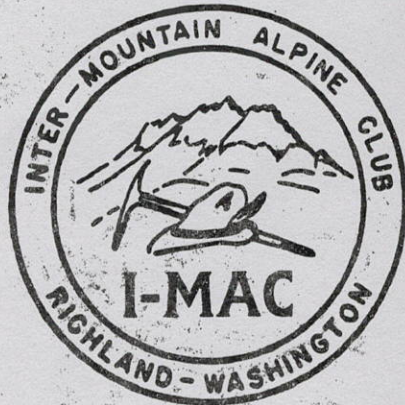


# Hikes Around Home



From the Inter-Mountain Alpine Club  
Tri-Cities, Washington



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## INTRODUCTION

The Inter-Mountain Alpine Club (IMAC) was organized in October 1948 to encourage the enjoyment of the outdoors and to promote hiking, mountain climbing, rock climbing, cross-country skiing, and other activities. It also hopes to provide the stimulus and opportunity for the beginner to enjoy the unique satisfaction that comes from attaining the heights under his or her own power and to gain a deeper appreciation of nature as a result of experiencing it first hand.

### **Inspiration for Hikes Around Home**

When I arrived in the Tri-Cities in August 1991 from upstate New York, I soon missed my habitual evening walks along country roads. Trips with IMAC filled my weekends, but I still had a desire for everyday "backyard hikes".

With IMAC's backing and help from many members, we ran a series of mid-week summer hikes designed to show folks that local hiking possibilities do exist even beyond the park system. This booklet is an outgrowth of the backyard hikes, following suggestions from fellow hikers and community members. Thanks to the many people who contributed and offered ideas.

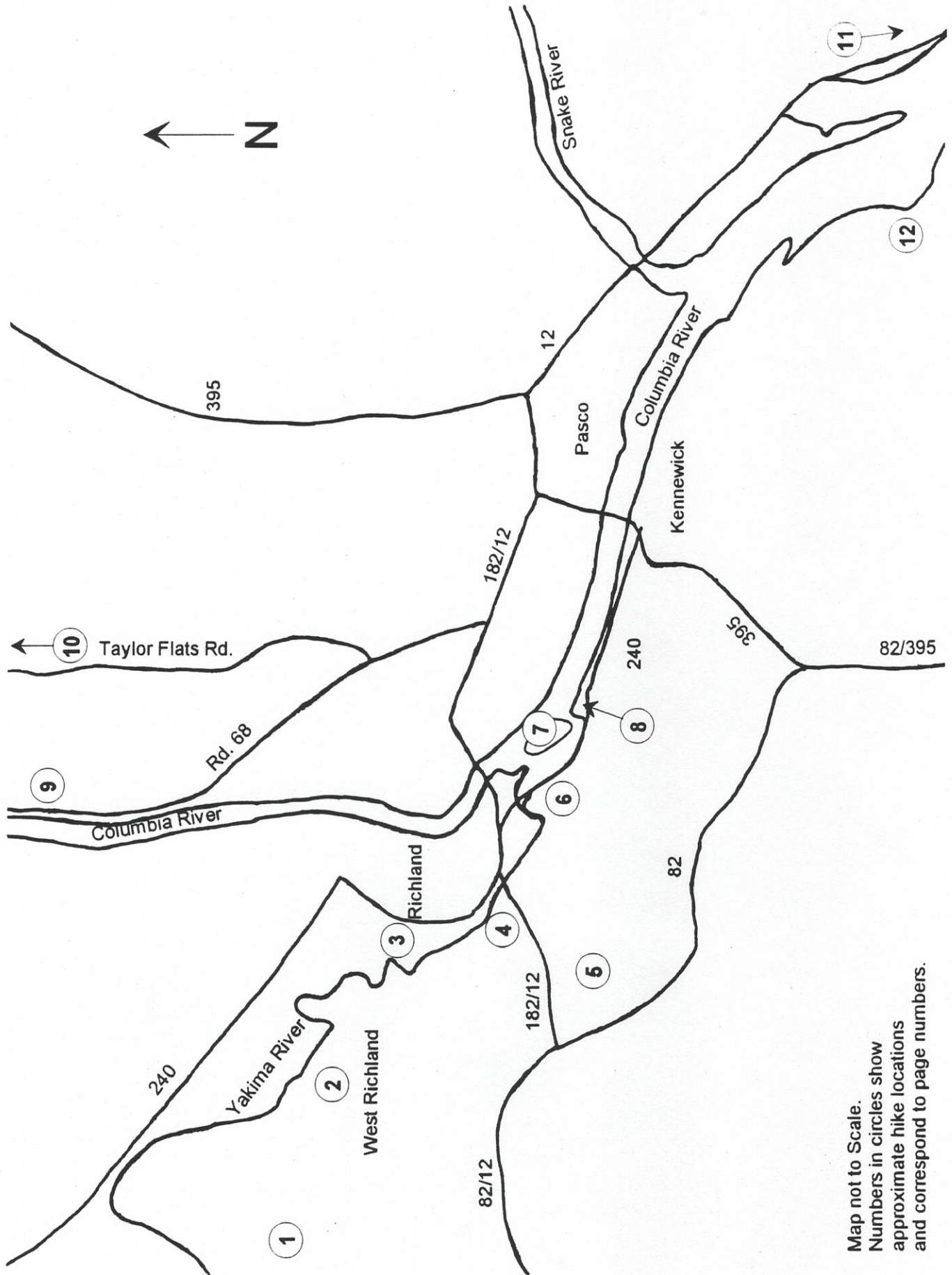
Several of the hikes listed are in areas designated for the proposed Tapteal Greenway, another community effort. We have noted Tapteal hikes in the write-ups. Of course, this booklet is not intended to be a comprehensive list of hikes - just a starting point for your wanderings.

