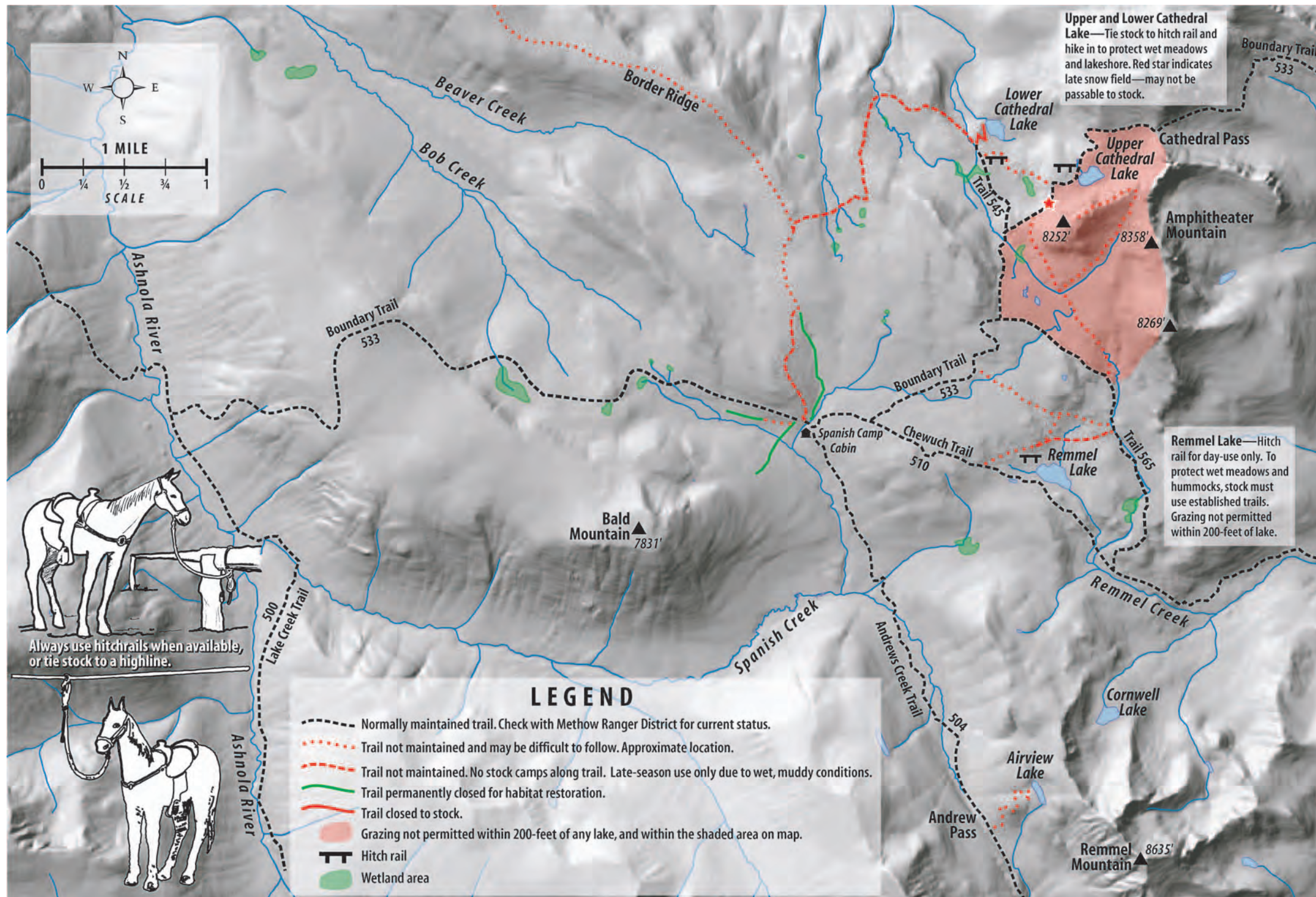


Routes and Tips for Traveling with stock in the Spanish Creek—Cathedral Pass area of the Pasayten Wilderness



For more information about packing in the Pasayten Wilderness, contact:

Methow Valley Visitor Center
 Highway 20 P.O. Box 579
 Winthrop, Washington 98862
 (509) 996-4000
 or
Methow Valley Ranger District
 24 West Chewuch Road
 Winthrop, Washington 98862
 (509) 996-4003

To learn more about backcountry stock use and “Leave No Trace” camping, visit the **Backcountry Horsemen of Washington** website: www.bchw.org

This brochure was cooperatively produced by the Washington Native Plant Society and the Methow Valley Ranger District, Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests.



This pamphlet is printed on recycled paper. Horse illustrations by Lindsay Herman

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Traveling with Stock in the Pasayten High Country

Experience the beauty.
Savor the adventure.
Help care for fragile alpine habitats.



The Pasayten Wilderness

is home to alpine habitats and plants found nowhere else in Washington. Alpine plants are specially adapted to survive wind, cold, heat, and a short growing season. But they are too fragile to survive trampling by horse hooves and boot soles.



