

The Hidden Side of Washington's Enchantments: Tips and Tales from a Wilderness Ranger

ANDREA JIMENEZ: Welcome everyone to the first of our lineup of family weekend events.

This is the Hidden Side of Washington's Enchantments.

We have Hannah Kiser from OREC presenting for us today.

She did a presentation for us a couple of weeks back on thru hiking, which was awesome.

We're really happy to have her back.

My name is Andrea Jimenez.

I'm the Program Coordinator here at Global Connections.

Yeah, Hannah, I'm going to pass it on to you.

HANNAH KISER: Awesome. This is a beautiful mountain goat, and I'll just

tell you a quick story about this really fast before I get started.

Once I had someone come up to me and asked me, what we shampooed the mountain goats with?

Giving a little bit of context, I used to work for the Forest Service in the Enchantments where we have these mountain goats.

Someone asked me, "What do you shampoo the mountain goats with?"

I was like, "This is not a petting zoo.

This is a wild animal that I do not shampoo."

Anyway, get lots of interesting responses.

But we will move on to introductions.

If you want to in the chat,

it actually might work better,

some people don't like unmuting themselves.

If you want to write your name in experience recreating with family, have you heard of the Enchantments or been to the Enchantments, and what you're hoping to get out of this?

If you don't want to write in the chat and you prefer to unmute yourself, then you can go ahead and speak now.

As you're writing your response in there, I can go.

I am Hannah Kiser.

I grew up recreating with my dad.

He took me when I was a really little kid, which is why I was inspired to give this on family weekend because to me, outdoor recreation is definitely a family event.

I worked as a ranger in the Enchantments in 2019, and I worked in a different district nearby in 2018.

I'm hoping to share with you guys a lot of the secrets behind the management of the wilderness, and what wilderness is, and how we take care of it, and how you can be safe, take care of it, and then use that knowledge to share with your friends and family to get outside more.

Awesome. Let me just read through these.

Oh, so a lot of people have not heard of the Enchantments.

This is a really, really popular spot in Washington, so I'm actually pretty surprised that a lot of you haven't, but that's okay because I've gotten into slide of the Enchantments.

This picture that you see in the upper left, that
is one of the classic rock climbing areas in the Enchantments.

It's just one of these love to that places near Leavenworth,

Washington, if you've heard of Leavenworth.

Big granite areas, lots of Alpine Lakes,

lots of mountain goats.

People really love it.

Someone says, "What do you mean by recreating with family?"

I mean, hiking, biking, rock-climbing,

just taking your family with you as you're doing these things

rather than going by yourself.

Sarah says, "Looking forward to seeing pretty pictures."

I have some pretty pictures.

What are the Enchantments?

For those of you who don't know,

it's an area in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests,

in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness.

There's about 40 miles of trails that are in what we designate as the Enchantments.

The most popular areas are Colchuck Lake.

If you look that Colchuck zone,

it's about a nine mile round-trip hike and 3,000 feet of elevation gain.

Then there is the core Enchantments.

That is really hard,

like somewhat hard to access.

You have to gain a ton of elevation up this pass.

It doesn't really have a trail in order to get to the core,

but that's the area that everyone wants to get into.

I would say the difficulty in general would be very difficult.

People somewhat underestimate the difficulty sometimes because they see like,

oh, it's a nine mile hike,

but 3,000 feet of elevation gain is quite a lot.

Also, a lot of this travel is not necessarily just like nice easy trail.

It's like big rocks,

you're having to follow a path by following cairns,

which are stacks of rocks sometimes.

Even though it is very difficult,

a lot of people do it,

but it is a physically strenuous area.

There's also the Snow Lakes zone,

which you can access for the same trail.

This is a really popular,

like 20 mile loop.

If you look at the picture,

there is where the Colchuck zone starts,

you hike to that lake.

This is Colchuck Lake.

Then up Aasgard Pass.

Then now we're in the yellow area through

all these other lakes down to Snow Lake and out,

that's a 20 mile loop.

It's extremely popular and you have to use a shuttle to do it.

The other areas, Eightmile Lakes and Caroline Lakes.

Those are a lot less popular,

but this entire area requires that you have an overnight permit to backpack in.

At this time, you only need a day's permit which you can fill out,

but the overnight permits have to be won in a lottery in order to visit.

This area is extremely popular, extremely beautiful,

but also extremely sensitive,

which is why we have these management measures.

For those of you who haven't heard the Enchantments before,

one of the main ways people do hear about it is on social media.

Maybe like based on the social media post,

post in the chat,

maybe like a short blurb,

or what you would be expecting your experience to be like when you visit Colchuck Lake,

or what you're expecting it to be like,

and maybe some things that you would like.

I would expect it to be like this,

but not like this.

Then let's have a guess of

how many people we think visit Colchuck Lake each day.

Someone saying, "Cold, freezing." Matt says, "Solitude,

beautiful, sunny, empty, 100 a day," Andrea says, "Fifty."

I'll give you guys maybe like another 20 seconds to put in your answers here.

High UV. Yeah, that guy is right.

Sarah says 200 a day. Are there wood chucks?

There are little chipmunks,

quite a lot. "Quiet, 200."

I'm going to tell you the number of people that I had seen on a Saturday.

I have an encounters book which is something where I

will write down like how many people were in the group and how many groups.

On a given Saturday,

you can see over 1,000.

What is that number make you feel like when I said that?

Yeah, that is a lot.

If you're not super familiar with public lands,

the National Parks Service does get quite busy.

Those areas are pretty accessible.

Six-foot distancing on trails, really great point.

