



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

February 2021

IATC's Annual Public Lands Forum is back!
For the first time ever, we're going virtual. Join us on **March 25 at 6:30 p.m. PT** for a fireside chat with former U.S. Secretary of the Interior **Sally Jewell**.

[Register here.](#)

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

IATC Releases Five Year Strategic Plan

Lindsay Frickle - February 19, 2021

In February 2020, the IATC Board of Directors and Executive Director gathered at the cozy log home of Board President Elect Anne Newcomb and former President John Sherwin at the base of Tiger Mountain for a strategic planning retreat. Due to the exponential growth in supporters and changes the organization has experienced in recent years, the Board took seriously the planning and strategic preparation for this next chapter. Executive Director, Lindsay Frickle said, "I feel that it is our responsibility to IATC supporters to invest in what will make the most impact on our mission and the future of the Issaquah Alps. Capacity building and strategic planning is imperative at this critical point in our organization's history."

The Board hired well regarded nonprofit consultant Susan Howlett to facilitate, and she continued working with our Executive Director and Strategic Planning Task Force throughout 2020 toward the goal of creating a formal strategic plan. We communicated with our partners, supporters, volunteers, and Board of Directors over several months to inform the Strategic Planning Task Force on our community's priorities and what the IATC is uniquely positioned to accomplish within our Issaquah Alps. We identified several programmatic, infrastructure, and sustainability goals and established guiding principles. Together our goals and guiding principles will help determine our actions for the next five years. These goals focus on both internal infrastructure and public engagement but all reflect the mission of the trails club.

After many meetings, drafts, and and much valuable feedback from our leadership and community, the Board gave IATC's first formal strategic plan its final approval.

In service to our mission to preserve, protect, and promote this Issaquah Alps for present and future generations, the Board is proud to share the IATC's strategic plan with our community.

Please click [HERE](#) to download the full 2021 - 2026 Strategic Plan.



Trailhead Ambassadors Program Update

Hannah Wheeler - February 21, 2021



Trailhead Ambassadors is a collaborative trailside natural resource protection education program. With the long-term goal of reducing negative human impact on public lands, staff and volunteers from organizations and agencies that already work on public lands implement these Leave Not Trace-focused programs at popular trailheads along the I-90 corridor during the busy summer season. Their mission is to inspire visitors to protect public lands through learning and teaching stewardship behaviors while recreating on trails in the Snoqualmie Corridor.

The program was set to launch in 2020, but was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, the program is set to begin this summer. "Trailhead Ambassador program will launch in summer 2021, following public health guidelines. Volunteer Trailhead Ambassadors will serve as a welcoming entity at popular trailheads to answer recreation related questions, promote responsible hiker ethics like Leave No Trace, and collect trail use information for agencies and nonprofits" the Mountains to Sound Greenway said in a recent press release on the program.



IATC President-Elect Anne Newcomb taking the "Leave No Trace" pledge at Salmon Days in 2019.

They plan to release educational and training materials for the program online starting in March, and will host two virtual information sessions to answer any questions interested volunteers may have on March 9th and March 11th. [Learn more about the information sessions and register here.](#)

Starting this summer you may find Trailhead Ambassadors at Poo Poo Point (Chirico Trail), Twin Falls, Mt. Si, Rattlesnake Ledge, and Franklin Falls depending on health and safety guidelines at the time.

To learn more about Leave No Trace principles that the program will focus on visit the [Leave No Trace website.](#)

To learn more about recreation guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic please visit the [Recreate Responsibly website.](#)

IATC Signs Letter Opposing Dam Rebuild in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness

Hannah Wheeler - February 22, 2021



Middle Fork Valley from the Garfield Ledges Trail

The Issaquah Alps Trails Club with its partners from the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Protection Society, Washington Wild, and many others recently signed onto a letter in response to a request for public comment on the plan to rebuild a dam at [Eightmile Lake in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness](#). The current plan to rebuild the dam would increase the size of the dam and the amount of water that could be taken out of the ecosystem. This raises several key concerns about the project.

Violation of Water Extraction Rights

The new proposed height of the dam would increase the amount of water being taken from the lake. According to the [Alpine Lakes Wilderness Protection Society](#), "Because IPID has not been taking the amounts of water it claims it has a right to, there is a very good case to be made that IPID has "relinquished" its rights to increased levels of water withdrawal." This means that with a larger dam, the IPID would be taking more water than they have the right to take out of the lake. The impact that removing that much water would have on the ecosystem has not been addressed.

Compliance with the Wilderness Act

[The 1964 Wilderness Act](#) "prohibits roads, motor vehicles, motorized equipment, mechanical transport, the landing of aircraft (including the dropping of persons, materials, and supplies from aircraft), and structures and installations within wilderness" with the goal of ensuring that wild spaces remain that way. The Alpine Lakes Wilderness was designated in 1946 after dams had already been built in the region. It is unclear how a larger dam will be constructed without violating the wilderness act given the machinery that is typically required for such a project.

