

Appalachian conservation group finds new vistas in the North Cascades / RECREATION, C1

**360 Nationals**  
Local drivers have found success in high-profile race  
SPORTS / B1

**Dream dance**  
Ballet classic coming to McIntyre Hall stage  
APPLAUSE / D1

**Skagit Valley Herald**

THURSDAY  
AUGUST 10, 2006

A locally owned newspaper serving Northwest Washington since 1884

Copyright © 2006

*"Out here, you guys don't know what steep is. We don't do switchbacks on the East Coast. It's straight up. I have to laugh when people say a trail around here is steep."*

Gary Weintraub, of Putnam Valley, N.Y.



Photos by Matt Wallis / Skagit Valley Herald

Trish Niece of Wallingford, Conn., takes in Mount Baker from the top of Anderson Butte during a hike that was part of August Camp.

## Appalachia out West

### Group sets up camp in North Cascades

By VINCE RICHARDSON  
Staff Writer

MARBLEMOUNT — They've camped in the shadows of the rugged Sawtooth Mountains in Idaho. They've conquered peaks in the White Mountains in New Hampshire and the Adirondacks in New York. They've paddled the Rangeley Lakes region in Maine.

But most recently, the Appalachian Mountain Club set its recreational sights on the North Cascades.

The nation's oldest outdoor recreation and conservation organization set up its August Camp on the outskirts of Marblemount on the shores of the Skagit River. The camp began July 15 and ends Saturday.

The AMC is a non-profit organization founded in Boston in 1876 by a group of Harvard professors concerned about logging in the White Mountains.

The group now boasts about 90,000 members in 12 chapters, 20,000 volun-

teers, and about 450 full-time and seasonal staff. AMC chapters reach from Maine to Washington, D.C. Most members hail from New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Since its inception, the AMC has promoted the protection and enjoyment of the mountains, rivers and trails of the Northeast.

Members gather once a year at August Camp to reconnect and enjoy the environment.

Members pick from one of two two-week August Camp sessions. They can stay the full two weeks or a single week.

The AMC offers about 8,000 other trips a year, from local chapter activities to major excursions worldwide. Trips are for every ability and outdoor interest level.

August Camp changes its North American location each year. It will be in the Sierra Nevada mountain range



Irene Logan of Long Island, N.Y., leads a group of Appalachian Mountain Club members.



# Camp

Continued from Page C1

next year. Wayne Foote is a member of the AMC's search committee, the group responsible for picking the North Cascades for this year's August Camp.

He arrived for August Camp by train from Middlebury, Conn.

"This was an absolutely beautiful spot," Foote said. "I came out here a year and a half ago to scout things out. I talked to a lot of people who said the club should go to the North Cascades, that we needed to get out here."

AMC found plenty of room to room on property owned by Concrete's George Theodoratus.

"We looked at George's place and really liked it," Foote said. "There was a lot of room."

And the club needed the room as the third week proved popular.

"We have the maximum of 64 campers here," Foote said. "Other weeks, we've seen between 40 and 50."

Foote's job didn't end when the camping spot was selected.

"I had to find hikes," he said. "There were about 170 that fit our parameters in the area. From that, I had to narrow it down to 20 or 30. We've hiked Railroad Grade, Park Butte, Anderson Butte, Baker Lake, Baker River and Easy Pass, just to name a few. I led the Easy Pass hike. It was beautiful. It was definitely a stretch for some, but most made it."

The AMC teaches its members the skills to remain safe in the outdoors, while at the same time caring for the natural world.

Campers have a number of choices when it comes to activities at August Camp. Each day offers a different set of hikes of various difficulties as well as other outdoor-related activities.

On this day, there was a group setting out for a two-day canoe trip on Ross Lake while another was bound for trails on Orcas Island. There are usually five activities scheduled per day.

"What can I say," Foote said,

"there is a lot to do around here."

Hikes are rated. "A" hikes are difficult, while "C" hikes are easy. Campers sign up, then head out.

Irene Logan is a retired teacher from Long Island. Hikers don't come much more hardcore than Logan. She's trekked all over the East Coast and has claimed most of its peaks.

"I'm a baby boomer," Logan said with a wide smile. "We're rebels. I like to keep busy."

Logan, a member of AMC for years, is one of five hike leaders at August Camp.