This is a really dangerous job for my ranger friends this year

because we're not able to socially distance this way.

But that is a lot of people.

This area is only 20 miles of a 700 mile wilderness that five wilderness rangers patrol.

We spend probably 50 percent on our resources,

in just this 20 miles section because it is so, so busy.

Like someone asked earlier, is this a hard hike?

Heck, yes, this is super difficult.

I have stood at the top of Aasgard Pass,

which if you look at this picture,

there's the big beautiful mountain that's called Dragontail peak.

If you look on the left,

there looks like whitish pass where you can hike.

I've stood at the top of that,
which is the hardest part of the hike,
and seeing 600 people on a Saturday trying to
go from Colchuck over to Snow Lakes and do that 20 mile hike.
You have to start at like 4:00 AM in order to make it in daylight.

This area is super busy.

I want us to keep this in mind as we're working through this presentation,
what role does social media play and how we expect something to be,
and how it really is,
and what is our role as users and consumers of social media in portraying
things accurately and using it for education versus using it to portray like,
I had this beautiful day which you could still have,
but that's full of solitude?

Yeah, I'm proud of myself when I do a five-mile easy hike.

Yeah, that 20 mile hike beats you.

Yeah, person was good at either clipping or not taking photos of the crowd.

Absolutely. People will just try to take
the picture that they want to get and I crop people out of it.

It's interesting because you have to try really hard not to get people in these shots.

Why are we talking about this in family weekend?

Like I said before, outdoor recreation is something that I had done with my family.

Also, I think it's a really amazing experience
whenever you get to share something with family and friends.

Either you're discovering a new activity together
or sharing it with someone and you have more skills than they do.

But you also have a responsibility to make sure that everyone in your group is safe,
but also that you can take care of the place so that
future people can have that same experience getting to share it with someone else.

Also, Mother Nature is our family too,
so we should take care of her.

If we're not careful,
these areas that are so beautiful,
so beautiful that thousands of people want to come to
them everyday that they will not be here,
in the way that we want them to.

These mountain goats, their habitat will be destroyed.

They will not be able to live here,
and so we have a responsibility as
citizens to make sure that we take care of these places.

I'm really interested to see what your responses are here.

Take a moment and jot down
your definition or a few words to describe what you think wilderness means.

It's totally okay to be wrong because we do not get
education about public lands and wilderness in school.

I'm really interested to see what people's ideas are here.

"No electricity beyond batteries."

"Unsettled, undeveloped."

These are some good ideas.

"Wilderness is a land that used to be occupied by tribes
that were removed so that it would not be inhibited by people."

That Sarah, I am going to be talking about in a few slides,

so that is a really great point.

"Frank's home."

Yes, it is Frank's home.

"Take trash out with you,"

"Free of human influence."

These are great ideas.

Back in the mid 60s,

1964, the Wilderness Act was passed,

which was put into law how Federal Agencies

are supposed to manage areas that are deemed wilderness.

One of the people who was fighting for at the time he wrote this,

"I believe we have a profound fundamental need for areas of the Earth where we stand without our mechanisms that make us immediate masters over our environment."

As people were moving West,

they began to consume their entire environment,

cutting down so many trees,

we're using them to build railroads and establishments and all of this stuff,

and people would go to places like Yosemite and they would say,

wow, this area's so beautiful,

we should not allow it to be destroyed by human's consumption.

People came together and said,

we want to preserve some of these areas,

and that's how wilderness and public lands came about,

is this need to be like,

we cannot control how much we consume,

we need to set areas aside for the future when this areas
is aside where we are not just controlling our environment.

This is word verbage from the Wilderness Act itself.

It is a little bit antiquated,

"A wilderness, in contrast,

those areas where man and his works dominate is recognized as
an area where the Earth and its community of life are untrammeled,
undeveloped, natural, and provide
outstanding opportunities for solitude and recreation unconfined."

What does "untrammeled" mean?

Because I don't have an idea because this is an old word.

Abused, that's what Sarah's saying.

If you're somewhat altered,

not deprived of freedom of action or expression,

not restricted, did you Google that?

Untangled.

If you're familiar with horses,

you can hobble your horses so they can't get away,

and that's called trammeling.

To be untrammeled means that it's unrestricted,

so we're not restricting mother nature from running her course, so to speak.

When there's wildfire and wilderness,

we oftentimes will not go and put that

out in a way that we may have done if it wasn't non-wilderness area,

because fire is natural and it's going to run its course.

That's what we mean by untrammeled,

and I think this is a really interesting word and interesting one.

The other ones I think we have a better conception of undeveloped,

so we don't have buildings

and bridges and all of these developed things that characterize humanity.

Natural, these mountain goats,

look at this really cute baby right here,

is like key species in the area,

and so we want to keep the Enchantments natural,

we want to keep areas natural,

so we should do things that promote them continuing to be there in that way,

if some actions that we are doing are preventing them from doing that.

Then our standing opportunities for solitude,

this is interesting because how do you possibly measure or characterize solitude?

In recreation, people should have the ability to

go and just be out there however they like,

be able to do so spontaneously.

I'll just leave it there for right now.

These are our characteristics of wilderness that we're going to be thinking about.

Wilderness is something where,

as I've been working in this field,

it's never easy, it's always super hard,

because these are often at odds with each other

when we're thinking about how do we maximize public land use,

so people care about wilderness and they want to vote to preserve it,

while also relying on these.

Your brain's going to hurt a little bit.

Anne says, "Are you one of those seasonal workers for the park service?"

I worked as a wilderness ranger for the US Forest Service,
that bear week was awesome, I agree.