Fish, Wildlife, and Climate Change Impacts

Given the scale of this project and the large amount of water possibly being removed from the ecosystem, we are requesting that the potential impact on fish and wildlife be fully explored. Climate change is only going to make it more difficult for fish and wildlife to survive dry summers. This complication has also not been addressed in the current plan.

Water Use for Residential Development

It is currently unclear what the extra water will be used for. The project cites orchard and farm irrigation, but there is also mention of residential development. We are concerned that allowing more water to be taken from the lakes will open up opportunities for residential development that will have a doubly negative effect on the fragile ecosystem of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness.

Until these concerns are fully addressed, the Issaquah Alps Trails Club does not support the rebuilding of the Eightmile Lake Dam.

Learn More:

<https://www.wilderness.org/articles/article/wilderness-act>

http://www.alpinelakes.org/newsletters/alpine_2020_01.pdf

The Foraging Behavior of the Pileated Woodpecker

Tom Anderson - February 22, 2021

A very common sight in the forests of the northwest is a dead tree, seemingly pecked apart, like this:



Most likely, the carnage above was the result of the foraging behavior of the pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), the most common woodpecker in the northwest. It is an insectivore, and an old dead tree is a pretty good place to find insects.

Believe it or not, the same critter is responsible for the very regular holes created in this fairly healthy western redcedar tree:



In this case, the pecking is much harder, and the bird aligns the holes with the long, straight grain of the cedar tree to make the going a bit easier. In some cases, the holes are so nearly rectangular, it seems like a human must have been involved, but alas, that is not the case.

Here is the bird working on one of the very holes shown above:



Or you can catch the action with this little video: https://youtu.be/BRSeu_ohEJY

These photos were taken on the Swamp Trail on the Tiger Mountain Tradition Plateau.

Becoming an Advocate of the Alps: How to Contact Your Lawmakers

Hannah Wheeler - February 21, 2021



Advocates at the Capitol in Olympia for Hiker Rally Day in 2019. Photo by Tom Anderson

Outside of voting periods, ordinary citizens can have an extraordinary impact by reaching out to their government representatives. By phone, mail or email, you can make your voice heard by contacting your elected officials today. The first step is finding out who represents you. This will depend on which district you live in.

U.S. Congress

Your U.S. Congress person represents you at the federal level in Washington D.C. Below is a list of individuals who may be your representative if you live in the area. You can find out who your U.S. House Representative is [here](#) along with their contact information if it is not listed below.

[Email Representative Kim Schrier](#) or call her office at (202) 225-7761.

[Email Representative Adam Smith](#) or call his office at (202) 225-8901.

[Email Representative Suzan DelBene](#) or call her office at (202) 225-6311.

[Email Representative Pramila Jayapal](#) or call her office at (202) 225-3106.

[Email Senator Maria Cantwell](#) or call her office at (202) 224-3441.

[Email Senator Patty Murray](#) or call her office at (202) 224-2621.

State Legislators

State legislators represent you in Olympia based on where you live in the State of Washington.

If you already know who your state Senator and Representatives are, you can find their email addresses [here](#). If you don't know who represents you at the state level, you can find out through the Washington legislature's [District Finder](#) search engine.

Once you know who to reach out to, you need to figure out what you are going to say to them.

If you're reaching out at the request of an organization or advocacy group, they may provide a sample letter you can simply sign onto like the one we have provided our members on the SR-18 redevelopment project.

Sample Letter:

Dear XXXXX,

I'm writing to you in support of the State Route 18 project from Deep Creek to Issaquah Hobart Road. This is an important opportunity to protect wildlife, enhance recreation and improve safety. I urge you to include the following project elements not currently addressed in the January 2021 plan.

- **Tiger Summit Interchange:** We must have a plan to include this infrastructure for recreation access and to support communication and forest industry.
- **Wildlife Passage:** We must address large animal passages at four critical areas: Deep Creek, Raging River, Hanson Creek and Summit.
- **Regional Trails:** We must ensure that current infrastructure does not preclude the development of a regional trail through this corridor for bikers and hikers

Thank you for your action to help build this project right the first time,

Name

Any letter you send should include the name of the issue you are reaching out about, what action you are asking your representative to take, and a few reasons why. They do not need to be long, but certainly can be if there is a lot of information to share. Just remember, your representatives are busy people and may not have much time to read through a long email, so make sure you put the most important information first.

Finally, we know that we can make a bigger impact together . Consider sharing your letter and why you wrote it on social media or with friends so they can take action using your example as well.

[Learn more about the SR-18 project here.](#)

The Apparatus

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