

One Step at a Time

Newsletter of the Mountaineers Naturalist Group
October 2016

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Photos from our September naturalist hikes





Hike of the month to Little Si. Hairy manzanita on top, view along the way, rain stopped for us on the top. Don't we look happy. Mosses were fabulous! Do you know why Sitka spruce is growing on this trail so far from the coast?

In the Garden – What's happening in our species garden?

******* Work Party and Stewardship Coming Up*******

There will be a work party the first Sunday of October (October 2) from 1:30-4:30 PM at the Species Garden to the right of the clubhouse (by the climbing wall). [The plan is to weed and plant in preparation for winter. If you haven't seen the garden recently, you will be amazed at the growth especially in the alpine plants.](#)

Many shrubs fruit or seed (snowberry, baldhip rose, ocean spray). Most of the exceptions are in the alpine garden where penstemon, several species of alpine daisies and a resplendent skyrocket (scarlet gilia) and Richardson's penstemon are still aflame and mountain monardella is hanging on. There are the expected pearly everlasting, asters and yarrow as well as the second coming of siberian miner's lettuce and cooley's hedge nettle. The alpine plants are showing remarkable resilience and longevity in their blooming, which shows what they can do when nurtured, watered and are free from the cold nights, high winds and strong insolation of the high country. We also have a new bat box (see below).



Mountain monardella (mint) and baldhip rose hips in species garden

October Field Trips for Mountaineers' Naturalists

There have been intermittent rains in the mountains, the temperatures are dropping and the flower season is close to done. Our hikes will emphasize fall color, birds, mushrooms, mosses and lichens. Look for workshops on mosses (November) and lichens (December), which will combine a lecture session and a field trip. The lichen workshop was also done a couple of years ago and was filled, so make sure you sign up early for that one (early December – look for listings under LEARN and find courses (click on exploring nature). They are there along with the listings for the lecture series, also starting in the winter. The moss workshop, though still far off is filling fast, so sign up soon if you are interested. Both courses have a small fee to contribute to material and room charges.

Moss Workshop - Seattle - 2016

Fri, Nov 11, 2016 - Sat, Nov 12, 2016 – Friday lecture and Saturday field trip

No Prerequisites

Availability: 9 participants

Registration closes Nov 9

Seattle Branch

Leader: [Stewart Hougen](#)

Lichen Workshop - Seattle - 2016

Wed, Dec 7, 2016 - Sat, Dec 10, 2016 Wednesday lecture and Saturday field trip

No Prerequisites

Availability: **26** participants

Registration closes Dec 5

Seattle Branch

Leader: [Stewart Hougen](#)

Here are some offerings for the next month (explanations are also included), which are listed under Activities, Exploring Nature. You may notice that two of these hikes are chock full of nats. We have added a second offering to Barclay Lake to try to provide the experience to more of us. Some already signed up may consider changing to the midweek hike. It will be less crowded.:

-

Day Hike - Esmeralda Basin & Fortune Creek Pass

Exploring Nature Trip

We will actually go to Ingalls Lake for fall color of larch and for geology

Difficulty: Moderate

Sat, Oct 1, 2016

Availability: **6** participants on waitlist

Registration closes Sep 29

Seattle Branch

Leader: [Stewart Hougen](#)

Day Hike - Barclay Lake

Exploring Nature Trip

We will look for edible mushrooms and identify trees, mosses, lichens and mushrooms and start

Difficulty: Easy

Thu, Oct 20, 2016

Leader's Permission Required

Availability: **11** participants

Registration closes Oct 18

Seattle Branch

Leader: [Gordie Swartzman](#)

Day Hike - Barclay Lake

Exploring Nature Trip

We will look for edible (and other) mushrooms, examine mosses and lichens, identify conifers and

Difficulty: Easy

Sat, Oct 22, 2016

No Prerequisites, Leader's Permission Required

Availability: 8 participants on waitlist

Registration closes Oct 20

Seattle Branch

Leader: [Stewart Hougen](#)

This fall we will also have a couple of workshops, one on mosses on November 9, with a field trip on November 12, and one on lichens December 7, with a field trip on December 10. Look for these to be listed soon as Naturalists courses. We have decided to make our hikes of the month the next to last Saturday in each month, because, as noted by Kathy Buck last year, the last weekend often coincided with Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Here are the tentative hikes for the next months?