This is what I'm going to touch on what Sarah had to say,
some beef with wilderness management.

Our public lands were not discovered by us.

They are previously inhabited by native peoples in the narrative
that is in the Wilderness Act and in many outdoor spaces,
often ignores the history and culture of indigenous people who lived on these lands,
and who continue to live in reservations around the area.

These people, they lived with their environment in harmony for many years,
they did not, in the Wilderness Act,
it says that wilderness is an area where man is a visitor and should not remain,
but that totally goes against how indigenous people
lived in harmony with these places for thousands of years.

I think it's important to be mindful of this narrative,
and this, I've actually got a link to this site, it's called nativeland.ca,
where you can look up the area that you're going to be recreating and it will
tell you about the treaties and about the tribe that used to live there,
and I think it's a great way to be more knowledgeable about this.

Then when thinking about social media use also,
when you're tagging places,
you can tag them,
the tribe that used to be there,
and I don't mean to do this,

it's just a token.

You really should be thinking about
your role in the outdoors and people who used to live there,
and I know that wilderness management and some Ellen T,
which we'll talk about in a little bit,
seems to skirt this sometimes,
I just want to bring some awareness to it before you move on.

Wilderness, if you had been hiking before and you've
seen one of these signs like in the picture to the left,
Henry M Jackson Wilderness,
that's how you know you are in a wilderness area,
you enter it by seeing this sign,
you can also find them on maps, the boundary.

If you look at this picture of Washington State, the area's in gray,
that's national forest land,
and within national forest land,
there are areas that are designated in wilderness.

What makes something designatable by wilderness?

I think this is a little wishy-washy because I've been in some areas of
national forest that I think give me more solitude and are just as beautiful,
but there are areas that are determined to have resources and be so
pristine and wonderful that they're worthy of protecting,
and there's more and more wilderness areas,
I don't know if I would say each year,
but over time, what we are gaining more wilderness areas.

These ones in black, Washington has a lot.

The district that I worked on,

we had Alpine Lakes,

Henry M, and Glacier Peak Wilderness.

We had three wilderness areas and each of

them are managed a little bit differently because they

each have different characteristics.

In a nutshell, before we move a little bit

forward and start working with this idea of wilderness,

is here's our nutshell understanding as we're going forward.

It's managed to preserve wilderness character.

Those four things we talked about,

but also provide access to the public.

If we don't provide access to the public,

they're not going to care about wilderness and they're going to say,

we don't want to vote for this to be a thing,

and then we lose our wilderness.

We do need to manage the public and our ability to go and use it.

Untrammelled, Mother Nature's the boss.

That means we have a more or less hands-off approach to managing wilderness herself.

Natural, I feel like that is pretty self-explanatory. No developments.

That's where this minimal tool concept comes in.

If you've ever seen work crews,

you're not allowed to use chainsaws,

power drills, like someone said,

and nothing beyond batteries.

When we're managing these areas,
we use really traditional tools and ways to clear the trails and no permanent structures.

Also, I think that thinking about wilderness
requires you to have a little bit change in perspective.

While we do want the public to see the value of wilderness,
wilderness is in and of itself, not about you.

It is about itself,
it is about preserving something because it is worth preserving,
and I think that's important to think when you think, "Well,
I really want to go to this area everybody goes to,
and I want to get this snapshot on my social media,
and I want to do this."

Thinking about yourself in the broader scheme of all of that.

Good comment by KT.

"There was a toilet sign in a previous slide, is it pointing
to a toilet or is it a trail park toilet?"

It was pointing to the toilet,
but I think you're starting to bring up,
you say you don't want anything developed and you want to be natural,
but yet there's toilet signs, so what's up with that?

That's getting into the meat of what we're going to talk about.

Leave No Trace is an organization that puts together principles that are
supposed to help guide your behavior when you're outside so that you can be safe.

You can make sure that you're leaving the least impact
possible to leave these places nice so that we can protect Frank.

Nine out of 10 people in the outdoors are uninformed about their impacts and that is shocking, but it's true.

Think nine out of 10 people, there's 1,000 people at Colchuck Lake on a Saturday, that's bad news if none of those people know you should pack out your trash. But we do not do a great job in this country of educating people about leaving no trace and so if you don't know about this, it is not your fault.

We're going to learn about that today so that you can hopefully share the love, leave no trace, with people around you, family, your friends, and then you can go out and feel good about being in the wilderness.

We're going to work through these principles.

The first being know before you go.

There's so much to know.

The Internet is great.

You can call local ranger districts and websites for accurate, up-to-date information.

Sometimes, social media is not the best place to rely for your up-to-date information.

Those websites directly are great.

You can call and talk to an actual ranger.

I love talking to the public and so that's what I recommend.

But there are so many questions that you should be asking yourself.

I think a lot of times, you were like,

I want to go on a spontaneous adventure.

But if you're being really responsible,

you need to think through things first.

Is there a permit required for day overnight use? Are there fees?

How do I park?

Is there self-service?

Can I bring my dog?

Can I not bring my dog?

How many people are allowed to be there? How far is it?

Do I need to bring water? Do I need to bring something to purify my water?

How long is it probably going to take?

What's the weather look like?

The weather is different in the mountains than it is in the city,

so I need to be looking at that direct weather.

Do I have everything I need just in case?

This is a lot of thought that's going in before you're even getting to the trail head.

Luckily, there's lots of good info online and all these different pictures around

the sides are different agencies that provide outdoor recreation opportunities.