She's a certified wilderness first responder and is trained in search and rescue techniques.

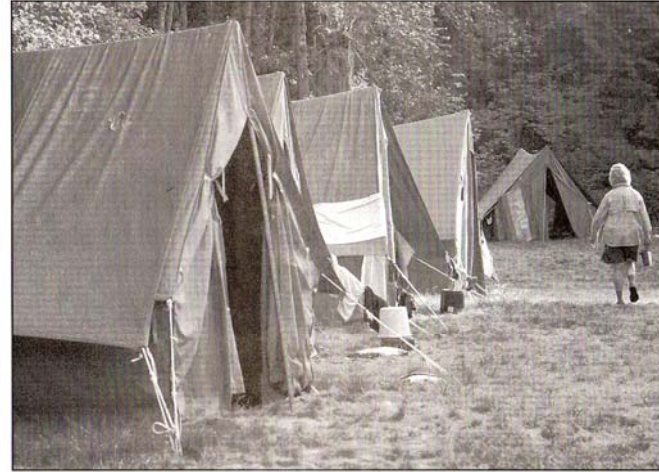
"It's just wonderful," Logan admitted. "This is my first time out here. It's been a lot of fun. I'll lead five or six hikes this week, then I'll get a day off. For people who want to semi-rough it, this is great."

As a hike leader, Logan took a group to Anderson Butte



Photos by Matt Wallis / Skagit Valley Herald

Appalachian Mountain Club members have breakfast before setting out for the day's adventures.



A tent city hosts campers on private land on the outskirts of Marblemount.

said. "You need sharp map and compass skills. They are much more difficult. These trails are beautiful."

Jack Driller of Ridgewood, N.J., was impressed with the number of trees.

"We don't have the big trees," he said. "This area is really nice and the people are very friendly. That's why we like to camp out west, the people are great."

August Camp runs like a fine-tuned machine.

The club furnishes the basics.

It supplies the tents (12-by-12 Eureka wall tents, large enough to stand and walk around in). There are two cots, water buckets and basins, and shower stalls. It's not running water, but rather "sun-showers," where the water is heated in a plastic pouch by the sun then poured over the campers.

All meals are provided. The campers enjoy multi-course hot breakfasts and dinners within the confines of the dining tent. Members prepare their own

trail lunches each morning.

Cooking is done by a cook and staff in a kitchen that boasts gas stoves and ovens.

Campers awake to the sound of reveille at 6:15 a.m. Breakfast is served at 7 by a crew of 10 high school and college students.

In the lunch tent, campers pack their lunch for the day, buffet style. There is also a coffee tent, complete with a cup tree. The "water buffalo" is a large tank of fresh water where sun showers and bottles are filled.

Placed strategically around camp are portable toilets and collection sites for garbage.

After eating, campers wash their own dishes and place them in racks. All will be later sterilized by the "dish dogs."

"I have enjoyed my time in Washington immensely," Weintraub said. "This is my first time at an August Camp and it's been great. This area is really amazing. I'll be back."

And the North Cascades will be waiting.



Hikers ford a stream while on their way to Anderson Lake.

and Anderson Lake. Campers signing up for the jaunt hailed from Putnam Valley, N.Y.; Wallingford Conn.; Ridgewood, N.J.; Washington, D.C.; Arlington, Mass.; Larchmount, N.Y.; Riverdale, N.Y.; and Sunnyvale, Calif.

California? Yes, Pam Putman was the lone West Coast hiker in the group.

"I heard about this from a friend who was a member of the club," she said. "I am normally a white-water kayaker. But I decided to give this a shot. It's been a fantastic experience."

As the group made its way along the trail, comparisons between the trail systems on the East Coast and those out west were inescapable.

The biggest difference, according to the folks from the East Coast, was the steepness of the trails.

"Out here, you guys don't know what steep is," said Gary Weintraub of Putnam Valley, N.Y. "We don't do switchbacks on the East Coast. It's straight

up. I have to laugh when people say a trail around here is steep."

Logan said the trails in the

North Cascades were much easier.

"We have a lot more bush-wacking on our trails," she

*"This area is really nice and the people are very friendly. That's why we like to camp out west, the people are great."*

**Jack Driller, of Ridgewood, N.J.**

■ Vince Richardson can be reached at 360-416-2181 or by e-mail at vrichardson@skagitvalleyherald.com.