October 22 – Barclay Lake with a focus on Mushrooms, mosses and lichens

November 19 – Hansville Reach and Point No Point with a focus on seabirds, conifers, and pond creatures

December 17 – Twin Falls with a focus on water, mosses and lichens

2016-2017 Naturalists Lecture Series Seattle Program Center, 7pm

The Study Group's winter lecture series begins next month. Mark your calendars:

Wed., Nov. 9, 2016

Elizabeth Petras, Natural Resources Specialist from NOAA Fisheries, will share the latest information on **Puget Sound's endangered orcas**: new insights into where they go, what they eat, how they're doing, and how we can help.

Link

<https://www.mountaineers.org/about/branches-committees/seattle-branch/committees/seattle-naturalists-committee/course-templates/naturalist-lecture-series/naturalist-lecture-series-2016>



and there's more, beginning in 2017

Wed., Jan. 11, 2017

Remember hearing how the Big One will leave everything west of I-5 toast? Maybe not. Nick Zentner, senior lecturer in geology at Central Washington University, reviews the tracks of previous **great earthquakes in the Pacific Northwest** to separate fact from fiction regarding tsunami and ground-shaking potential.

Thurs., Feb. 9, 2017

It's too wet, it's too cold, it's too hot, it's too dry, and we blame it all on **global warming**. Climatologists have a more informed view. Nick Bond, state climatologist and UW research scientist and associate professor, explains why.

Thurs., March 9, 2017

Janneke Hille Ris Lambers, UW biology professor, tells us about **Meadowatch (see article in this issue by Kay English)**, a citizen-science program that is monitoring the link between climate and wildflower reproduction at Mount Rainier National Park.

Seattle Audubon Society Field Trips - October

Sunday, October 9, 2016 – Limit 8

Carkeek Park

Leader: Jen McKeirnan

8:00 AM, Use park main entrance and meet at the far west parking area overlooking the water

Explore the North Seattle waterfront and the woodlands in search of fall migrating and resident species. Expect to walk up to 3 leisurely paced miles with some hills. Bring binoculars, and a scope if you own one. Dress to stay warm and dry. Restrooms will be available. Bring water and snacks. Over by 10am.

Saturday, October 15, 2016 – Limit 11 in 3 cars

Spencer Island and Surrounding Area

Leader: Jean Olson

6:30 AM, Greenlake (Ravenna) P&R

Spencer Island and the nearby Snohomish River Estuary has a nice diversity of habitat including mixed forest, mudflats and open water. We should see a variety of waterfowl and shorebirds. Scopes are great if you have them. We will be walking with many stops to view birds. Dress in layers for the weather and boots are recommended because some trails are muddy. Drivers need a Discover Pass (Spencer Island does not require one, but we may make other stops in the area that do). Return in early afternoon. Carpool cost is \$15.00 per car shared equally by riders.

**Saturday, October 22, 2016 – Limit 15 (carpooling encouraged)
West Seattle**

Leader: Penny Rose

7:00 AM, Camp Long – 5200 35th Ave SW, Seattle WA 98126

Join us for an exploration of the "wilds" of West Seattle. We will explore forests, Seattle's only river, saltwater shorelines and Puget Sound. Expect mixed species flocks, shorebirds such as Surfbirds, raptors, and seabirds such as Scoters and Loons. Bring binoculars and scopes.