Kamiak Butte, if you're from Pulman,

managed by the County National Park Service like the North Cascades and Mount Rainier,

Forest Service, which is the organization that I work for and

oversees the National Forests.

There's lots of state parks in Washington as well, Fish and Wildlife.

There's many more. These are the main ones that jump out to me when I'm thinking

about these public land institutions.

If you are getting out,

you should probably think about grabbing all of

these essentials because if there's for some reason,

you don't have something of this and something happens to you, likely,
you're going to have to be way more impactful on the outdoors than otherwise.
Say something happens and you have to end up staying the night out,
but you don't have you don't have a jacket or any of the stuff.
Maybe you're having to like,
"I need to cut down these branches in order to make myself a bed and stay warm."
But if you bring all the things that you need to rely just on yourself,
then you're less likely to have to pull from the environment to do that.
Also, it just keeps you safe and happy and if you're safe and happy when you're outside,
then you're more likely to go and enjoy it again.
I think these are pretty self-explanatory,
but you want to know something about navigation and probably have a map with you.
So many people I meet,
they have no idea where they're going.
They just saw Colchuck Lake on Instagram and
they don't realize the name of the trail is called the Stewart Lake trail.
They end up at Stewart Lake and they think they were at Colchuck Lake,
and they wonder why doesn't look the same as Instagram.
Just baseline navigation is really important.
Someone mentioned high UV.
You're absolutely right.
In the [inaudible] , you're at 8,000 feet,
you need to have UV protection.
Also, it gets way colder in the mountains than it does down in
Leavenworth or Wenatchee a swing of over 50 degrees sometimes.
So having a warm jacket,

gloves, hat, thing like that.

A headlamp is really useful if your trip is taking you way longer.

First aid kit and a little bit of knowledge about how to use it. Fire starter.

This one, you probably should have

this so that you do not die if something bad were to happen.

But also in many areas like the Enchantments,

you are not supposed to have a fire.

I would say you should suffer before you start a fire.

But I also don't want you to die,

so you can bring your fire starter.

A multi-tool, water,

and a purifier if you think that you will drink all of your water,

because as we're going to learn later,

there's a lot of poop around in the Enchantments,

and a lot of busy places and so you're going to want to purify that water.

Food because hiking makes you hungry and an emergency shelter,

something is set up if the bad weather comes in

or you are forced to spend the night outside.

Say you roll your ankle and you can't make it back or something like that.

Our second principle is travel and camp on durable surfaces.

What do we think is a durable surface?

Let's put some things in the chat.

What does it mean to be durable?

"Not slanting or slippery."

"Not sliding slope."

All right, good ideas.

"Sturdy." "Concrete foundation."

Interesting. "Preferably not plant covered."

Yes, Sarah. Durable surface is one

that you can walk on it a bunch and no one's going to know.

It's going to put up with the abuse that you put on it.

An example of a really durable surface,

who has got an example in the chat of good durable surfaces?

Or maybe an awesome not durable surfaces?

Sarah already talking about one plants.

"Rock slab." Snow and rock

are really great examples of durable surfaces because you can walk on it, and walk on it,

and walk on it,

and it's not going to damage anything underneath.

Which is really great, and great for the Enchantments is we have tons of rock.

It's characterizing features, tons of granite.

Unfortunately, people don't like to walk on the rocks for some reason,

and so if you look at the right,

instead of walking on the rocks,

people walk off to the side where it's muddy and they end up widening this trail.

Over time, what ends up happening is it ends up

eroding away that slope and destroying a lot

of the really sensitive vegetation to the point where you've just got mineral soil left.

Once you've just gotten mineral soil,

it's really hard to re-establish those delicate plants,

plus they have a really short growing season.

When you are walking,
it seems like something that like,
why should I have to think about where I'm walking?
But you want to make sure you're staying on trails,
things that are already impacted,
or if you have a choice of somewhere to walk,
you're walking on something that you're not going to destroy.

It's like getting slapped in the face.

If you get slapped in the face once,
it probably stings a little bit,
but it doesn't hurt that bad.

But imagine if you got slapped in the face a thousand times like the
thousand hikers that are walking up to Colchuck Lake.

That's probably going to hurt really bad.

Yes, seriously, so no thank you.

It's not just your footstep when you're walking on this sensitive vegetation,
it's thousands of footsteps.

I don't think I have given the statistic yet, but in 2018,
there were 47,000 people who visited the Enchantments.

That is a lot of people and that's a lot of slaps in the face.

When you're just walking around,
you want to make sure that you're staying on a trail,
and if you want to get off the trail,
just pretend like this sensitive vegetation is lava,
and like jump from rock to rock

because it's pretty easy in Enchantments, there's lots of rocks.

Then we're going to get on start talking about camping.

Look at this picture in the center,

do you guys think that this is a good place to put a town or a bad place and why?

I'm making you participate a lot,

because I think it's more fun.

Because I teach high school and that's what I do.

Andrea said she think it's bad,

why do you think it's bad, Andrea?

"Grass." Grass is pretty durable when we think about grass in our backyard, need water?

Grass is pretty good when we think about our backyard because that's pretty thick.

Also, the growing seasons really long,

and not that many people are setting up their tent.

But imagine if every single night for six months someone was

walking the same path in your yard and setting up their tents, sitting on it.

It probably would end up dying and would make a big, ugly dirt patch.

Actually, while this looks like a really beautiful campsite,

it's actually not a great one because they're camped on a meadow.

It's hard to see that these plants are super delicate,

and so what's going to happen if someone's going to put

their tent there and someone else is going to see it and go,

"I can't wait for that person to move because that's a great spot."

