



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

April 2021

Join us for Part 2 of our virtual Forum for Public Lands [Friday, May 21st 5:30pm - 7:00pm!](#)
We are sitting down with Hilary Franz, Commissioner of Public Lands for a fireside chat about forest health and the importance of preservation and stewardship of our public lands.



The Issaquah Alps Trails Club Celebrates Earth Day 2021

Hannah Wheeler - April 22, 2021

To celebrate Earth Day 2021, the Issaquah Alps Trails Club partnered with Green Issaquah and some fantastic volunteers to restore habitat at Berntsen Park in Issaquah.



Volunteers at Berntsen Park in Issaquah on Earth Day 2021.

[The Green Issaquah Partnership](#) is a collaboration between the city, local environmental nonprofits, and community groups to restore and maintain its parks, forests, and open spaces. The Issaquah Alps Trails Club is proud to work with the city on this program.



IATC President-Elect Anne Newcomb removing invasive plants.

Volunteers removed invasive species like blackberry, holly, and ivy which threaten native plant species and sensitive habitat along Issaquah Creek. The invasive plants were composted on-site using platforms to prevent them from re-growing.



[If you're interested in learning more about the Green Issaquah Program, visit their website.](#)

Meanwhile, IATC board member and trail runner Kaytlyn Gerbin picked up trash along trails in the Issaquah Alps and encouraged our members to join virtually.



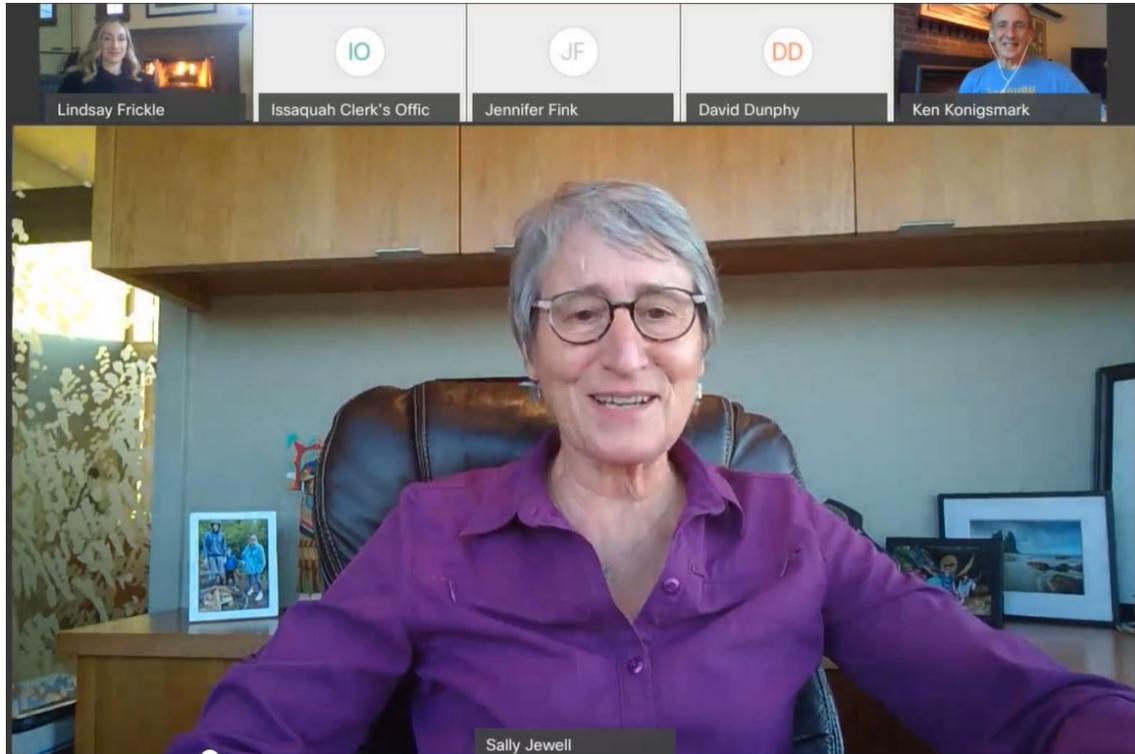
Kaytlyn Gerbin on the Issaquah Alps Trails Club Instagram supporting Earth Day.

