



# Issaquah Alps TRAILS CLUB

— EST. 1979 —

Dedicated to engaging the public to preserve, protect, and promote the land, wildlife, and trails of the Issaquah Alps, for future and present generations.

## *Newsletter of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club*

# THE ALPINER

**November 2020**

The Newcastle Historical Society published a new book detailing 100 years of history of the coal mining town. This book tells the story of the mines, coal companies, transportation and the people of an almost forgotten era. [Get your copy here.](#)

Let's play "I Spy" with the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust! In lieu of their annual tree planting event, they have partnered with Carter Subaru to put on a fun ["I Spy in the Greenway" bingo contest!](#) From November 11-30, 2020 we'll plant a tree in the Mountains to Sound Greenway for each bingo card submitted.

If you are interested in getting involved with the IATC in more ways, please fill out our [volunteer form](#) and let us know what you are interested in.

If you're hitting the trails this week, please remember to [Recreate Responsibly!](#)

**Mask up!**

Please be prepared to cover your nose and mouth:

- When you are **within 6 feet** of anyone not in your group
- When you are in a **busy area**
- When you **go indoors**



#RecreateResponsibly [www.recreateresponsibly.org](http://www.recreateresponsibly.org)

# Winter Wise: Recommendations from #RecreateResponsibly to Stay Safe While Hiking This Winter

Hannah Wheeler - November 18, 2020

As safety concerns of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to limit activities indoors, we expect that more people will be out hiking in snowy conditions than in previous years. And while we are excited that so many hikers are out exploring our public lands, winter hiking brings new safety considerations to be aware of. Whether it's your first time recreating in the winter, or you're a seasoned pro, now is a good time to start preparing.

**Check Conditions** - Obviously one of the biggest changes from summer to winter hiking is snow! This year, Snoqualmie Pass has already had 22 inches of snow, so that means it is also time to start thinking about avalanche risk.

The best way to determine avalanche risk is to visit the [Northwest Avalanche Center website](#). Starting November 24th, NWAC will update their avalanche danger maps daily, and provide full mountain weather forecasts. Danger is rated on a scale of 1-5, 1 being low risk, and 5 being extreme risk. You can control your risk by choosing to avoid areas with high avalanche danger. If you want to learn more, we recommend taking an [avalanche safety course](#).

North American Public Avalanche Danger Scale				
Avalanche danger is determined by the likelihood, size and distribution of avalanches.				
Danger Level		Travel Advice	Likelihood of Avalanches	Avalanche Size and Distribution
5 Extreme		Avoid all avalanche terrain.	Natural and human-triggered avalanches certain.	Large to very large avalanches in many areas.
4 High		Very dangerous avalanche conditions. Travel in avalanche terrain <u>not</u> recommended.	Natural avalanches likely; human-triggered avalanches very likely.	Large avalanches in many areas; or very large avalanches in specific areas.
3 Considerable		Dangerous avalanche conditions. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route-finding and conservative decision-making essential.	Natural avalanches possible; human-triggered avalanches likely.	Small avalanches in many areas; or large avalanches in specific areas; or very large avalanches in isolated areas.
2 Moderate		Heightened avalanche conditions on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully; identify features of concern.	Natural avalanches unlikely; human-triggered avalanches possible.	Small avalanches in specific areas; or large avalanches in isolated areas.
1 Low		Generally safe avalanche conditions. Watch for unstable snow on isolated terrain features.	Natural and human-triggered avalanches unlikely.	Small avalanches in isolated areas or extreme terrain.

Safe backcountry travel requires training and experience. You control your own risk by choosing where, when and how you travel.

**Choose appropriate location and route** - Popular summer hikes may present different hazards in the winter. Recent trip reports in addition to avalanche danger alerts can help you make safe decisions. [Washington Trails Association](#) is good place to start to find frequent detailed reports.