They're going to move, and then the next people are going to come in and they're

going to continue walking over that area,

and it's eventually going to become just a giant dirt patch,

and it's going to destroy the meadow that's there.

That's unfortunate because meadows are really gorgeous.

But if you look out in the meadow and all you see is a bunch of dirt patches, you've ruined the beauty there.

It's hard to state how delicate these plants are, but their growing season in some areas is about three months, and so they have very little time to grow, and so if you damage them, they're really not going to be able to come back.

Also, there are plenty of places to camp besides this.

This is just what they want because it was beautiful, so I had to move them off.

Here's some good tips for you for picking great campsites if you do go backpacking.

You want to ask yourself, is it safe because we care about you. Is it durable?

Which we talked about.

Is it far from water in close to bathroom options and can others see me?

Is it safe you want to make sure that you're not in a flood plain.

You're not somewhere where if there's a freak storm,

it's going to flood and you're going to be in trouble.

You don't want to camp in a wash. You also want to look above you.

Are there dead trees?

Are there hanging branches that could fall if it was really windy? Is it durable?

Setting up your tent on rock is probably the best thing that you can do.

You're probably thinking, wow, that doesn't sound very comfortable,

but sleeping pads are really great these days.

I actually really like sleeping on rocks, bare dirt,

which is just like the mineral soil and forest [inaudible] ,

which is like those pine needles and stuff.

Those are really great durable surfaces to camp on.

Also, places where it's really clear other people
have camped before because it is so impacted.

If it looks like someone's camped before and it looks like they camped on meadow,
then I would not camp there.

But if it somewhere where it's just dirt,

so in this picture, you're like,

okay, this is clearly a campsite and I'm not going to
be impacting it more, it's already dirt.

Then you don't want to be super close to water in terms of right next to the water,
but you do want to have a water option for yourself.

You want it to be close to somewhere where if

you need to dig your cat hole, you can do so,

because if you get into a bad situation and there was no good nearby,

then you're probably going to have an emergency situation

that's not going to be good for the water quality in the area.

Then can others see me?

You don't want to be far from the trail because

as you're hiking along and enjoying your solitude,

you don't want to be able to look over and be like, "Wow,

there is everyone and their mother,

which I'm glad everyone's families are getting out.

But now I see them all camped and that's not great."

Here's some not-so-great campsites,

and we're all guilty of choosing less than ideal camps,

at least I know that I am,
because it's not always straightforward,
that's what I said about wilderness.

It's never like here's these criteria and this is what makes it perfect.
Let's get some ideas in the chat of things that we
think are not great about the top picture and the bottom picture,
and you can talk about things we haven't talked about yet,
because there's a lot to talk about.

Impacts on the water body.

The top picture is really,
really close to the water.

In most places we'll tell you,
no camping within 200 feet,
which is about 80 paces.

That's because as you're in your camp,
you're making food, you're brushing your teeth,
you're doing things and it's really likely
that those things are going to get into the water.

These Alpine lakes are very sensitive
to changes in nutrients and chemicals and the fish that live there.

If you've got, like I said,
1,000 people visiting Colchuck Lake and
there's not a thousand people camping there because we have overnight permits,
but all of those places are constantly full all season.

If you've got people doing this all season,

the cumulative effect is that that lake is full of
toothpaste water and chunks of mountain house and other stuff like that.

You want to be far enough away from the water so
the inevitable impacts that you will have are not going to be there.

Someone else is saying the bottom picture is a fire pit.

No fires, please.

They both have a fire pit.

We're going to talk about fires in couple of slides,
but there's no fires in a lot of places because that's what the environment
uses to recycle minerals and stuff so that we can restore that vegetation.

The fire pit is not great.

Also the below fire pit is in a meadow and
it takes decades for fires in meadows to be recovered.

It's really hard for me to naturalize the area which means like,

I'm thrown all this stuff away,

I'm dispersing the ash

once it's out and I'm trying to make it look like nothing ever happened there,

it's really hard in a meadow,

plus, that was a huge firing.

This was all a family, I think,

on the bottom one,

but if they were at the same party,

that's like way too close.

I don't go to the wilderness to camp that close to somebody and it was in a huge meadow.

Anyone who walks into this meadow immediately sees like, this caravan people.

It's sometimes hard to know if your campsite is good or

not and so I think it's good to see a few examples.

You want to make sure you're not close to the bodies of water,

you don't want to be on those sensitive places of vegetation,

you want to know if you can have a fire or not.

These are good things to keep in mind.

This is my favorite topic of all time,

as a ranger you are constantly talking about poop.

Dispose of waste properly,

pack it in and pack it out,

someone mentioned that before.

If you've ever wondered, if you've ever seen a ranger wondered why they carry a shovel,

it's because of poop.

In 2019, we buried nearly 800 piles of poop which is really gross.

If you look at the bottom picture,

this is what ends up happening, people aren't prepared,

they don't know what's going on and so they are like,

"I didn't think I'll have to go to the bathroom."

Then you end up with all these toilet paper blooms.

Certainly not something that you're hoping

to see and definitely not something that's posted on

social media when you think about going out on a nice hike.

The upper picture is what we call a [inaudible] or a backcountry toilet.

It's trying to keep it looking natural.

Then because the Enchantments have a lot of granite,

you can't actually bury your waste in a lot of areas there and so we have to put it

in these fiberglass containers that we fly out with helicopters.

That's a good link.

Under this umbrella as well biodegradable things are also not great in water, so you don't want to be washing your dishes or your hair, anything in water.

It's only biodegradable once it is in the dirt, so that's a common misconception that people have.