"If you're planning a hike, trail run, bike ride, or any other outdoor activity, join us in cleaning up our favorite trails! Grab an extra trash bag and some gloves, and tag us in a photo of your trash loot for the day for a chance to win some IATC swag."

Show us how you celebrated Earth Day this year on our [Facebook Page](#). We are looking forward to continuing to re-engage with our members through events like these as we head into summer! Stay tuned for more information.

Takeaways from the 2021 Annual Forum for Public Lands

Hannah Wheeler - April 1, 2021



This past week the Issaquah Alps Trails Club hosted its first ever "virtual" Annual Forum for Public Lands in partnership with the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust and the City of Issaquah. This year the club hosted former US Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewel in conversation with Ken Konigsmark and Lindsay Frickle of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club. The forum featured questions from the audience on everything from current challenges facing our environment to balancing work with an active lifestyle.

To kick-off the forum, Doug McClelland asked the audience to consider three things during the course of the evening: "Learn, know, and understand the tribes that are part of our community... get to know the history of the people involved here... and get to know the land, not just the trails, it's the conservation that's important. If we can all do that, we can leave this place a little better for the next generation.

In addition to being the U.S. Secretary of the Interior from 2013-2017, Sally served as the board president of the Greenway for three years, acted as the CEO of REI, a regent for the University of Washington, raised a family, and has a deep passion for outdoor recreation and conservation that lead to her record of service and accomplishments. Sally credits her time in the Greenway as the best preparation she had for her job as the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

Ken and Sally began their conversation by talking about Sally's experience as the Secretary of the Interior. As the Secretary of the Interior, Sally not only oversaw the land managers we are familiar with such as the Bureau of Land Management and the National Parks Service, but also bureaus such as the U.S. Geological Surveys, the Bureau of Reclamations totaling ten. Besides being "overwhelming" Sally

notes the importance of finding common ground and compromise in the job. "Your customer is everybody... and it really is about listening to perspectives and making sure you have the full story." She recognizes that you won't always make everyone happy but notes that "it's really hard to have an adversary when you've sat across the table from someone... and know them as human beings." To make progress you really need to know the people, not hide behind the anonymity of social media. Even on the "thorniest" issues she says "it was all about relationships... when you can get past assumptions and build a relationship, magic happens."

Going forward, Sally notes that current Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland has her work cut out for her. She cites climate change in particular as an issue that many people are becoming increasingly concerned or even hopeless about. "One of the opportunities she has... is painting a vision of what can be." Sally notes that protecting public lands will be a crucial aspect of this future vision. For those of us wondering how we can help shape this future, she recommends we all get involved. "[Public servants] want to hear from the public, when you hold a public meeting and no one, or only one side shows up, you're not necessarily hearing all points of view. It's important to share your point of view." She also notes that storytelling and fact-checking are key when speaking to public officials. "When you're speaking to a public servant the best thing you can do is bring out a story- not a theory- but a story."

Making sure voices that are traditionally underrepresented is a theme that emerged as well. In particular, Sally discusses her own ignorance in building relationships with native tribes in our communities and how she has worked on addressing that. "We've had engagement with tribes... but it hasn't been with the level of authenticity I wish we could have." An example she gave was in the formation of the Bears Ears National Monument in which five tribes came together to advocate for the protection of their gravesites there. "One of the most meaningful and powerful meetings I had was sitting in a teepee as they talked about their connections to these landscapes and how they needed to use them... if we had not had those meetings, and we had not listened, we would not have understood the challenges they faced and the desecration of their culture they saw." Again, listening is important even if it's difficult. "Sometimes it means listening to all of the things that my colonial ancestors did to eliminate these tribes... and now when I hike up Mt. Si.. I think of it as a sacred site... not just all of the things we see as climbers and hikers."

When asked about Climate Change, Sally says the priority actions we need involve "stopping the bleeding... protect what's there... and create incentives. That means first we need to put an end to converting public land to development and learning to value the land for all of the value the land can provide us as it is. "One of the things the Biden administration is doing to address this is... stop leasing public land for fossil fuel development... we need to be far more discerning on where we develop." She also talks about the importance of creating regulations that "align economic interests with environmental interests." Closer to home, Sally talked about the risk wildfire poses to Western Washington. "Fire is not inherently bad, it's actually essential, but the Alps are full... of the urban-wildlife interface." Solutions such as wildlife corridors, making communities "fire-wise" and working with property owners to develop in a way that's considerate of the landscape.