To protect alpine habitat:

As you travel—

Use established trails. Avoid creating new routes.

Avoid side trails blocked by branches. They are closed to protect fragile areas.

Water stock at established stream crossings, or take water to your stock.

When you camp—

Use established campsites and avoid creating new ones.

Choose campsites at least 200' from water when possible.

Select campsites where highlines can be set up over bare or rocky ground.

Grazing your animals—

Avoid grazing stock in moist meadows or near lakes and streams.

Select an area dominated by grasses.

If using pickets or electric fences, move often to promote light grazing.

No grazing is permitted within 200' of any lake.

Avoid vegetation sensitive to trampling—

Learn to recognize easily-damaged alpine plants.

Avoid early season travel when trails and meadows area especially wet and easily damaged.

Fragile Alpine Habitats of the Pasayten Wilderness

Wet meadows, wetlands, and hummocks

Wet habitats are like sponges that soak up snowmelt and rain. In summer they slowly release water, replenishing high country streams and lowland rivers.



Wetlands are critical breeding areas for amphibians such as the spotted frog. When wet habitats are trampled, the soil loses its ability to store water, plants are destroyed, and animals lose their homes.



Alpine habitats provide homes for ptarmigan, mountain goats, moose, wolves, lynx, and marmots; species rarely seen elsewhere.

Avoiding wet habitats

Wet, squishy ground is a sure sign that you should avoid the area.



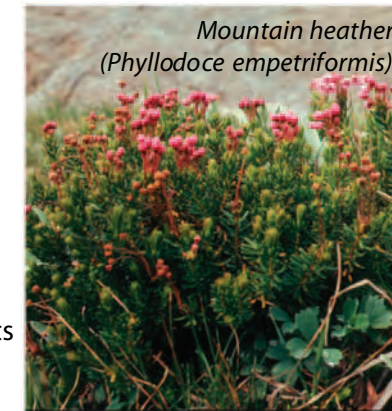
Moist meadows are a richer, greener color than surrounding areas. They are often filled with colorful flowers like paintbrush and lupine.

Shrubby willows may conceal small, easily damaged streams and pools that are important wildlife habitat. These areas can be unsafe for stock.



Hummocks are mounds formed where frost heaves wet soil. They are covered with low plants and lichens. Hummocks are easily destroyed by hooves and foot traffic. If damaged, they can no longer store water needed in late summer. Inky Gentian (*Gentiana glauca*) is a sensitive plant that grows on hummocks (above, lower right).

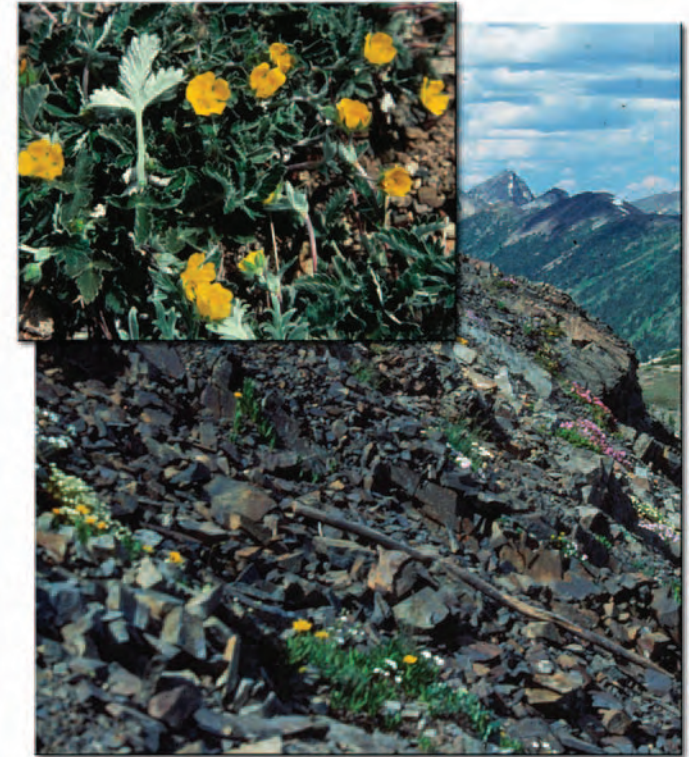
Heather Heather grows in poor soil where most other plants can't survive. These plant communities can take thousands of years to establish. Any travel over plants can destroy them.



Heather provides hiding places, shade, and nesting and breeding areas for birds and small animals.

Alpine gravel fields

On high, gentle slopes covered with fine gravel, watch for low growing, dwarfed flowers and plants. Although damage from your footsteps is not immediately visible, these "cushion plants" are easily destroyed. Avoid stepping on plants.



Snow cinquefoil (*Potentilla nivea*, above inset) and salish daisy (*Erigeron salishii*, right) are some of the sensitive plants growing on alpine gravel fields.