One example of a summer trail that frequently becomes dangerous in the winter is the popular Snow Lake Trail. In the summer this trail is a delightful trek up to a gorgeous alpine lake, however snow creates a large avalanche chute across a section of the trail. Searching for the trail on WTA's website shows this message:

# Snow Lake

 SNOQUALMIE REGION

## LOCATION

Snoqualmie Region --  
Snoqualmie Pass  
[View map below](#)

## LENGTH

7.2 miles, roundtrip

## ELEVATION

Gain: 1800 ft.  
Highest Point: 4400 ft.

## RATING

★★★★★  
(182 votes)  
[Log in to rate](#)



WTA worked here: 2019

**Parking Pass/Entry Fee:** [Northwest Forest Pass](#)



A large avalanche chute crosses the Snow Lake Trail. If visiting in winter have experience navigating avalanche territory and the appropriate gear

Recent trip reports also confirm that avalanches are common here. The best way to stay completely safe is to avoid places with high avalanche risk like this, or turn back if you become unsure while hiking.

**Finally, come prepared.** In addition to the [ten essentials](#), winter hikers should bring extra gear including extra layers of clothing and traction devices. If you are traveling in avalanche terrain, be sure to bring an avalanche transceiver, probe, and shovel (and the knowledge to use them).

Don't forget that you may need chains for you car, extra blankets, and extra food too. Conditions can change while you're out and you don't want to be stuck away from home without preparation.

There are so many great opportunities to enjoy our public lands in the winter; trails for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and hiking are everywhere! So while you enjoy your favorite hikes from the summer in the snow this year, remember to keep these tips in mind.

## Be winter wise!

Winter can be a wonderful time to explore the outdoors. But it's important to remember a new season brings new guidelines for staying safe.

Be winter wise and  
**#RecreateResponsibly**

## Be winter wise!

**1. Check conditions** – Weather and avalanches present unique risks. Before heading out, check the mountain weather and avalanche forecasts at the **Northwest Avalanche Center (NWAC)** and road conditions. You control your risk—plan accordingly.



## Be winter wise!

**2. Choose appropriate location and route** – Summer destinations may present different hazards with snow cover. Recent trip reports may help paint a picture. Avalanche forecasts will help you assess environmental hazards for the day. Turn back if you're unsure. Don't delay calls for help.



## Be winter wise!

**3. Be prepared** - Snow adventures require additional safety gear such as extra layers, and traction devices. If traveling in avalanche terrain, make sure you have an avalanche transceiver, probe, and shovel—and the knowledge to use them. Your car needs gear too (chains, blanket, food, etc.)



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# Save the Date #GivingTuesday is December 1

Lindsay Frickle - November 24, 2020

Save the Date: #GivingTuesday is December 1

In this time of uncertainty, there's a fundamental truth that gives us hope -- that together we can do extraordinary things. Join us on #GivingTuesday and let's come together as a community to raise crucial funds for our Issaquah Alps!

**Give to trees = get FREE tees!**

Give to the IATC in honor of your favorite outdoor enthusiast and get a FREE t-shirt (photos below)! **Issaquah Alps Trails Club tees make great holiday gifts!** [Donate](#) a minimum of \$20 for your free tee, or donate \$40 for two! Gifts of any amount are much appreciated!

Now, more than ever, we need the great outdoors to nurture our mental and physical well being. Throughout 2020, IATC volunteers continued to work with civic leaders and land managers to preserve our public lands and trails. However, we have much more to do to protect the Issaquah Alps while collaborating with our community to maintain a long term vision for the landscape and its habitat. We're rallying our community today through #GivingTuesday on December 1.

Your donation will go straight to the heart of our mission -- advocacy. All funds raised will help citizen activists organize, mobilize, and influence on a broader and deeper level than ever before.

**[Join us, to give back today or on #GivingTuesday and help preserve, promote and protect our Issaquah Alps!](#)**

Thank you for considering an investment in our trails and open spaces. Together, we will make a lasting impact on the public lands we all love.



Shirts come in mens S, M, L, and XL and women's S, M, and L.