Keep your lakes blue,

that's why people come to the Enchantments.

Don't do your business within 80 paces of water sources, camps or trails and dig

a cat hole if you have to go to the bathroom or find one to of these great toilets.

Some crappy math. In 2018,

as I said, we had nearly 47,000 visitors in the Enchantments and that is a lot of crap.

We have a ton of these toilets that we are digging and the ones they're called vaults, like you saw on this slide, this is called a vault.

Where does all of that go?

We are running out of space to build pit toilets in the Enchantments, which means we are having to put in more and more of these vault toilets.

But as we do, think about what we talked about wilderness and how we said it needs to be managed in a way where we don't have impacts for man,

but now, here we are having to fly helicopters into the wilderness, land at the lake so that we can pick up.

I think this say they just flew a few weeks ago,

67,000 pounds of human waste.

That is an absolute extreme measure that has to be taken in order for us to try to preserve this area.

I don't even want to do water testing here to know what the impact is.

This is just a great example I think when were thinking about how do we preserve wilderness, we don't want it just be full of poop but how, at the same time, we're having to fly a helicopter in here and that goes a lot against wilderness and solitude.

Some interesting things to somehow battle with in your mind.

Our next principle, leave what you find, also means leave it how you found it.

A lot of people like to leave their mark and vandalize which is not so great because wilderness is about wilderness, not about you.

You should not leave your mark.

You should pack out trash if you see it, but I understand that it's COVID times, so you can leave that to the rangers, it's like your own level of comfort.

Here's an interesting question.

If you find an arrowhead or cultural artifact, should you take it or bring it back to a ranger station or do something else?

"Leave it for someone else to discover."

"Leave it and take a picture."

A lot of times, the archaeologists who worked at the Rangers districts, they know that those things are there, but they leave them there because it's in context.

This artifact should be where it was found

because it tells us a broader story about the area.

They have those GPS tag and stuff like that,

so you should definitely not bring into your ranger station.

You can take a picture, you can get

a GPS coordinate and you can take it back and be like, "Hey, I found this thing."

They might already know about it,

but if they don't, you just helped them out,

and now they have another piece to the puzzle of

learning about the cultural history of the area.

This is something that I hear people

ask sometimes and so I thought it would be fun to throw in there.

All right. Reduce campfire impacts.

Why no campfires?

Most of the rules that we have are not just because

we want to control people and we want to write tickets,

it has a real reason in supporting wilderness principles.

Like I said before, these areas,

the growing season is super short.

In the upper core,

it's like probably two or three months.

That is a such a short season.

So how well do you think a five foot tall larch is?

A larch is a like a pine tree that is deciduous,

so it has green pine needles in

the summer and then in the fall, they turn orange and they fall off.

It's something that's very spectacular in the Enchantments.

But even just like a five-foot tree that would be at like 8,000 feet.

How old do you think it could be;

a 150 years old, 80 years old?

I don't know the exact answer but you're right.

It's way older than a five-foot tree that you

planted when you were a kid and now it's huge in your backyard.

Oh no, this advanced.

So we don't want to be cutting those things down,

and that would, once it does die,

it ends up going back into the ecosystem and

creating soil that can promote vegetation growth.

We having all this vegetation law,

so obviously that's something that we really want.

We need that decaying matter.

So the reason we have no campfires is because if every single person who's camping there,

which is I think there's 60 people per day in the core,

for six months and all of them are having a fire

each day of their trip, there'd be no wood left.

That is why we often have no campfires at these lakes or at certain elevations.

Here's a tip though, if you do go back tracking somewhere other than Enchantments,

bring a big compacter bag with you because

you can just scoop up a ton of water in a creek

nearby and then just pour it all over this campfire like my mentee ranger was doing.

It takes about 9-12 gallons of water to put out a fire that's about as big as your arms.

That's a lot more water than you're probably thinking,
and so bringing that bag can really help you to actually reach and being able to do that.

Someone says, "We should cut it down to count the rings."

No, you should cut it down.

I could site you if you cut them down.

I've seen that before and it really hurts
my heart. Hopefully it was a joke here.

Respect wildlife.

We already talked about Frank,

but also, there's a species called the Ptarmigan.

They is sort of a hallmark species for this area.

With the increased use in the Enchantments in '70,

I think even in the '70s they had dogs there still,
and the Ptarmigan started to disappear, which is really sad.

So the Forest Service made a decision;

okay, we're going to prohibit dogs.

We can't prohibit people from coming at all because it's public land,
but we can prohibit dogs and reduce the impact in that way.

The Ptarmigan population has recovered.

I've actually seen them.

They're so cute.

They blend in with
their environment during the summer but then as it gets cold, they turn white.

So it's really, really unique and their babies are really adorable.

By prohibiting dogs, we're able to keep the wilderness
natural and that the species that are there are continuing to be there.

Let's see how we're doing on time.

In the chat, "what are some other ways we think that we can respect wildlife to protect ourselves and other critters?"

Stay away from them.

Yeah. There was a Instagram trend that was called #ColchuckSnowWhite, which there's these birds that are pretty aggressive.

They get fed and people would feed them so that they would swoop down and eat out their hand and they would get a video of it.

That was a huge thing on Instagram.

That's horrible because you don't want to be feeding them.

People will feed the chipmunks and they get very large and fat.

What do you think happens to these chipmunks once people are gone for six months of the year.

Now they haven't been spending their time hiding food, and I don't know if they can live off their fat stores.

They are pretty fat but that's not natural.

That's not what they ought to be doing.

So don't feed them.