While we attempt to accurately convey some of the local hikes available to Tri-Citians, trails change and hazards will always exist in any outdoor activity. Pack your good sense along with water and other essentials. Neither IMAC nor any of the individuals associated with the club may be held liable for any damages or injuries that you may experience as a result of hiking the trails listed herein.

--Edee Edwards, President  
March 1996

For more information, contact:

Inter-Mountain Alpine Club  
P.O. Box 505  
Richland, WA 99352  
(509) 545-1311



Map not to Scale.  
 Numbers in circles show  
 approximate hike locations  
 and correspond to page numbers.



## West Richland

### RED MOUNTAIN

- Estimated Hike Distance: 3 miles & 880 ft. climb R.T. to high point.  
To the end of the ridge, 7 miles & 1120 ft. climb R.T.
- Time Needed: 2 hours R.T. to high point, 4-5 hours R.T. to ridge end
- Level: Moderate to Long
- Highlights: Moderate climb to a long ridge with views of the Hanford Project, Benton City and Richland. Between Rattlesnake and Candy Mountains.  
Accessible year round.
- Directions: While driving west on the last, straight stretch of the main road through West Richland (highway 224), observe Red Mountain looming directly ahead. Continue 0.2 mile past the Tri-Cities Raceway's entrance and turn right onto Red Mountain Rd.; in 0.1 mile look for the Jeep road on the left that leads up to the ridge. Park and start walking. No facilities here or any place on the hike.
- Suggested Route: Follow the dirt road, along the power lines, across the nearly flat, ½ mile approach to the end of the ridge. The road continues up the hill and forks in several places; just keep heading up the end of the ridge until the 1410 ft. high point is attained at 1 ½ miles and 880 ft. elevation gain from the parking spot. Take in the views.
- The ridge can be followed northwest another 2 miles for closer views of Benton City, Rattlesnake Mountain and the Yakima River - a pleasant stroll with some ups and downs. From the high point (1 ½ miles from the parking spot), on a small, 1173 ft. knob which overlooks the Yakima River. Turn around and return to parking spot on the same trail, regaining the 240 ft. elevation back to the high point.
- Contributor: Bill Gurwell