# Wilderness on the Metro - Squak Style

Tom Anderson - November 14, 2020

The year 2019 was a banner year for the Trailhead Direct service, bringing about 10000 hikers to popular trailheads in the Issaquah Alps. Sadly, COVID-19 came along, and threw a monkey-wrench into the works. We hope the service will resume in 2021, but meanwhile, don't despair, there are several trailheads in town just a short walk from a Metro bus stop. This little article will describe one such connection. Specifically, hiking to the Squak Mountain Central Peak via the East Ridge Trail, starting at the bus stop on Newport Way SW by the fish hatchery (and Gibson Park). The bus stop is served by Metro routes 214 and 271, connecting to Bellevue and Seattle. (Another option is SoundTransit route 554, with its nearest stop about a quarter of a mile away at East Sunset Way and Rainier Blvd.)



*The Metro bus stop on Newport Way SW next to Gibson Park.*

From the bus stop, proceed south on Newport Way to the bridge over Issaquah Creek, where the Squak Mountain Access Trail begins (right beside the creek). Look for the coal mining interpretive sign entitled "Turning Coal into Profits." As per the map, this is the start of the Squak Mtn Access Trail, although you won't see trail-specific signage until the Sunrise Place crossing.



*Start of the Squak Mountain Access Trail.*

The trail runs along the west side of Issaquah Creek for about .5 miles and then ascends up past the Wildwood Apartments and Kelkari Condos to Sunrise Place SW. Cross the street at Sunrise Place and continue for another .9 miles where the Squak Mountain Access Trail merges onto the East Ridge Trail. From there, the East Ridge Trail ascends the ridge, sometimes steeply, but the trail is in good shape. The woods are deep and inviting.



*The Squak Mountain Access Trail Signpost on Sunrise Place.*

At about 1400 feet there are peekaboo views out over the valley to the east including Poo Poo Point on the other side of the valley. There are better views here than on the Central Peak Summit! If the paragliders are flying, enjoy the show (from an excellent social distance).



*View of Poo Poo Point from the Squak East Ridge Trail.*

At about 1500 feet the East Ridge Trail turns west, but there is an unmaintained trail that continues south up the ridge to the Southeast Peak of Squak Mountain, an alternate destination. This is a good option to consider if you are looking for a trail without disease-ridden humans  $\delta\tilde{Y}\tilde{S}$ . It is a very nice trail, but a bit overgrown in places. Seldom used by anyone. And the SE peak has a little bit of a view out towards the valley. The map shows that there is a view, but apparently the forest has grown a lot since the map was generated. The view at 1400' is actually better.

Or, continuing on the East Ridge Trail, it drops down to the saddle of Thrush Gap before ascending again, arriving shortly at the junction with the Phil's Creek Trail. Turn right, following the signs to Central Peak. In just a few hundred yards is another junction with the Summit Trail, turn left and ascend, following the signs to "Central Peak."