Also, taking care of your own foods, so making sure it's stowed in your pack.

"Don't risk your own life for a selfie." That is a good point.

Making sure that you're protecting your food and all of your smellable items is another great way, not getting too close.

There was someone who was gored in

Olympic National Park for wanting to pet a mountain goat.

It's not a petting zoo. These are wild animals.

Not even if it's a really good selfie, still not worth it.

Lastly, be considerate of others.

A lot of people have issues,

maybe putting wilderness before themselves,

so this one kind of takes care of that if you're more person-centric

because you can focus on not interfering with other people.

So if don't dispose off your waste properly,

you're not really being considerate to others because someone's going to see that too.

This is people who are going to visit tomorrow and next week and next year,

but also the generations who aren't born yet.

It's important to respect the rules,

not for the sake of the rules, but because, like,

we talked about how they promote this protection of wilderness,

and they help keep us safe and they help keep the areas open.

A few of these that I often see is people who walk down the trail

and they're blasting music on their boombox and their Bluetooth speaker.

So do we think that that

is being considerate of others and is in line with wilderness principles?

I see Matt shaking his head, no.

You can always put that music in your ears.

But other people maybe came out for solitude,

so they're not appreciating your music choice.

Then also, this is something that I write a lot of citations for;

should you camp without a permit?

No, you should not because a lot of people

enter this lottery for years and years and years before they're able to get one.

They follow the rules and it can be upsetting when you're willing to risk it and break the rules while

other people are not trying to because while you're not really getting a wilderness experience when there's 1,000 people at ColChuck Lake, if you get one of those overnight permits and you're up in the core, the core is a pretty big area.

So if you try, you really can feel

solitude when you're up there if you get an overnight permit.

So it's important to respect that for others as well because you would want the same.

I hope that you saw as we worked through this that there is this real balance between wilderness principles and in public use, when we think about what wilderness means.

So maybe in the chat,

you could put in a question or something that you notice.

Why do you have a toilet sign if you said that the area needs to be undeveloped, like something along that line that you're wondering.

Like, how is this allowed given this or what information I have, if that makes sense.

So maybe a question you have about

some management practice and how that practice is made.

I'm kind of just a boots-on-the-ground person when I work for the Forest Service about we are privy to a lot of this logic that goes behind the scenes.

Anne, can you elaborate on your question?

ANNE: There's always the thing about do

you tell people where these hidden treasures are or not.

HANNAH KISER: Right. I think that it's

good practice not necessarily to tag your location if you're in a really pristine place,

like if you get a great camp site or something,

because you don't want people to go exactly to that place.

You could say, "Hey, I went to Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest and it was awesome."

Then people can go enjoy the forest because there are tons of trails.

But you're right, there are these areas that are real gems and they get loved to death.

How is social media to blame and how and is tagging it to blame for that?

I think that is a really great point,

because I think that social media promotes equity in the outdoors in

some ways because some people don't have

access and don't have family to show them these things.

But at the same time,

people go up just to get their Instagram selfie and they turn around.

That's a good question and it's one that's really hard to answer.

Because something else that we've talked about is,

do we just sacrifice certain areas?

The Enchantments is to be sacrificed because it's already so popular,

but we're not going to talk about these areas because we need to keep something nice.

But then, that also doesn't sit well for other reasons.

I think you're grasping, this is hard.

How many people are rescued by helicopter up there a year?

This is a good question. A lot.

I think over Fourth of July weekend, we had

three or four emergency protocols put into place for like a missing hiker,

someone who rolled their ankle really badly and who's having trouble getting out.

That really states the importance of plan ahead and prepare,

because if you have extra food and a shelter and you roll your ankle,

you can stay overnight and get out safely.

Versus maybe you freak out and push the SOS button,

and then a helicopter has to come in and rescue you or a crew has to come in,

a big crew that's going to trample a bunch of stuff and be really impactful.

If you have other questions, you can unmute or put them in the chat.

I've got some on this slide as well.

Why do we have log bridges over streams?

Why do we have toilets?

Those are developments.

It's that balancing act of,

if we didn't have toilets,

the poop would be a huge problem.

So we have to do something.

You have to give somewhere.

If we don't have a log bridge,

then people are going to be walking in the stream.

If that stream is one stream that supports a red salmon,

it's a really important species.

Maybe we do have that log bridge because it's developed.

But that is less important than preserving

the naturalness of the habitat for the salmon that's spawning.

Then what if an area is loved to death,

like the Enchantments, should we have permits?

We are required by law to provide solitude.

Right now, in the Enchantments, that's not happening.

So we have to have permits,

in one way of thinking,

in order to try to preserve that or at least work towards preserving that.

Matt says they use permits.

I'm interested in what you guys think.

You probably want to come here and now you're like,

"Wow, it's so beautiful."

But a thousand people at Colchuck,

they have day-use permits on the weekends.

People get really up in arms about that

because they think about it's my right to be there.

This is a public and it's a natural space,

but at the same time,

we are not able to provide solitude for people in doing that.

Then why have trails?

What would happen if we didn't have trails?

We would have a lot of trails that were not official and

not maintained or people wouldn't go

out and enjoy areas and then they wouldn't see the point.

This is one of our wrap-up slides.

Stay safe and practice outdoor stewardship.

Hopefully, you're taking some of this information that you've learned

here and you can use it to educate others.

It's way more useful to educate others by using the resource,

like, "See how beautiful this is?"

But when you do this,

think about the impact of your garbage or the impact of having that fire,

rather than saying, "Well,

the rule says," blah, blah, blah.

I've had to write a lot of citations.