## FLAT TOP MOUNTAIN

- Estimated Hike Distance:** 1 mile R.T.
- Time Needed:** 30 minutes
- Level:** Moderately easy, steep and short
- Highlights:** Lovely views of Tri-Cities and panoramic view of surrounding areas; e.g., views of Jumpoff Joe, Badger Mountain, Candy Mountain, Red Mountain, Rattlesnake Mountain and Hanford area. Especially beautiful at night under a full moon and excellent place near the Tri-Cities to get in shape for other hikes--it's a good workout especially with a pack on one's back!
- Directions:** Take Van Giesen through West Richland (1 mile after crossing the Yakima River). Turn left on 38th Street (one block west of Bombing Range Road) and park in West Richland Transit Center parking lot next to Flat Top Park (5 minute drive from by-pass).
- Suggested Route:** Look west from the parking lot to the high point and notice a 13 ft. white cross on top of Flat Top Mountain. Head straight to the top of the mountain taking the abandoned Jeep road--the trail is to the right of sign marked "NO MOTORIZED TRAFFIC". Climb steeply 340 ft. to 760 ft. top of mountain and enjoy the view. Trail starts out gradually but is very sandy and gets quite steep--also a little rocky in spots. It takes about 25 minutes to climb up if resting frequently and 7 minutes to descend. Boots are recommended although most climb it in sneakers.
- One can wander around on top of mountain which is owned by City of West Richland. Incidentally, Easter sunrise services are held on top of Flat Top Mountain; a wonderful experience with a variety of weather at 5:30 a.m. For the return (or even the ascent), there is a road up the back of the mountain that eventually hooks up with the parking area--less steep and through a newly developed area.
- A great hike--and close by--wonderful views and a real workout!

**Contributor:** Carol Davis



## W.E. JOHNSON PARK

Estimated Hike Distance: 7 miles R. T.

Time Needed: 4 - 6 hours

Terrain: Level dirt paths and old dirt roads.

Highlights: Varied riverfront and lowland vegetation and wildlife. Solitude. Part of Taptal Greenway.

Directions: Turn south from Van Giesen onto Chester next to Wood's Nursery. Continue one-half mile to gate and parking is on the right. To reach the south end of this hike, take Jadwin over freeway to new Richland sewer plant and turn right. Find bike path at the bottom of the hill.

Suggested Route: Hike south past the gate onto gravel road. When the gravel road makes a large swing to the right, turn off to the left onto old dirt road. The junction is obscure but the route soon becomes easy to follow. Bear right at fork to two equally good paths (the right? fork will also go but it is easier to get lost). Continue to another gate and go up a slight rise. Follow old roads and paths near top of low bluff. There are excellent views of the flowing river along here. Many dead-end paths give access to the river shore. Pick up the bicycle path on approaching the Interstate bridge and follow it to the road. Better yet, turn right after passing the bridge and wander on a maze of dirt roads through extensive lowland area.

Contributor: Dean Dickenson

## Richland

### **YAKIMA RIVER DELTA**

- Estimated Hike Distance:** 1-4 miles
- Time Needed:** Up to 4 hours
- Level:** Moderate
- Highlights:** Riverside walking and a few river views as well.
- Directions:** From I-182, take Exit 3 (Kennedy Rd./Columbia Dr.). Turn SE and make a quick left onto Columbia Drive. Turn left again quickly onto Valley View Rd. One more left onto View Dr. (dead end). Take it all the way to the end and park underneath the overpass.
- Suggested Route:** Start by going under the underpass. For a combination of river bottom and heights it is suggested to take a right just past a small spring. Following dusty roads (littered with shotgun shells--warning here: wear bright colors during hunting season), you can find some paths directly to the river's edge but no way to walk along side of it.
- Dirt bikes and fishers are likely sights. After a bit, you can follow paths to scramble up a steep embankment. Up here lies the Columbia Canal Irrigation line which is followed along by a road apparently accessible to those with four-wheel drive. This road/bike path leads all the way to West Richland and runs into Broadview Dr. Be aware that you will be walking past people's back yards if you choose to go this far, respect their property and privacy.
- Return by doubling back at any point along the canal and heading for the highway where you parked.
- Contributor:** Edee Edwards



## BADGER MOUNTAIN

Estimated Hike Distance: 2 miles round trip

Time Needed: 1 hour

Level: Moderately steep grade for the first half, leveling out on top

Highlights: Offers wonderful views of the Tri-Cities area including Richland, Kennewick, Pasco, and the surrounding countryside. Try the hike at night with a full moon. The city lights are spectacular.