To Sally, the future of advocacy relies on the tools that we have today. "The ability to use technology to tell a story... I've been pulled to places all over the world." She thinks that advocacy will certainly involve social media given the power we have seen it wield, for good or for bad. "The future looks like getting a lot more voices to the table than have ever been heard... if you're not at the table you're on the menu" she says. By this she means that if you have an opinion, you want to make sure your voice is heard, and that today it's getting easier and easier to make your voice heard. "Advocacy is evolving, and that's a really good thing." Ken added that "if you want to be a good advocate, you have to have the passion for it." because it can take a lot of your life to advocate effectively for the things you care about.

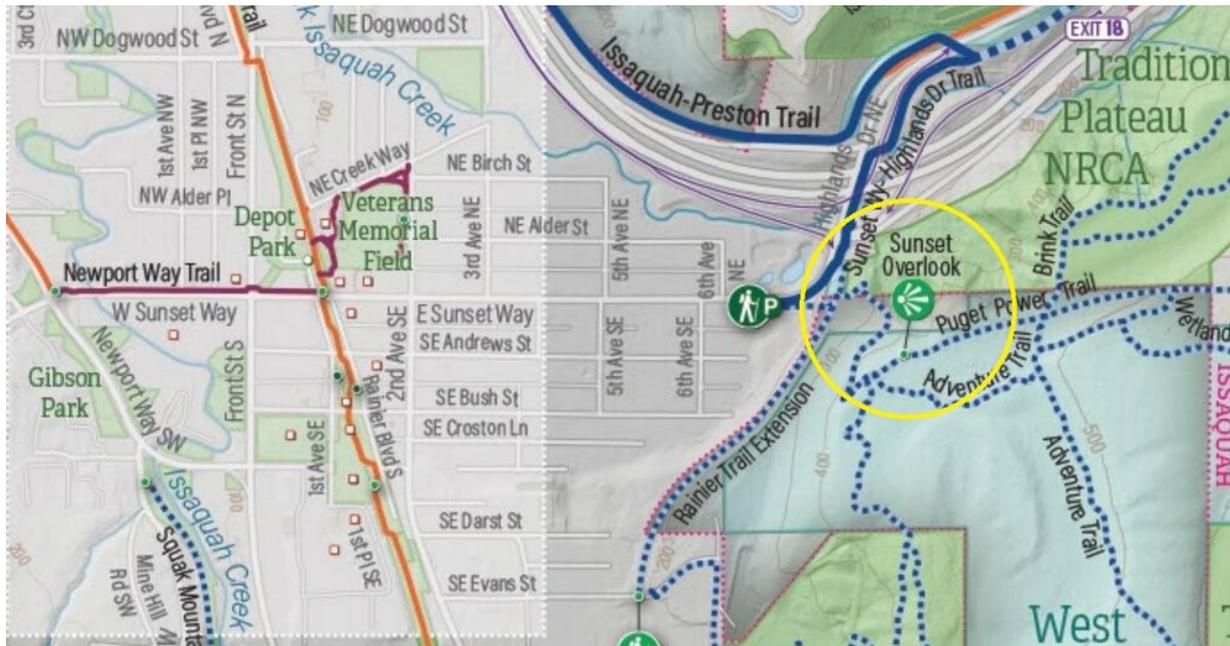
Watch the recording of the Annual Forum below, and learn more about advocacy at the Issaquah Alps Trails club by visiting: <https://www.issaquahalps.org/advocacy>



The Sunset Overlook - Then and Now

Tom Anderson - April 16, 2021

A popular point-of-interest while hiking on the Tradition Plateau (Tiger Mountain) is the viewpoint on the west end of the plateau where the power lines drop down to the town of Issaquah. The point is identified as the "Sunset Overlook" on the trail map provided by the City of Issaquah.