Sometimes people will actually thank me when I'm done citing them

because I helped them see what their impact was doing.

Maybe they're also just scared.

I don't know. I'm not a very intimidating person.

But instead of saying,

"Hey, this is the rule. You broke the rule.

Here's your citation."

When you're talking with family, friends,

or even when you're just out,

and you see someone doing something wrong,

it can be nerve-racking,

but that's a good way to be able to talk to people.

Because, you want to know the truth of who's going to save our wilderness areas?

It's not me. It's not wilderness rangers.

It's users, users that become educated and

hold others accountable for practicing leave-no-trace.

Because there's no way that I can contact that many people.

Last year, wilderness rangers contacted,

I think, 11,000 people of the 47,000 that visited.

So we are not contacting enough people.

When nine out of 10 people don't know how to reduce their impacts in the outdoors, those numbers are pretty grim.

So you guys have the power.

It's up to you.

Some good actionable items are being prepared and hone your outdoor skills, know how to set up your tent and that kind of thing, know how to use those wilderness first aid skills, educate others around you and seek out best practices.

In the Enchantments, you can use a toilet to go to the bathroom, but in some areas, you have to use a blue bag and you have to do other things.

So it's important to find out what the specific leave-no-trace measures are in those areas.

Then use social media responsibly.

I think we saw, in that first post, how that was maybe not true.

Social media can be a great tool for education.

I went to Colchuck Lake and I saw all this toilet paper, and have a picture of it.

Make sure that you're packing that out or make sure that you are using a pee rag, make sure that you're doing something so we don't have to see this.

I think social media can be used for good instead of putting on this picture of everything's perfect and pretty and solitude and nothing's wrong.

Then I think it's important to challenge our perspective from time to time and evaluate our personal choices.

Everyone wants to go to the Enchantments,
but maybe we should take a step back and think,
maybe I should go somewhere else.

Maybe I don't need to see it.

Maybe I don't need that selfie.

Maybe I can go somewhere less busy,

maybe that is a good choice for me,

or maybe I should go on a Wednesday when it's not busy,

instead of going on a Saturday when I know a lot of people are going to be there.

Local hiking spots, such a good point, Erin.

Because then you're also reducing your impact because you're not driving hours and hours.

Someone said, "I'd like someone to give me

a virtual hike video so I don't have to walk there to

enjoy the view nor do I have to challenge my skills."

You know what, that's probably out there for you, KT.

Here's some resources.

I think I can share this presentation with you all if you're interested.

I can put my e-mail in the chat and you can e-mail me if you want it,

and then I can send you the link.

But if you want to get involved and you're in Pulman,

UREC programming with outdoor rec center, we have Eco-Adventures.

We have one next Saturday on Moscow Mountain where we're doing some trail building,

I think, or some kind of trail work.

Also, all overnight adventures have an LNT component.

It's great to learn this stuff online,

but sometimes putting that stuff into practice and seeing how it works when you're really out there is really useful.

I know COVID's made things weird,

but look for a calendar in the spring.

Washington Trails Association does a lot with volunteer crew.

So if you want to learn how to cross cut,

if you want to just go work with them,

and they do stuff all over the State of Washington, you can do that.

Most Ranger districts need and want volunteers,

so you can go to [volunteer.gov](https://www.volunteer.gov).

You can do internships where you can do more of this stuff.

There's lots of ways to get involved.

Also, just educating friends and family.

Then for learning more, LNT and Native Land. All right.

What is your takeaway?

What's one thing that you feel like you can commit to doing to preserve our wild places?

Sorry. I'm right on the cusp here.

I'll actually put my e-mail,

if you have any questions about anything related to this, actually.

"Not take any pets with me."

Even when they are allowed,

pets are pretty impactful.

I just recently went hiking with a friend and she brought

her dogs and I could not believe how impactful they were.

"Encouraging land managers to implement days-use permits,

I feel that's necessary."

Yeah. This is interesting because,
if maybe you're familiar with the federal government,
things move somewhat slowly sometimes when there's that much bureaucracy involved.

So even though we've been collecting a lot of data to show, look,
we're not upholding solitude,
it takes a really long time for that to get put into an actual practice.

It all takes a lot of education and stuff too.

I feel you on that, Matt.

"Don't go there. I don't have enough skills to."

That's a great point, Katie.

I've seen people on the top of Aasgard Pass,
which is a very steep trail-less way to go from Colchuck to the upper basin.

They have a little backpack that's plastic and clear and it's got maybe a jacket in it.

It was 06:30 PM and she was like,

"I'm going to all the way through," like the whole 20 miles.

She had only gone, I'm not even sure, six or seven.

I was like, "I think you ought to turn around.

It doesn't look like you have the things to stay out.

It's going to get dark soon."

She was like, "I've done this plenty of times. I know what I'm doing."

People often are not prepared and they don't have
the skills or they underestimate how difficult or how hard it is.

I don't mean to say that to scare people away,
but you do need to be prepared when you go
out on these things so that you can take care of yourself.

I'm sure that you would be like enough skills to do the hiking
to Colchuck Lake.

But I think it is wise to choose places that are less busy as well and be
responsible with how you're sharing them on
social media and how you're taking care of them when you're there.

All right. Special thanks to
the Wenatchee River Ranger District and the friends of the Enchantments.
They gave me photos and data and they helped raise me to a ranger.

Also, I want to say that the things I talked about in
this presentation are the reflective of my own thoughts.

I'm not speaking for the Forest Service or for friends of the Enchantments here.

But LNT and all this is
a best practice and how we make decisions about wilderness management.