Saturday, October 29, 2016 – Limit 10 in 3 cars

Port Angeles and Sequim

Leaders: Jean Olson and Jon Houghton

6:10 AM, Greenlake (Ravenna) P&R, N side of 65th (contact leaders for possible alternate meeting locations)

Explore the north side of the Olympic Peninsula. Stops include Ediz Hook, Dungeness Spit, Three Crabs and Sequim Bay State Park. Shorebirds and water birds will be the primary targets. Bring warm clothes and rain gear as the area can be blustery. Lots of coffee stops (bring your mug), bathrooms and a little walking. Scopes are a plus. Return by late afternoon or early evening. Discover Pass needed by drivers. Carpool cost is \$50.00 per car + \$47.60 ferry fee, shared equally by riders.

Washington Native Plant Society Oct 6, 2016 Program

Field Botany in the Andes Mountains of Northern Peru by Mark Egger

In April of 2005, Mark took part in a botanical expedition to sample the flora of the Andes Mountains in northern Peru. With the assistance of Peruvian botanists based in the city of Trujillo, Mark and fellow *Castilleja* researcher, Dave Tank, made two separate trips into the mountains. The first and longest outing was to the vicinity of the ancient Inca city of Cajamarca and continuing on to the more remote towns of Contumaza and Celendin, the latter on the brink of the dramatic canyon of the Rio Marañon. Most of the areas visited were between 9,000-14,000' elevation, in the alpine plant communities known locally as jalcas, high elevation grasslands similar to the paramos of the northern Andes. While the goal of the expedition was to study and document the many and varied *Castilleja* species of this region, they also observed many other fine plants, including a wealth of species in the showy genera, *Salvia*, *Calceolaria*, and *Bartsia*. Northern Peru is the center of diversity for the latter two genera. In addition, the scenery was spectacular, and the visitors encountered the local people and culture of a region far removed from the usual tourist routes of this remarkable country. Mark is a highly accomplished photographer, so be prepared for a very informative and esthetically stunning presentation!

Mark Egger is a recently retired science teacher and a Research Associate at the UW Herbarium. He has been a member of the CPS Chapter of WNPS since 1983. He has spent the last 32 years studying the genus *Castilleja*, traveling throughout North America, Mexico, and Central and South America to take approximately 20,000 images of *Castilleja* or Indian Paintbrush, photographing over 95% of the approximately 200 known species and varieties. He has written or contributed to numerous scientific publications on *Castilleja* and has published seven species new to science. He is currently preparing a monographic treatment of *Castilleja*, and in conjunction with Margriet Wetherwax of US/JEPS and is preparing the treatment of *Castilleja* for the Flora of North America.

**Thursday, Oct 6th, 7:30pm,
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.

Odds and ends

End of Summer

Related Poem Content Details

By [Stanley Kunitz](#)

An agitation of the air,
A perturbation of the light
Admonished me the unloved year
Would turn on its hinge that night.

I stood in the disenchanting field
Amid the stubble and the stones,
Amazed, while a small worm lisped to me
The song of my marrow-bones.

Blue poured into summer blue,
A hawk broke from his cloudless tower,
The roof of the silo blazed, and I knew
That part of my life was over.

Already the iron door of the north
Clangs open: birds, leaves, snows
Order their populations forth,
And a cruel wind blows.

To Autumn

[John Keats](#), 1795 - 1821

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;

Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,--
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-cricketts sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Environmental Issues:

Meadowatch article by Kay English:

Meadowatch 2016

This summer I participated in a citizen science project at Mt. Rainier called MeadoWatch. This project has been in existence for about 4 years and is a collaboration between the Department of Biology at the UW and the NPS.

According to the very excellent booklet for volunteer use on the trails, the “goal of MeadoWatch is to collect high quality data on the seasonal timing of flowering (i.e. wildflower phenology) in the high mountain meadows of Mt. Rainier.” Phenology is the study of the timing of recurring life stages (e.g. budding, flowering, fruiting and releasing seeds). Phenology is frequently cued by climatic variables (e.g. snow disappearance, temperature) and thus will likely be sensitive to climate change. This data is used to understand the biological impacts of climate change. The timing of the flowering of plants affects other species, for instance, butterflies (being studied by the Cascade Butterfly Project) and is occurring earlier with climate change.

