



**SIERRA  
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# Loo Wit Rumblings

**Environment, Education, Conservation & Events for Southwest Washington**



## **February 16 Member Program features Cross-Country Cyclist**

On a long distance bicycle adventure, you experience just about everything. Just ask Tom Baltes of Camas, who will present Loo Wit's member program on **February 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m.** at the downtown Vancouver library in the Columbia Room (ground floor).

During December and January, Tom pedaled the Adventure Cycling Association's Southern Tier bike route, which stretches more than 2,500 miles from San Diego, CA to San Augustine, FL. Tom will share highlights of the Southern Tier and also some from his 2014 Northern Tier ride (Anacortes, WA to Bar Harbor, ME).

Tom also enjoys walking and hiking, and says "To be honest, I don't consider myself an accomplished or avid biker, as walking and hiking are my most enduring passions and will likely remain so."

Backpacking the Pacific Crest Trail across Oregon and Washington is next on his "to-do" list.

Baltes is a Minnesota native and graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. His 22-year military career included work on B-52 and B-1 bombers around the world. He and his wife Louise are both retired lieutenant colonels.

Join us on February 16<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) to meet Tom and share his adventure!



*Photos show Tom at the start and finish of both the Southern tier (top 2 photos) and Northern tier (bottom two photos). Photos by Tom Baltes*

## ***Loo Wit Political Committee Seeks New Members***

No question, politics was wild and wacky in 2016. Fortunately, 2017 looks to be more low-key with the focus on local races.

If you have an interest in politics, Loo Wit asks for your help. At the end of 2016, two longtime members of our political committee (“polcom”) stepped down after many years of service. The polcom is an important facet of Loo Wit’s work in seeking to endorse and elect environmentally friendly candidates. On tap this year will be races for city council, Vancouver mayor and Port commission.

To ask questions and get detailed info, please contact Loo Wit chair Mark Leed ([markleed02@gmail.com](mailto:markleed02@gmail.com)) or Lehman Holder ([tripsguy@aol.com](mailto:tripsguy@aol.com)). We would enjoy hearing from you.

## ***Status of Coal and Oil Projects***

On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, outgoing Public Lands Commissioner Peter Goldmark rejected the request for a sublease of the state’s aquatic lands to Millennium Bulk Terminals. This should be the end for the proposed coal terminal in Longview. Suits and counter-suits will likely follow, but for now, we will celebrate the win.

The proposed oil terminal at the Port of Vancouver is in the hands of EFSEC (Energy Facilities Site Evaluation Council). A hearing on Vancouver Energy’s request for an air discharge permit (a permit to pollute the air), will probably occur in late March. This is the latest word from EFSEC. When the date is announced, please plan to show up.

*By Don & Alona Steinke*

### **Calendar of Events:**

**Thursday, February 16th**—Member Program 6:30 pm

**Sunday, February 19th**—Nordic Ski outing

**Sunday, March 5th**— Nordic Ski outing

**Saturday, March 18th** — Nordic Ski outing

**Sunday, April 9th** — Bike outing

**Sunday, May 7th** — Sea kayak outing

### **Loo-Wit ExCom Leaders:**

**Mark Leed**—Chair

**Don Steinke**—Vice Chair/Oil & Coal

**Steve Foster**—Treasurer/Sales

**Mike Newsham**— Outings Liason

**Alona Steinke**—Oil & Coal/at large

**Lehman Holder**—At large

**Fred Suter** — Legislative Liaison

***Meetings and Events are open to the public and all are welcome!***

## ***Kalama Methanol Refinery Hearings Underway***

*Alona Steinke*

On January 23, hearings began regarding Northwest Innovation Works' (NWIW) application for a shoreline permit. NWIW, a start-up company working for the Chinese Government, plans to build a methanol refinery at the Port of Kalama which would be the largest of its kind in the world. Such technology has never been used on this scale.

Fracked natural gas would be received via pipeline, mainly from British Columbia. After refining, the methanol would be put on ships and sent to China to be made into plastic.

NWIW employees testified as to the jobs that would be created, while opponents argued that our climate and the health of residents would be at risk. Ships used to transport the methanol would release small particulate matter at more than four times the level that the EPA determines would increase health risks. These small particulates contribute to heart disease, strokes and other major health problems.