Directions: From Richland take I-182 to Exit 3 (Kennedy Rd/Columbia Drive). Turn west (right) onto Kennedy Rd. In about 2 miles turn left onto Dallas Rd (Bombing Range Rd. extension). Follow it about one mile. Just after it crosses under I-182, look for unimproved parking on the left. Badger Mountain is directly east. If you are coming from Kennewick on I-82, Badger Mountain can be seen to the north. Exit on Dallas Rd. and go about two miles to the parking on your right just before the I-182 freeway.

Suggested Route: At this time (Fall 1993) there is some development in the area so hiking conditions may change over time. Generally, hike directly east along one of several gravel roads or paths that gradually ascend the long ridge leading to the summit. As you get up on the mountain the best views are to the north so it is best to stay left. The high point is near the microwave towers two-thirds of the way along the ridge.

Contributor: Carl Fies

## BIRD SANCTUARY

Estimated Hike Distance: 0.5 to a couple of miles

Time Needed: ½ to 2 hours

Level: Easy to moderate

Highlights: Part of the reason this is a bird sanctuary must be because of the plentiful supply of mosquitoes, so this makes an excellent winter/early spring hike. Nice for solitude and birds. Part of the proposed Tapteal Greenway.

Directions: From Highway 240, exit at Columbia Drive (not Columbia Center Blvd.) and go west (right). Just past Leslie Rd. there is parking off to the right.

Suggested Route: Amble down to the Yakima River and you are shortly presented with a choice of left or right. Exploration possibilities are more numerous to the right, where you can follow along a small stream in the hopes of finding a crossing spot. Triangular in shape, the property is bounded by the railroad and Hwy. 240 on the east, Columbia Drive on the south and the Yakima on the north, so look around without fear of getting too far from civilization.

Dense thickets and birds abound. While it is possible to bushwhack your way up to the northern-most point, cross over the railroad, under Hwy. 240, and continue back southeast to the main Ben Franklin bus depot, this is more adventurous than some may wish to be. Fences and safety considerations might be other deterrents. The area is likely to be wet, so some sort of waterproof footwear is wise.

Contributor: Edee Edwards



## BATEMAN ISLAND

Estimated Hike Distance: 1.5 miles round trip

Time Needed: 45 minutes minimum

Level: Very easy: flat

Highlights: Wonderful for exploration, with many alternate routes. Wildlife includes birds, birds, birds, occasional deer, skunks. Part of the proposed Tapteal Greenway.

Directions: Travel north on Columbia Center Blvd to the river. Take a left on Columbia Drive. Park at Wye Neighborhood Park (restrooms available).

Suggested Route: Cross the dike and go to the left of the artifacts sign. Let your sneakers lead you on, avoiding roads branching to the right, until you come to a wonderful tangle of tree branches forming an arched roof. Bring along a garbage sack, because this otherwise mystical spot is often trashed. Duck out to the right into a meadow. Continuing north, stop by old foundations on the left and head off towards the rocky beaches.

You may need to backtrack just a bit to find the road curving across the island. Follow that around, taking some time to check out whatever path catches your fancy. While it is easy to feel lost, you can't get too far gone on an island. A sandy path leads you back to the road in.

Contributor: Edee Edwards

## Kennewick

### AUDUBON TRAIL IN COLUMBIA PARK

Estimated Hike Distance: ½ to 1 mile

Time Needed: ½ hour, more to fully appreciate it

Level: Very easy, wheelchair accessible

Highlights: Wheelchair and stroller accessible. This delightful trail offers a variety of experiences in its short distance. Signs are placed about to help you identify flora and fauna.