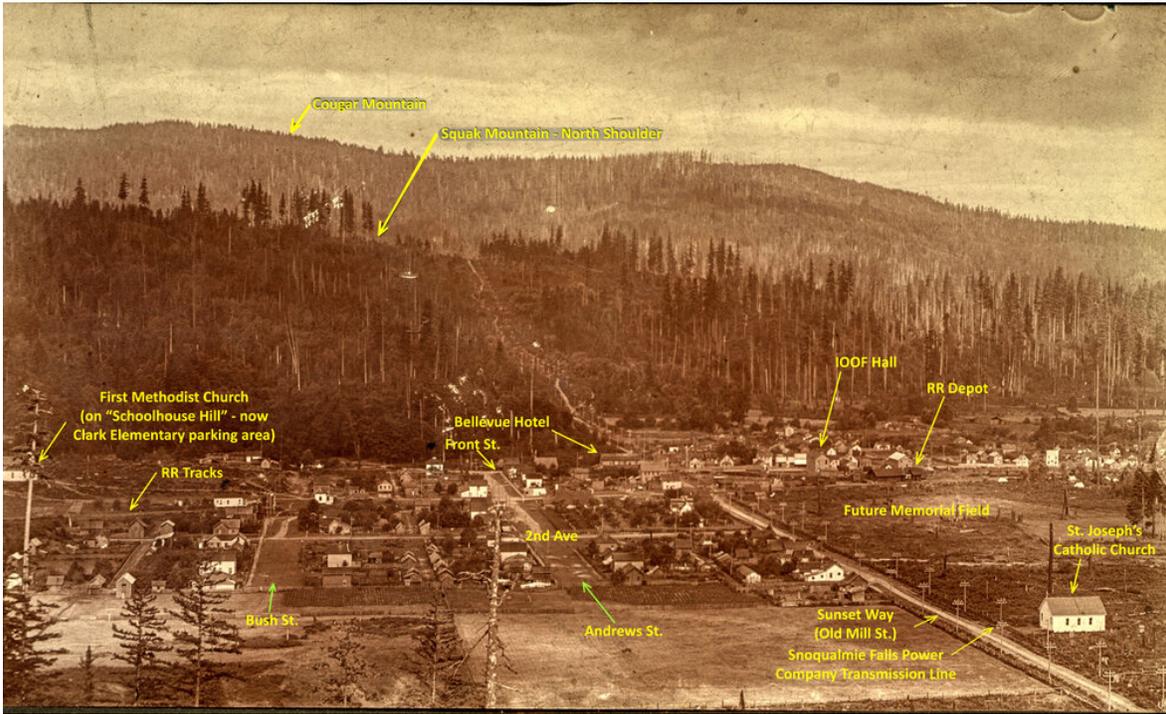
The "Sunset Overlook" on the west end of the Tradition Plateau.

Back in the day, the vantage point provided a commanding view of the "Old Town" Issaquah streets and buildings, including Sunset Way, for which the overlook is named. Today, not so much. Today, the view is limited to features of the north end of town, such as I-90, Gilman Blvd., Lake Sammamish, Talus on Cougar Mountain, etc. The trees on the scarp prevent a view toward the south end of town. To illustrate, here is a photo taken by the bench at the overlook:



A nice view, but let's imagine what it would be like 120 years ago, after the first logging of the Tradition Scarp. The following photo is from the Issaquah History Museums' collection and depicts exactly that (accession number 94.029.001). The date is circa 1900. We know that it is no earlier than 1899 as that is the date the power line that runs along Sunset Way and up over Squak Mountain was constructed. A few of the streets and buildings are identified, to aid in the viewer's orientation.

And following the old photo is the "now" photo, but how do we acquire the "now" photo given the constraints we discussed at the beginning of the article? Technology to the rescue, in the form of a drone! We can fly a little west of the scarp, away from the trees, and achieve the same field of view as the photo from 1900. Here they are, in sequence:



Much has changed, some has remained. The Sunset Way power line still follows the same route. The IOOF Hall (Stan's BBQ) remains. The Railroad Depot remains. And, most notably, Squak and Cougar Mountains are still there, bidding us.

Bobcats, Bears, Coyotes and People - A Tail of Partnerships and Carnivores

Ash Lehto - April 22, 2021

COEXISTING WITH CARNIVORES

To keep our neighborhoods and our wildlife safe:

Store garbage indoors or in bear-resistant garbage cans.

Place cans outside on the morning of garbage pick-up.

