



Dege Peak

The hike to Dege Peak along Sourdough Ridge provide a great opportunity to experience the broad field of Western Pasqueflower in seed (the 'mopheads') and also attain a great panoramic view from Dege's summit. Starting at Sunrise, 6,400', it may take some time to acclimate to the rarified air of the alpine zone.

1st Leg - Sunrise Parking Lot to Sourdough Ridge: *Approximately 0.55 mi., +330', average grade 11%.* Head north from the parking a short distance on the paved surface to the trailhead. Continue north and stay to the right at the first junction. Head northeast up the broad open slope. This area is a prime example of the dry grass vegetation type meadow dominated by Bunchgrass and Western Pasqueflower which forms the iconic 'mophead' when in fruit, or seed. In a little over a half mile the trail intersects with the Sourdough Ridge Trail.

2nd Leg - Sourdough Ridge to Vista: *Approximately 0.90 mi., +88', -88', average grade 6%.* As good an alpine stroll as it gets! A great trail with little up and down allowing wildflower viewing both uphill and downhill. Amidst the bunchgrass look for red paintbrush, blue lupine, pink daisy, yellow cinquefoil, pink phlox and especially the dainty violet Cusick's Veronica.

3rd Leg - Vista to Trail Junction: *Approximately 0.30 mi., +117', -69', average grade 15%.* The ridge crest is reached with great views to the north. Look for goats on the rocky slope below. The slope to the south becomes much steeper. With less bunchgrass and related flowers look for bracted lousewort, senecio and arnicas, including the 'three-pronged' nodding arnica.

4th Leg - Trail Junction to Dege Peak Summit: *Approximately 0.25 mi., +238', -13", average grade 17%.* Reaching the summit requires a little effort as the trail is narrower, rockier and much steeper. A special treat is Showy Jacob's Ladder tucked away amongst the dwarf, or 'krummholz', whitebark pine.

Guides and Map: Hike No. 5 in Tami Asars' *Day Hiking Mount Rainier* (2nd edition), Hike No. 38 in Ron Judd's *Day Hike! Mount Rainier* (4th edition), Tracy/Giblin *Alpine Flowers of Mt. Rainier*. Greens Trails Maps, No. 270, Mount Rainier East, WA or Mount Rainier Wonderland, No. 269S.

Distance and Difficulty: While the hike is just 2.0 miles, or 4.0 miles round trip, the experience initially can seem a bit strenuous simply because it begins at 6,400' elevation. Many hikers start their day at sea level and the need for acclimation comes as a surprise even for the hardy. The guide books generally classify the hike as "easy", but of course that is always relative. With the exception of the short 4th leg the trail is very good with a moderate grade. The elevation difference is 606' but due to some minor 'dips' in the trail the net elevation gain is about 773'. The trail of the short 4th leg is steep and rocky. Overall a good workout suitable for a board spectrum of hikers.

Preparation: The hike is in an alpine environment which can produce unexpected hazardous conditions including wind, rain, cold, and whiteouts, as well as dehydrating extreme sunlight and heat (possibly all in the same day!). Most of the hike is in the open, so if its hot be prepared with sun screen and twice the water normally carried. The *Ten Essentials* are always a good idea. The trail is well maintained and heavily used but has its share of rocks and ankle twisters so good footwear is important. Please see "Preparedness for Mount Rainier Hiking" under Resources in the *Flowers of Rainier* website, <http://www.flowersofrainier.com>.

Weather Forecast: http://www.atmos.washington.edu/data/rainier_report.html

Trail Conditions: <http://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/trails-and-backcountry-camp-conditions.htm>

Ranger Station: White River Wilderness Information Center, (360) 569-6670 (may be a summer number only).. Call Longmire Wilderness Information Center, (360) 569-6650, for year-round assistance.

INDEX OF FLOWERS SHOWN ON MAP:

- 1 - **Bunchgrass**, *Festuca viridula*
- 2 - **Western Pasqueflower**, *Anemone occidentalis*
- 3 - **Whitebark Pine**, *Pinus albicaulis*
- 4 - **Subalpine Lupine**, *Lupinus latifolius* var. *subalpinus*
- 5 - **Magenta Paintbrush**, *Castilleja parviflora* var. *orepola*
- 6 - **Mountain Daisy**, *Erigeron glacialis*
- 7 - **Cusick's Veronica**, *Veronica cusickii*
- 8 - **Spreading Phlox**, *Phlox diffusa*
- 9 - **Fan-leaf Cinquefoil**, *Potentilla flabellifolia*

- 10 - **Wooly Pussytoes**, *Antennaria lanata*
- 11 - **Green False Hellebore**, *Veratrum viride*
- 12 - **Pink Mountain Heather**, *Phyllodoce empetriformis*
- 13 - **Bracted Lousewort**, *Pedicularis bracteosa*
- 14 - **Western Senecio**, *Senecio integerrimus*
- 15 - **Nodding Arnica**, *Arnica parryi*
- 16 - **Sitka Valerian**, *Valeriana sitchensis*
- 17 - **Drummond's Anemone**, *Anemone drummondii*
- 18 - **Showy Jacob's Ladder**, *Polemonium californicum*

Trail notes, other flowers observed, highlights:

Date of hike: / /