

Epic Trails in the Glacier Peak Wilderness

Washington TRAILS

A Publication of Washington Trails Association

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Jul+Aug 2014

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“Lightning Bill” Moves From Goat Peak to Leecher Lookout

OKANOGAN-WENATCHEE NATIONAL FOREST – Those hoping to catch a glimpse of U.S. Forest Service lookout legend “Lightning Bill” Austin will find him in a new spot this year. After a 19-year tenure at Goat Peak in Mazama, Austin has been reassigned to the Leecher Mountain Lookout southeast of Twisp. The move comes amid a shrinking Forest Service budget and shifting firefighting resources.

Austin, who lives in Bridgeport when he’s not watching for forest fires, is the only full-time seasonal fire lookout remaining in the Methow Valley Ranger District. But that’s not his only claim to fame. During his time at the Goat Peak Lookout, Austin earned a cult following for personally greeting many of the lookout’s 2,000 visitors each summer and inviting hikers inside during lightning storms. He especially loved giving tours to children. Over time, he arguably became as much of a tourist attraction as the lookout itself and now stays in touch with his so-called fan club via a popular Facebook page.

As of mid-June, Austin has settled into the Leecher Mountain Lookout and is ready for visitors. Connect with him and learn more about his life in the lookout at facebook.com/lightningbill.



Olympic National Forest: Which Roads Do You Use?

OLYMPIC NATIONAL FOREST – With more than 2,000 miles of roads and a dwindling maintenance budget, Olympic National Forest (ONF) has embarked on an effort to identify the minimum road system needed for the forest—and forestry officials want your help.

ONF is holding multiple open houses around the Olympic Peninsula this summer to ask hikers and other forest visitors which areas and roads they use most, as well as what they do there. The answers will help determine which roads in the forest will stay open and which will get closed or decommissioned.

If you can’t make it to a meeting, you can still chime in online. Visit ONF’s website and participate in their electronic questionnaire, or check out their interactive mapping tool that allows you to highlight roads and special places that are important to you.

WTA will be following this process and keeping you up to date as it develops. Get more info at wta.org/onfroads.

Attend an Olympic National Forest open house in your community and share what’s important to you.

- July 17 – Port Townsend**
Port Townsend Community Center
- July 30 – Quinalt**
Quinalt Ranger Station
- August 19 – Shelton**
Shelton Civic Center
- August 21 – Aberdeen**
Rotary Log Pavilion
- August 27 – Olympia**
ONF Supervisor’s Office