This project would harm the Columbia River Estuary, which has been designated as a critical area for 17 species of endangered fish. It is essential habitat for Pacific salmon.

We used to think that natural gas was a good bridge-fuel to clean energy. We now know that methane is 80 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub> as a greenhouse gas. The EPA has said that the natural gas industry leaks 1.4% of what it produces. Leaks occur from the origin at the fracking fields and along the pipelines.

At the rally, in a park near the river, we were privileged to witness the release of a bald eagle. The eagle, badly injured when hit by a car, had been rehabilitated by the Portland Audubon Society. It was a very inspiring moment.



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## LOO WIT OUTINGS



### ***Nordic Ski Outings Enjoy Terrific Conditions***

If you haven't experienced a Nordic (cross-country) ski outing to Mt. Hood this winter, you are truly missing out!

There is plenty of snow and conditions are among the best in recent years. No skis? Rentals are available for a very nominal fee and can be picked up en route to the outing location. These outings are oriented to "advanced beginners" so you need basic skills—moving forward (diagonal stride), descending, climbing (there are no chairlifts in Nordic skiing) and stopping.

Upcoming Nordic outings are scheduled for **February 19<sup>th</sup>** (Sunday), **March 5<sup>th</sup>** (Sunday) and **March 18<sup>th</sup>** (Saturday). Questions? Contact outing leader Lehman Holder at [tripsguy@aol.com](mailto:tripsguy@aol.com)

### ***Cycling, kayak outings set to start in April, May***

Okay – if winter's not your thing, not to worry. Loo Wit's popular cycling (bicycle) and sea kayak outings will return in mid-April and early May.

Bike outings will start pedaling on **April 9<sup>th</sup>** (Sunday, barring rain), and sea kayaking starts on **May 7<sup>th</sup>** (Sunday) with a beginner/ novice outing on Lake River (sea kayak outings go rain or shine). No kayak? Rentals are available from Ridgefield Kayak Rental, on the water at Ridgefield Marina. As with all of Loo Wit's outings, cycling and sea kayaking trips will be posted 7-8 days in advance on [Meetup](#). Beginner/novice outings include instruction.



Loo Wit Bike Outing last Spring

Photo by Steve Foster

***Join Loo Wit on an outing!***

***All outings are posted 7-8 days in advance on Meetup***

***Click [here](#) or go to the website below to see upcoming outings and RSVP***

***<https://www.meetup.com/Portland-Vancouver-Sierra-Club-Outings-Events/>***

## 2017 Hiking Outings

By Mike Newsham

We are getting off to a slow start this year due to the extremely bad winter weather we have been having. I plan to lead a climb of Mt. St. Helens, June 22, 2017.

This is a non-technical climb that entails very moderate scrambling, although it is physically challenging. It's a climb with approximately 4,500' of elevation gain over a distance of 9.4 miles. We will car camp at Climber's Bivouac, if the road is open. Otherwise, we will back pack into Chocolate Falls from Marble Mount Snow Park, camp overnight climb the next day, and then hike out. You must be in pretty good physical condition to do this climb and enjoy it.



Standing on the rim of MSH looking towards Mt. Rainier (photo by Emily Waters)

### **FEATURED HIKES**

Hunchback Mt.

Hardy Ridge

Hamilton Mt.

Devils Rest

Angels Rest

Multnomah-Wahkeena Loop

Dog Mt.

Herman Creek to Indian Point

Franklin Ridge

Wauna Point

Elevator Shaft

Ruckel Ridge

**At this point the 5 spots for this climb have been reserved.**

However, given the history of prior years, I am taking names to put on a wait list. So, if you are interested in climbing MSH in June, please send me an email at: [2newshams@comcast.net](mailto:2newshams@comcast.net) You can also contact me about the climb by phone at 360-798-0800. Either of these methods will get you on the wait list.

I will lead hikes in the spring that will prepare you for this adventure. Even if you don't climb MSH, these are some of the best hikes in the Columbia River Gorge, and are well worth doing.

I plan to lead hikes from the included list although trail and weather conditions will determine which ones we actually do and when. Difficulty rating will be noted in individual **Meet Up** postings (range from easy to real knuckle busters!).

We will not necessarily do all of these, but we will do enough of them to prepare for climbing MSH.