Directions: The trail head is marked by a large sign in Columbia Park, east of the Ducks Unlimited building, on the highway side of Columbia Drive.

Suggested Route: This figure-of-eight path can be traveled in either direction. Since it is asphalted, it is very easy to navigate for young or old. Though quite near the highway, the trail is so well constructed you can easily ignore the sound and lose yourself in your surroundings, be that by the pond or in the wooded areas. Trail-side signs and interesting shelters will add to your enjoyment and make this an especially good trip for youngsters.

Contributor: Edee Edwards



## Franklin County

### **NORTH ROAD 68**

- Estimated Hike Distance:** Up to 4.5 miles RT, depending on starting point
- Time Needed:** Up to 2.25 hours
- Level:** Easy
- Highlights:** Travel along a peaceful stretch of seldom or lightly traveled road (depending on starting point) just above the Columbia river with orchards, a few old homesteads, native vegetation, birds, islands and Rattlesnake mountain in view.
- Directions:** Exit I-82 between Richland and Pasco on Rd. 68 and head north appx. 7.5 miles to the Esquatel wasteway.
- Suggested Route:** The hike can start here, parking on either side of the wasteway, or you can start 0.7 miles further up the road. At this point, you hike north along the side of the road which has only light local traffic and occasional bike tours. A new orchard just beyond the wasteway often has misters on which can moisten both sides of the road. The road now runs opposite Hanford's "300 Area". Several islands, with plant cover just now becoming established, are gull nesting sites in the spring.
- 0.7 miles later, the main road turns uphill away from the river and becomes Sagemoor Rd. Stay on Rd. 68 which soon becomes a dead end road. At this point one can park along side the road as there is far less auto (and no bike tour) traffic. Another 0.7 mile down the road, the pavement gives way to dirt, orchards soon give way to sagebrush hillsides marked regularly with "No Trespassing" signs, and an old battered sign warns of Slide Danger and says "Keep Out". The first slide is another 0.8 miles beyond there. There is little danger before reaching this slide, particularly in the dry months of the year, and this stretch gets regular use despite the sign. There appear to have been no slides in recent years. Rd. 68 once extended many more miles up river, but after a series of land slides, the county abandoned that part of the road. At the first slide is a small beach which is popular with boaters. This is a good point to turn around and head back. Any hiking beyond the slide becomes more difficult and hazardous as there is uneven loose terrain and a slick stream crossing between sections of the remaining road bed.
- Everyone should make their own decision as to whether to pass even an old battered "Keep Out" sign - which in this case is a warning of potential danger ahead (there are no "No Trespassing" signs posted at any point on the road). We attempt here only to present an accurate description of conditions so people can make an informed decision. A good hike can be had without passing the sign.
- Contributor:** Marilyn Young



### RINGOLD/WHITE BLUFFS

Estimated Hike Distance: 5 miles RT

Time Needed: 4-5 hours

Level: Easy to moderate, minimal elevation gain.

Highlights: Great place to spot beavers and other wildlife.

Directions: Take Road 68 north off I-82, and veer right onto Taylor Flats Road after about 2 miles. Continue on Taylor Flats until it dead ends, then turn left and follow the fork off to the right. In about 1 mile, turn left, towards Ringold fish hatchery. Turn north (right) along the river, and park in a parking area just beyond the hatchery.

Suggested Route: This hike is best in the winter and early spring months, before the fields of cheatgrass ripen. From the parking area, head towards the river, stopping to wander around what might have been an old homestead in a grassy, shaded area. Continue along the shoreline, keeping an eye out for beaver. As the rocky shore gets narrower, you'll need to scramble up a low cliff. You can survey the land and water from this area. To the east is the early start of the White Bluffs, heading northward. Across the river is Hanford. You are nearly even with the Washington Nuclear Power Supply station; although it is not visible, later you can see one of the warning signs.