BLACK BEAR
Photo submitted to carnivorespotter.org

#CoexistingWithCarnivores

For more information visit: zoo.org/coexisting Report sightings online: carnivorespotter.org

WOODLAND PARK ZOO
CITY OF ISSAQUAH WASHINGTON
MUSEUM LIBRARY SERVICE

By far one of the greatest joys of living, visiting, and working in the foothills of the Cascades is the closeness we get to have with nature - forests that trickle into our neighborhoods, rivers running through our backyards and downtown. With this close proximity to nature comes many benefits - but also unique challenges. As our urban areas extend into our natural spaces, we find ourselves interacting more not just with plants, but also wildlife. While raccoons and crows might be enjoying the urban life, this isn't the case for all animals - especially the predators of our local environments, such as bobcats, cougars, and bears. Yet these carnivores are incredibly important to our local ecosystems and food chains, so it's important that we learn to coexist with them.

Issaquah Alps Trails Club (IATC) has partnered with the [Woodland Park Zoo's Coexisting with Carnivores program](#). This community education and engagement program seeks to equip local residents with knowledge and resources about the large carnivores and other wildlife that are found in the area. The program also helps people learn how to coexist and have positive interactions with their neighboring wildlife!

The work of Coexisting with Carnivores includes educating students at local schools about large wildlife, supporting the students in developing scientific and leadership skills while discussing real-world environmental challenges and solutions. Additionally, there are a variety of community-led projects and events that focus on education and strategy-development around human-wildlife interactions, such as Carnivore Coexistence Action Teams and the Living Northwest Fest. So if you have a student at a local school, are looking to get involved in a citizen science program, or just want to help spread the word

about healthy coexistence, you can find resources on the Coexisting with Carnivores webpage!

There's even an ongoing scavenger hunt game entitled Crossing Paths with Carnivores in the Issaquah Highlands that you can download and play, with monthly prizes offered! You can learn more about the game and how to play here: <https://www.westsideseattle.com/ballard-news-tribune/2021/04/05/start-scavenger-hunt-cross-paths-carnivores-win-prizes-and-protect>

Even if you aren't interested in playing a game or getting a yard sign about the program, you can still work on a healthy relationship with carnivores and other wildlife. The best way to start a journey of coexistence is to simply Know Your Neighbors!

Black Bear - Easy to identify and always exciting to see, black bears are common around Washington. Weighing between 100-300 pounds with black or brown fur, these chubby carnivores can be dangerous to humans. They don't tend to wander too deep into urban areas, but you may come across one in your backyard if you live further from a city, or while on a hike in a natural area or forest. The best way to avoid conflict with a bear is to simply ensure you don't come across one. Make noise when you're outside to avoid surprising one, and minimize a bear's access to your trash and food, by not feeding other wildlife or leaving out scraps near your home or campsite. When you do head out into the woods, it's always a good idea to carry bear spray. If you do come across a black bear at some point, make a lot of noise to scare it away - this will be a good reminder to the bear that humans aren't good to be around!

Bobcat - Known for being reclusive and having a stubby tail, this medium-sized member of the cat family is becoming increasingly common in urban areas. Bobcats weigh less than 30 pounds and only reach about 3 feet in length, and the tips of their tails and ears are black. They also have unique fur habits, with little tufts on their ears and furry "sideburns" on their faces. While bobcats don't often eat domestic animals, they will still be opportunistic and go after a cat or poultry if presented with the opportunity. If a bobcat does appear in your area, you can do things like cleaning around your bird feeder and not feeding other wildlife - bobcats will follow their wild prey, and if other animals are often around your home, their predator may naturally follow!

Cougar - Also known as the mountain lion, cougars are typically stealthy animals and not often seen - though that doesn't make them uncommon! These large cats can weigh between 110-140 pounds and range from red-brown to tan in color, with black tips on their long tails. They are active mostly at night but also during the day, and while they tend to hunt larger prey such as deer and elk, they may still go after livestock or pets. The good news is that cougar attacks on humans are rare, and there are things you can do to prevent cougars from coming near your home, such as trimming up trees and bushes to remove hiding spots, planting species that deer don't prefer to eat, and feeding your pets indoors.