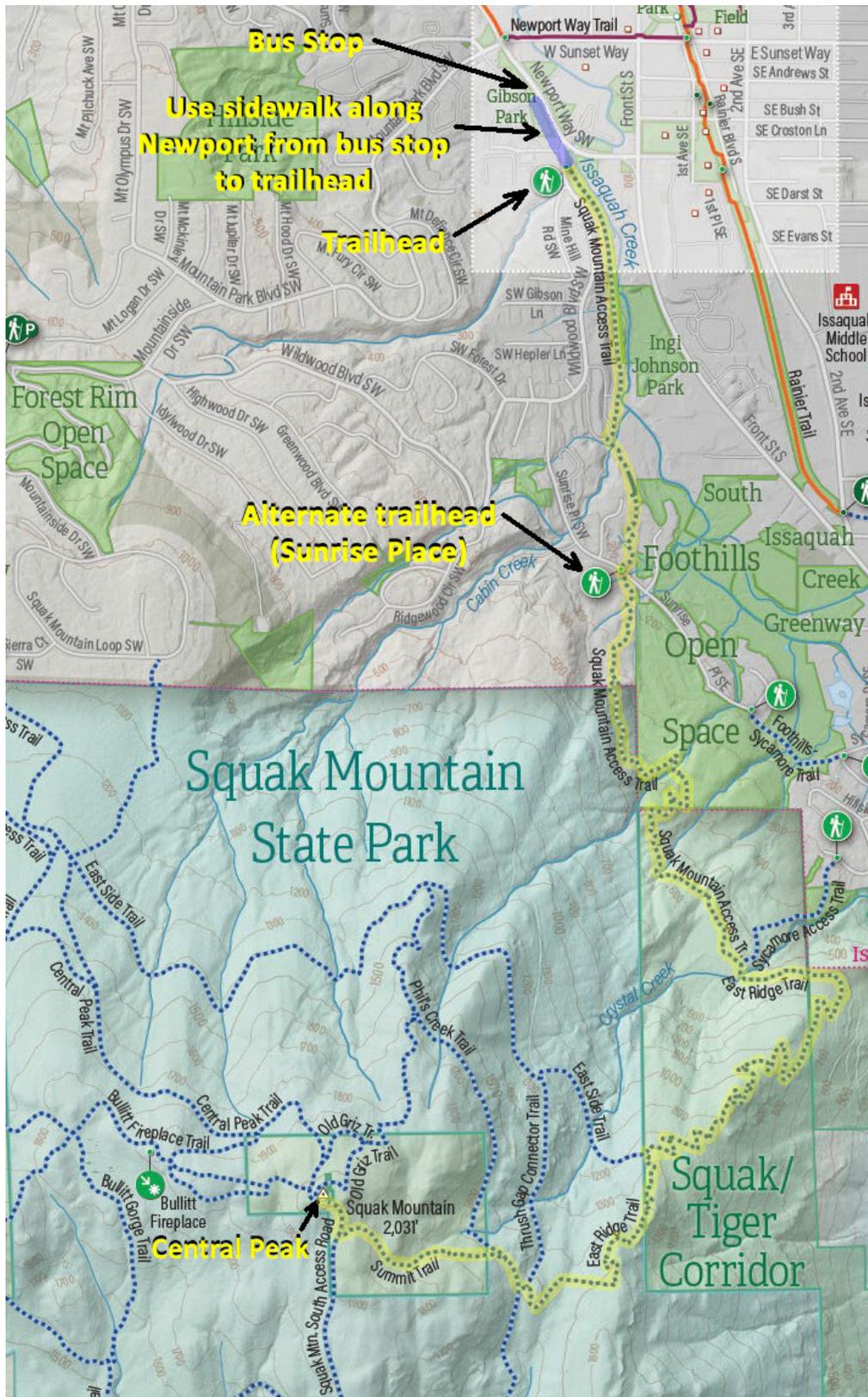
*The Summit Trail Signpost at the intersection with Phil's Creek Trail.*

The Summit Trail terminates on the Squak Mountain South Access Road a short distance (.2 miles) from the Central Peak Summit. Turn right and ascend to the summit area and enjoy the ambiance of the communication towers. There are tiny views between the trees in places, but the views back on the East Ridge Trail are actually better.

Return via the same route.

- Round Trip Distance: 8.2 miles
- Elevation Gain: 2000 feet

Map of the route (sidewalk portion in blue, with trail highlighted in yellow):





Big Tree Ridge is a small trailhead located near the sensitive habitat of Tibbets Creek, and therefore historically has not had enough space for a designated parking area. Construction will make improvements to this trailhead in light of its challenging location.

Luckily, there are many other trails on both Cougar Mountain and in the Cougar-Squak Corridor to explore. [Download a map of the area](#) to start exploring, or visit [Washington Trails Association's website](#) to see trip reports from nearby trails.

Thank you for your cooperation during this time. Please visit [King County's website](#) for updates and information.

