



THE MOUNTAINEERS TAKE ON THE PCT

The Seattle based **Mountaineers**, whose mission is to enrich the community by helping people explore, conserve, learn about and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest, has decided to take on the PCT.

Thirty-three members of the Foothills Branch of the Mountaineers completed day hikes and one-night backpacking trips on the PCT each weekend for the duration of the summer. Their goal was to hike 75 unique miles on the Trail in Washington, however, three of the hikers reached more than 150 miles.

Chris Caviezel, the branch's PCT Series coordinator, collaborated with **Suzanne Wilson**, PCTA's North Cascades Regional Representative, to generate interest among the members by offering a slideshow presentation from local section hiker, **Tom Griffin**. When asked to recall a favorite hike, Caviezel hesitated, saying each hike offered a different experience and perspective of the Trail, long distance hiking, and of hikers themselves. Eventually, he decided that his recent walk from Mineral Creek trailhead south to Snoqualmie Pass in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness was his favorite. While it meant putting in a long 21.2-mile day, the hike took them to the heart of the Wilderness and offered views of Chikamin Ridge, Huckleberry and Alaska mountains and the famous Kendall Katwalk. It was along this stretch that the group encountered the kind of wildlife hikers don't see during an average day hike: pikas, marmots, and a mother bear with two cubs.

Along the way the Mountaineers have crossed paths with many thru-hikers who have shared a bit of their journey and inspired them. In fact, they altered their hikes to head south with the intention of meeting more PCT thru and section hikers. They often gave candy or extra food to the thru-hikers, enticements to stop for a chat about their adventures. The members have access to the Mountaineers' lodges. So they offered warm beds, hot showers, and hearty meals to **Gut Hook**, **Tangent**, **The Mayor** and **Genius** at Meany Lodge in exchange for trail stories and a peek into the life of a long-distance hiker.

As a result of interacting with thru and section hikers along the Trail, many of the Mountaineers have given each other trail names, and talked about the possibility of 'one day...' They have been inspired by the likes of **Hummingbird**, who moved an impressive 35 miles per day, and in awe of **Daredevil**, who spent a night at the home of one of the Mountaineers and shared stories about her time on the PCT.

The Mountaineers, who have never taken on adventure specific to the PCT since their creation in 1906, have become attached to this amazing resource for the first time. In the process, they have taken an interest in the mission of the PCTA. There is no doubt that the journey will continue next summer, and some members have approached the PCTA about volunteering on the Trail as a way to give back for the amazing experiences they have had wandering down this great path. If you are interested in learning more about their adventures or want to join, please go to <http://www.foothillsmountaineers.org/hiking/pct-series.html>.

Top: Maureen Corlas (Tracker); Steve LeBrun (Upward Dogg); Chris Caviezel (Orange Pacer) north of Snoqualmie Pass, near Huckleberry Saddle. Bottom: Chris Caviezel (Orange Pacer), Charles Cerveny (Fire Plug), Maureen Corlas (Tracker), Joel Mott (Good Deeds), Vivian Olsson, Lawrence Landauer (Bee Keeper). Photographs by Joel Mott.

