE**

Grays Harbor area

Leader: Brian H. Bell (206-619-0379, morning of trip only)

6:00 AM, Green Lake (Ravenna) P&R (NE 65th St. under I-5, north side)

Shorebirds start moving south in early summer, and by August should be present in good numbers.

We'll explore the most likely locations searching out plovers and sandpipers, and will be looking for seabirds, gulls, and passerines as well. Spotting scopes highly recommended. Drivers will need a Discover Pass. Bring lunch, snacks and fluids. Carpool cost \$80 shared by riders

Odds and ends

Scientists have discovered that lichens have a third symbiont, which is a yeast. The link to the article came from Sylvia Burges:

<http://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/releases/2016/Q3/yeast-emerges-as-hidden-third-partner-in-lichen-symbiosis.html>

The Way Through The Woods

By Rudyard Kipling

THEY shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.
Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know
There was once a path through the woods
Before they planted the trees:
It is underneath the coppice and heath,
And the thin anemones.
Only the keeper sees
That, where the ring-dove broods
And the badgers roll at ease,
There was once a road through the woods.

Yet, if you enter the woods
Of a summer evening late,
When the night-air cools on the trout-ring'd pools
Where the otter whistles his mate
(They fear not men in the woods
Because they see so few),
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,
Steadily cantering through
The misty solitudes,
As though they perfectly knew
The old lost road through the woods ...
But there is no road through the woods.



Last month's Challenge flowers from Gary Brill

1. found of top of Mt. Townsend in Olympics (6200') and also at 4500' in a well trained meadow in Olympics – *Gentianella Amarella*, Northern Gentian
2. Found on Iron Bear near Blewit Pass on Teanaway Ridge. *Iliamna longisepala* Longsepal globemallow

Now for this month's challenge here are:



1. Found in Berkeley Park on July 24 by Gordie Swartzman
2. Found on the trail to Melakwa Lake by Stewart Hougen

Pictures



Lisa Ni – Eastern WA wheat fields and Mt. Belnap OR

Feature article Yellowstone in Summer by Gordie Swartzman

Yellowstone, our first and most diverse, national park is located a long stone's throw from Seattle (1.5 days drive) and, while its roads are crowded much of the day and it is difficult to get reservations to stay in the park and requires early arrival to obtain camping spaces in the non-big-rig campgrounds (my name for the advance reservation campgrounds), it is well worth a visit and many revisits because, truth be told, off the roads, and even along them at times, are some of the most spectacular wildlife viewing opportunities in the world. In the northern part of the park (Mammoth area and Lamar Valley) antelope, bear, deer, elk, bighorn sheep, bison abound and it is possible to view wolf family dynamics and grizzly feeding (the true snap, crackle and pop on prey bones and gristle). And as if this were not enough yellowstone is also blessed with many thermal features (geyser's, steaming hot pools, sinks, mud springs, hot springs, calcareous weeping terraces), a world class canyon and falls (the grand canyon of the Yellowstone) and, the mountain wildflower displays on a good year (like this one) are spectacular. And this, only a day and a half from Seattle.

Peg and I went with our grandson Kaveh, 9, who had never seen Yellowstone. Kaveh has also not traveled away from his family and he missed home dearly at night, but this fell away with the magic of Yellowstone. The trip there in our van was uneventful (a good thing since we've had van breakdowns in the past). I was able to get 2 nights of reservations at Mammoth Inn, in the north of the park. I think the magic of the park needs a stay inside the park at a rustic campground or lodge, though many of them are very expensive. Mammoth was bearably expensive and