## ***Legislative Priorities get Chapter Focus***

*By Fred Suter, Loo Wit Legislative Liaison*

Your state legislative committee is involved with several priorities for 2017. Of highest priority is defending the advances made to protect water. Last October, the Washington State Supreme Court ruled in the Hirst decision that local jurisdictions were required to make independent determination that nearby watershed 'in stream flows' aren't negatively impacted before they can issue permits to drill new wells in support of new development.

As a result, local jurisdictions are acting to address the impact of the Hirst decision. Whatcom, Spokane, Okanogan, and Pierce counties have already passed new legislation. The Board of Clark County Commissioners met Dec 14, 2016 to discuss ramifications. Expect the Clark County Council to disseminate more information on this issue. To find out more check out this link: <http://www.columbian.com/news/2016/dec/14/county-told-no-easy-fix-to-water-decision/>

There are already numerous legislative bills introduced in Olympia designed to weaken the impact of the Court's ruling. However there is a bill that we can support. SB 5024, proposed by the Environmental Priorities Coalition, allows development to proceed under mitigation plans similar to those adopted in Clallam and Kittitas Counties. SB 5024 has the support of the Sierra Club. To learn more, check out the following link: [http://www.futurewise.org/assets/card\\_images/2017-Water-Priority-One-Pager-Jan-10.pdf](http://www.futurewise.org/assets/card_images/2017-Water-Priority-One-Pager-Jan-10.pdf)

Other priorities include legislation for improving funding for oil transportation safety and promoting clean energy legislation.



Here are a few examples of upcoming legislative priorities:

**HB 1334** revises the energy independent act.

**HB 1646 / SB 5509** creates an innovative, performance-based carbon tax that scales in response to progress in reducing emissions and creates good jobs and supports workers and households with lower income. HB 1334 and HB 1646 / SB 5509 are all supported by the Sierra Club.

**HB 1210** is a barrel tax created to strengthen funding for oil spill response and prevention programs.

**HB 1048** increases incentives for solar energy installation in Washington State, promotes a sustainable, local renewable energy industry by modifying tax incentives and providing guidance for renewable energy system component recycling.

**HB 1233** enables electric utilities to prepare for the distributed energy future. Distributed energy systems typically use renewable energy sources such as small hydro, biomass, biogas, solar power, wind power, and geothermal power.

If you are interested in following the progress of one bill or another, check out this website - <http://www.leg.wa.gov>

*P.S. - In Dec 2016, the Army Corps of Engineers determined not to permit the Dakota Access Pipeline. More recently, President Trump signed an executive order putting pipeline construction back into play. But you can fight back. Do you have money in one of the banks that is in the process of making loans to Energy Transfer Partners, the company building the pipeline? If you do, withdrawing your money from these lenders sends an economic message that banks would be wise to heed.*

To find out where you stand, check out this website: <http://www.defunddapl.org>



## Chapter Retreat Focuses on 2017 Framework

By Mark Leed

The Washington state Chapter Executive Committee held its first retreat of 2017 in late January at the Dumas Bay Centre in Federal Way. Loo Wit participants included chair Mark Leed and ExCom member at large Lehman Holder. National Sierra Club Board members Allison Chin and Mike O'Brien, as well as staff members Greg Cassini and Cesia Kearns presented the Club's 2017 framework of "Resist, Recruit, Train and Sustain". The retreat focused on how ExCom can become a high-performing team that can fight the Trump administration's anti-environmental agenda every step of the way. Standing together with our allies and engaging new members and supporters were emphasized in breakout groups.

In other news, Chapter ExCom has elected Julia Reitan as our new chapter chair. Julia previously served as Director of Volunteer and Activist Services at the National Sierra Club office. Chapter ExCom has also begun the process of hiring a chapter director to coordinate the Club's operations in Washington and to serve as a hub for all our programs and committees. The goal is to have a chapter director in place later this year.



Loo Wit Executive Committee Members, from left to right: Dave Bybee, Alona Steinke, Don Steinke, Mark Leed, Lehman Holder, Emily Waters, Fred Suter and Mike Newsham



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# Don't Get Left Out in the Cold... Join Us!



Sierra Club Outings are a terrific way to meet new people and enjoy the great outdoors. Whatever your interests - hiking, canoeing or birdwatching - there is an outing for everyone. If you are new to the area, let your local Chapter or Group give you the lay of the land. Join today and become part of America's largest environmental organization offering the most enjoyable outings.

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**Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!**



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Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35
Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35

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