Coyote - This medium-sized predator is one of the most commonly-spotted carnivores, and far too often mistaken for a dog. They can weigh up to 35 pounds and have low, bushy tails and noticeably elongated snouts. They also often have lighter fur, though colors can still range from black to brown to tan. It's worth noting that coyotes are urban adapters, meaning they do well in human-built environments, which isn't surprising as they are known to be found in a wide variety of natural settings as well. Coyotes don't typically attack humans, and the majority of conflicts with coyotes are around pets - these carnivores tend to eat smaller prey, which includes dogs and especially cats, so you shouldn't leave pets outside alone, especially after dusk and in the early mornings. If you do spot or

suspect a coyote in the area, make sure your home isn't a welcoming place to them - don't leave out garbage or compost, which may attract smaller animals the coyotes might prey on, feed your pets indoors, and if you see a coyote, shout at it to scare it away.

If you do catch glimpse of one of these carnivore companions, consider communicating your sighting on [Carnivorespotter.org](https://www.carnivorespotter.org), a project launched by the Woodland Park Zoo and Seattle University to keep track of the wildlife spotted around the area. You can visit the site to see what other people have seen nearby, and share your own discoveries. It's a great way to take part in a huge community science program.

If you're interested in learning more about urban wildlife, check out the webinar "[Environmental Justice and Wildlife in Our Urban Ecosystems](#)", run by Seattle Parks and Recreation and the Green Seattle Partnership, with speaker Dr. Chris Schell from the University of Washington.

So as spring carries on and we find ourselves outside more and more, take the time to learn about your local carnivores and how you can live peacefully with them as your neighbors - and if you do come across one, you'll have a great tail to tell your community!

Trailhead Ambassadors Kicks Off Volunteer Training

Hannah Wheeler - April 22, 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. [Learn more about the program here.](#)



The Issaquah Alps Trails Club is looking forward to continuing to partner with the Trailhead Ambassadors program. We live in an area with a "bountiful degree of beauty of magnificence" and this is not a well-kept secret. Hiking popularity has doubled in the last nine years. We are exceeding existing capacity at some of our most popular trailheads. Trailhead Ambassadors are focusing our education and stewardship efforts on some of our most popular trails within the [Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area](#). Some of the trails you may see Trailhead Ambassadors at include:

- Poo Poo Point via Chirico Trail
- Twin Falls
- Rattlesnake Ledge
- Mt. Si

The Trailhead Ambassadors program hosted its first information session in March. The session features a panel of partners from the Issaquah Alps Trails Club, Washington State Parks, the Mountaineers, and the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust. It gave an overview of key information about the program and

answered audience questions. Read some of the key takeaways below and watch the video for more information.

Impact of COVID-19

The pandemic has highlighted if not exacerbated the need for our community members to get outside and recreate. This means that we need Trailhead Ambassadors now more than ever. We are working to make sure we can accomplish our mission while staying safe. Required training will be virtual, and Trailhead Ambassadors program partners will be "working closely with recreation managers to make sure recreation trailheads can accommodate this opportunity safely."

Key Problems Trailhead Ambassadors is Trying to Solve

- Litter
- Dog Poop Bags
- Loud Music
- Parking Violations
- Unlicensed trail building

The Trailhead Ambassadors Solution

Trailhead Ambassadors share a vision to "inspire visitors to protect public lands by teaching stewardship behaviors while recreating on public lands." Signs, posters and press releases have worked in the past, and we know negative confrontation doesn't work well. The Trailhead Ambassadors program will take a new approach through face to face education. It is not focused on "policing" trail activity, but rather engaging with the public and creating positive experiences that will encourage future stewardship.

Becoming a Trailhead Ambassador

"Meet people where they are at."

We will send out volunteers to some of our most popular trailheads and teach you to engage with the public safely and effectively. The primary role of the TH ambassador will be to be a "welcoming and friendly face." You will not be expected to enforce, just to educate and inspire.

[If you're interested in becoming a trailhead ambassador click here.](#)

Next Steps- It's easy to become an Ambassador!

- [Fill out Interest Form](#)
- Complete Training- Virtual, Approximately 6 hours
- Sign Code of Conduct
- Participate in at least three half-day shifts between May-September
- Must be 18 or older

What's in it for volunteers?

- Your actions will play a direct role in stewarding public lands
- Gain experience in public engagement
- Swag
- Time can be put toward a free NW Forest Service Pass or Discover Pass.
- [Mountaineers](#) receive a stewardship credit for being a TH ambassador.

The success of this program during its first year will inform future decisions about program expansion. We look forward to seeing you out there helping to steward our public lands this year.

Watch the full video below and share information about the [Trailhead Ambassadors](#) in your own network.

The Apparatus

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