As you continue to head north, you might find a place to cross a trickle of the river onto Savage Island, if it's dry. Watch out for mud which is at least thigh-deep. The island itself is quite wide, but go all the way to the river. This is a nice spot for lunch.

Heading further north, be alert for large gullies, which are a signal to head back toward the road. You'll come to a concrete irrigation ditch as well. You can return (or continue on), by the dirt road (watch for cars), or along the base of the cliffs, stopping by the WNP tower.

Contributor: Edee Edwards



# Walla Walla

## **TWO SISTERS**

Estimated Hike Distance: .5 miles

Time Needed: 1 to 4 hours

Level: Easy

Highlights: This is an open area with a variety of terrain. The main draws are the flowers in the spring, the sunsets, and the Two Sisters, side-by-side basalt columns.

Directions: Take highway 12 south from Pasco to the Wallula Junction, about 18 miles from CBC. Then turn left onto highway 730 and follow the Columbia River for the last two miles. Turn left into a small gravel parking lot with a roadside attraction type of sign.

Suggested Route: Before you start the hike, you should read the sign telling the Indian story about the coyote and the three sisters. This will fill you in on some of the history of the area. The path starts on the other side of the fence to the right of the sign. You either spread the barbed wire or use the built-in ladder to climb over (watch for the barbs). The path leads up through a draw between the south sister and a bluff. There is a branch to the left that takes you up to the two sisters or continue on to the sand dunes. The sand is a good place for a relaxing lunch, watching birds, clouds, or beetles struggling in the loose sand.

From the sand, the route again splits, giving the choice of wandering around the top of the bluff to the south or going up to the two sisters. The top of the bluff will have flowers and birds, which vary by the season. There are also expansive views of the Columbia River bluffs here in the Wallula Gap. The trip up the Two Sisters is steep but worth it so take your time. You are led to the gap between them and each sister has a path circling all the way around. The paths do have some exposure and the south sister has a cable part way to help. Climbing higher is not recommended and try not to kick rocks loose because there may be climbers below.

Contributor: Jim Langdon



## Finley

### WALLULA GAP

Estimated Hike Distance: About 4 miles, RT

Time Needed: 2-3 hours

Level: Moderate

**Highlights:** An easy hike southeast of Finley at Yellepit on the shore of the Columbia River. A good view of the river at Wallula Gap. There is no trail most of the way. An excellent early spring hike. Be prepared for cold wind.

**Directions:** From Columbia Center Blvd. overpass (mile 0.0), drive east on Columbia Dr. and south on Chemical Rd. to Finley. Continue on Chemical Rd. beyond Finley until the road ends at Piert Rd. (mile 12.0). Turn right onto Piert Rd. and continue on the main road for 5.4 miles. At mile 17.4, turn left onto Avers Rd. (street sign may be missing, but there is a cattle guard and a primitive road sign). Continue on Avers Rd. for two miles. The gravel road is very rough for the last mile. It may not be passable for passenger cars in early spring. At mile 19.4, there is a junction with a dirt road on the right and a small parking spot on the left. There is a railroad track a few yards down the gravel road. Park in the parking space. The hike starts on the dirt road along the fence.

**Suggested Route:** One popular route is to hike to the relay tower (visible from the parking lot) downriver at Wallula Gap. Hike along the dirt road for about 0.5 mile. Take a faint uphill trail on the left that heads toward the bluffs. The trail meanders to and disappears in a small valley with the bluffs on the left and small hills on the right. Continue up this valley, walking over a lot of little rocks, to a little hill below the bluffs. Just before this hill, veer to the right and you might be able to find a faint trail that will lead you to an easy walk up to the top of the bluffs. After reaching the top, head downriver along the bluffs to the relay tower. There is no trail. There will be some up and down hiking. On the way back to the cars at the ravine crossing, go down the ravine to a plateau below the bluffs and pick up a faint trail on the left of the gully. Follow this trail back to the initial valley below the bluffs.

Contributor: George Meriwether