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## IATC Advocates for Trail and Mitigation Planning at New School Site

Lindsay Frickle - November 24, 2020

Providence Ridge Schools

To: [Cristinah@issaquahwa.gov](mailto:Cristinah@issaquahwa.gov)

The Issaquah Alps Trails Club shares many of the environmental concerns that other groups and individuals have with the plans for the two schools on the former Providence Height site. It is difficult to understand how the transportation system for pedestrians, buses and cars will function. It seems very car oriented with lots of conflict places for pedestrians and great inefficiencies for buses. Certainly, no recognition of climate change concerns given the transportation layout and its dependence and prioritization of single occupancy vehicles. We are concerned about the long term protection and restoration of the retained natural areas and any new areas that will be restored and maintained for long term open space. Our organization encourages the use of parks, open spaces and trails for use by physical education classes, physical training for athletes in many sports and the use by cross country teams for practice and events. Likely the school will have a cross country team and typically PE classes and others exercising will use unpaved surfaces for some of their running. A trail system will assuredly develop on the open space over time, the key is to proactively plan that trail system avoiding steep erodible slopes, off trail "short cuts," unsafe road crossings and protect the long-term health of the existing and future plantings required for disturbed ground and restoration areas.

The use by Issaquah High School of the adjoining Park Pointe city open space has some issues that are of concern that we don't want to see repeated here. Some of the trails they use at Park Pointe are not well planned or maintained for running. Management of tripping hazards such as rocks and roots are handled by painting them with white spray paint! Certainly not the best solution for the health of the forest and the safety of trail users. With little forest planned to be retained and areas of new plantings needing protection and the need for safe crossings of busy roads surrounding the schools there is a great need to carefully plan for trails, road crossing points and the use of the few remaining natural areas for educational uses as well. The health of the green belts on the north, west and south sides are in terrible shape, as is the wetland south of the proposed elementary school. There are many non-native plants including state regulated tansy ragwort, ivy varieties and non-native blackberry species. A comprehensive planting plan and 10 year bonded maintenance commitment needs to be developed for these areas. With roads and school facilities pushed up close to adjoin in residential uses the narrow green strips need to be well planted and well maintained. On the east side of the property there is a

great deal of quality native plant and tree habitat. Much of this habitat will be lost to the 5 lane road, other grading and filling and stormwater facilities. This same area requires a comprehensive planting plan and 10 year bonded maintenance agreement. Besides great mitigation plans and 10 year bonding two additional mitigation strategies need to be followed. To compensate for the loss of smaller native plants there should be opportunities for plant salvage on areas where plants would otherwise be destroyed. This would apply to native ferns, native flowers and shrubs and smaller trees. Ideally salvaged plants would first be used on the site, second made available for use on other school sites and public areas and finally for the general public. Compensating for the loss of many large trees, both evergreen and deciduous is more difficult, in this instance there is a real need for the large trees on the site for use in a salmon restoration project in the same basin, Lake Sammamish, as the school site. State parks is working with the Mountains to Sound Greenway on a salmon recovery project in Lake Sammamish State Park that has the need for large woody debris to be placed in the creek for a variety of fish enhancing purposes. Providing large trees, with root balls attached, would be a great way to compensate for the loss of the forest on this site within the Lake Sammamish Basin.

We recognize the difficulty with putting two schools on the site given its limitation in size, access and topography. Trying to do more school on less site requires more work, more cost and more impact and a more comprehensive mitigation program. The above suggested requirements are justified given the proposed impacts development of this site would create.

Sincerely,

David Kappler, VP Advocacy

Lindsay Frickle, Executive Director

Issaquah Alps Trails Club

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# The Apparatus

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Harvey Manning

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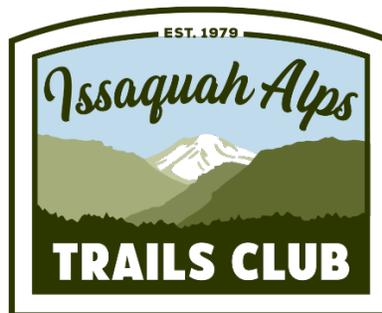
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