they even have some rooms with outside bath that are generally affordable. Some people go in a group and share rooms. The problem is this requires advance reservations and you may have to play your trip around availability of space. The lodges are well appointed and attempt to recycle and save resources and reflect a message of eco-friendly. From a logistics point of you the park is not a place to use cell phones, though the Mammoth visitor center did provide free wifi (not common in National Parks). So, if you want to go either plan ahead or prepare to deal with finding camping spaces. For the nice campgrounds (I mean ones that are not full of mobile homes and commercial hookups) you need to show up before 7:30 AM (sometimes 7) for first come availability. This sucks, but you need do it only once. With a reservation in a hotel the first night we only had to get up early one day (but of course we did it every day because wildlife viewing is best in early AM and because the roads are tolerable then if you want to go through the park). In all we spent half a day (the first) around Mammoth hiking. There are trails that take you around the terrace pools and the more primitive ones are worth taking because very few people are on them (vs the hordes on the more accessible trails) and because you have access to the newest water features close up and personal. The pools at sunset are absolutely glorious. Also you can almost pet elk (though don't try it).

We spent a long day at Norris and Upper geyser basins. Norris early in the morning was lovely with many steam features. Kaveh was excited to see a minor eruption of Steamboat geyser, our first of the trip. At the main geyser basins, where old faithful is, Kaveh did exercises to become a junior scientist. They had a workbook that had the kids explore the hypothesis about whether the area was volcanic (Kaveh actually changed his mind about this after getting the evidence). They provided tools for remote temperature measurement and a lot of exercises dealt with figuring out temperature and type of bacteria from color of the water. We also saw old faithful a couple of times as well as Grand, an aptly names 10 minute really big show. We were all blown away by the energy, color and splendor of that geyser. The driving was tiring and there were mosquitos at the picnic area (our only mosquitos on this early July week). We did finish off the day with a walk to see Yellowstone falls and the grand canyon (short shrift for a magnificent place, but in great slanty light for pictures).

The next day (our third) was for Mt. Washburn hike and wildlife viewing in

Lamar valley in the evening. Mt. Washburn was the turning point for Kaveh. It is a 4 mile round trip (or semi-loop) and it started with one long complaint. I needed to send tender hearted Peg ahead so I could coax Kaveh up the road-trail. The flowers were magnificent. I am amazed how many of our northwest subalpine and alpine species show up in Yellowstone. But there were surprises. In addition to bracted lousewort, there was a Parry's lousewort, which is a pinkish version I'd never seen before. There was a small herd of bighorn sheep to greet us at the top and very close. The views are great and Kaveh wanted to go down the other way, so Peg got me to go with him and she went down the way we'd come up. Pretty soon we linked up with a couple of women from Ohio and Vermont (mother and daughter) who were into flower identification and presto – a new Kaveh. He was engaged, relaxed, sharing what he knew about edibility of plants and learning how to distinguish different alpine plants. After that time he was engaged and delightful. I was so grateful that he could let go of his anxiety and be there. The rest of the trip was with wildlife. We saw wolves including pups interacting (from a distance but with people who shared their fine scopes, even lowering them so Kaveh could look). We saw a grizzly (sort of) ripping apart a dead tree, many bears came by us, some close (we were mostly in the car). There were antelope, many bison, deer (no moose which are now rare in the park), coyotes were relaxed and on the hunt. Many birds were with young on nests. Osprey, red tailed hawk, coots, eared grebe, merganser, ruddy duck. Viewing was great and we went back a few times. Weather was mostly good. We had a severe thunderstorm the last night and I didn't sleep that well (camping in the van), and we left in rain. I always like to leave in rain, since I feel like I'd not enjoy staying, especially when wildlife are not out (though we saw a bear scamper across the road as we were leaving). I include a few pictures to give a feel for the place. Yellowstone is a great place to take kids, especially of Kaveh's age and older. Kaveh also enjoyed the hot pools on the Gardiner river just north of Mammoth (great for kids) and we had a good hike to the beaver ponds near Mammoth. For 5 days we did and saw a lot. Of course, longer is better, but less time is crazy. Go while you are young, go while you are old and go in between. Greet the passion of geyser gazers and wolf watchers, revel in the general interest in wildlife and catch the wildflowers and learn more about mammal behavior. Its all there in glorious Yellowstone.



Mount Washburn (Peg and Kaveh), Grand geyser at it, sky pilot or elegant polemonium and pronghorn in Yellowstone.