

Seattle's Great Escapes: Inspiration Vacation with North Cascades Institute

DIABLO, WA — Getting back to nature was never so enjoyable, informative or comfortable. Tucked along the shore of Diablo Lake within North Cascades National Park—less than three hours from Seattle—the North Cascades Institute is the place to learn about and enjoy the nature all around us. A nonprofit that works in partnership with the National Park Service, the Institute runs several field excursions, seminars and family getaways in and around the North Cascades throughout the year.

If you're looking for literary inspiration, hitch a ride with "The Beat Goes On," which retraces the physical, philosophical and spiritual steps of beat writers Gary Snyder and Jack Kerouac, each of whom wrote verse relating to their time as fire lookouts on desolate nearby peaks during the 1950s. Those seeking relaxation should consider signing on for a "Diablo Downtime" weekend, when good eating, yoga, hiking and other tonics dominate the schedule. If your curious mind seeks more, spend a weekend tracking warblers, vireos, thrushes and tanagers with an expert birder. Or learn to paint watercolor scenes of the jagged green and white peaks jutting up from glacial blue waters.

Getting away from it all at the lakeside campus is the ultimate resort of the intellectually curious. Facilities include dorms for 92 guests, a dining hall, multimedia classrooms, a research library, an earth sciences lab, canoes and a dock on Diablo Lake, and trails radiating into North Cascades National Park. Rates start at \$95.