The introduction to this program was held at the Burke Museum. There were about 130 volunteers, many of them returnees. We learned about the program and some of the results to date, including a graph of very impressive shifting of phenophases to an earlier date for some of the plants in the hot, early summer of 2015. We learned how to distinguish among the phenophases and how to record data to indicate presence or absence of each phenophase for each focus plant. You are asked to do a minimum of 3 hikes, either at Glacier Basin or Reflection Lakes or a combination of the two. Signup for hikes was online and participants were given a letter to allow free admission to the park for the hikes. Free camping reservations were also available at either White River Campground or Cougar Rock Campground for participants at the time of their hikes. I chose to do 3 hikes at Glacier Basin, since I love the east side of the park. For the first hike I was joined by Maureen Traxler, and for the second and third by Lola Kemp. My first hike was July 19th and at that time there were still patches of snow in shady areas of the trail. My last hike was August 30th and it was very interesting to see how quickly summer flowering comes and goes at these high elevations. The Glacier Basin trail starts in the White River Campground at 4200 feet and ends in Glacier Basin past the end of maintained trail at around 6100 feet. The hike was 6.2 miles or so roundtrip. Here is a picture of the end of the trail on a beautiful late summer day.



On this trail there are 15 red or orange survey markers that are located by GPS coordinates, approximate elevations, and pictures and descriptions of visual clues along the trail to find these. The markers are alongside a survey plot whose boundaries are determined by a rectangle formed by your outstretched arms as you stand astride the survey marker. One of us measured the plot and looked for the indicated focus plants, of which there were various combinations of 10 spread among the 15 markers. The other recorded the data indicating presence or absence of each of the 4 phenophases, as well as the presence or absence of snow. These data sheets were turned in at the completion of the hike,

either in a box at the trailhead, or by mailing back to Meadowwatch. The booklet had excellent color photos of the plants and their phenophases as well as lovely line drawings which clearly showed the whole plant with leaves, flowers and stems. There was also a section on distinguishing between similar appearing plants, particularly lovages. There were also color photos of each marker locations with useful location guides such as “if you pass metal mining equipment, you have gone too far”. We were warned that marmots like to take the survey markers, but we were lucky in always finding all of ours, eventually.



Trail survey marker



Kay measuring plot boundary



Lola putting data sheet in trailside box

Of course, there was plenty to see in addition to data collection. There were lots of flowers, climbers

heading toward Camp Sherman, other hikers who were very curious about what we were doing and always stopped to talk and learn about this interesting project.



Chilly winds, and dramatic moisture laden clouds of arriving fall weather streaming over the top of Rainier on August 30th as we headed down from our last Meadowatch hike.



If you are curious to learn more about this project be sure to attend one of our Study Group lectures on 9 March 2017 by Janneke Hille Ris Lambers, Executive Director of Meadowatch, and a member of the Department of Biology at the University of Washington.

More information can also be obtained at Meadowatch.org

Kay English

Last month's Challenge flowers from Gordie Swartzman and Stewart Hougen

Now for this month's challenges here are:



1. Fern on chain lakes trail by Gordie Swartzman – it is Kruckeberg sword fern, an alpine sword fern



2. found on Green Mt. Trail by Stewart Hougen – it is an unusual pussytoes field pussytoes
Antennaria neglecta
3. bonus – found on Green Mt. Trail by Gordie Swartzman – it is pyramid spirea a cross between douglas spirea (hardhack) and mountain spirea. It is found naturally
4. Found by Danielle Graham – candystick *Allotropa virgata*

Mystery plants

This month's challenges from Gary Brill





These were on the Little Si trail. I think there are 2 different plants here. Does anyone know what they are (gordie)?

Pictures

From Gary Brill: I found *Eurybia merita* on a hike in early September. It is a rare but lovely



composite. I identified it through photos and subsequently collected it in mid-September for the Burke Herbarium. It had only been collected twice in Washington state previously, in 1934 and 1989. Originally collected in Whatcom County, it was in a high angle south facing meadow at 4500'+- in Snohomish County. In this location it was widespread. It was not known to exist in Snohomish County

The keen eye of Betsy Bertiaux





