



Washington Butterfly
Association

*G'nun**

The newsletter of the Washington Butterfly Association

P.O. Box 31317 Seattle WA 98103

<http://wabutterflyassoc.org>

Facebook: Washington Butterfly Association. Instagram: #washingtonbutterflies (anyone can use this hashtag)

iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/washington-state-butterflies>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@washingtonbutterflyassocia4732>

*G'nun is the official greeting of WBA. It is derived from the name of common Washington butterfly food plants, of the genus *Eriogonum*.



Nothing says "Great Butterflying" like a dystopian collapsed radio antenna on a remote mountain top. Here's WBA at the old tower high in the Simcoes, between Simcoe Butte and Satus Pass.

Upcoming Programs by Zoom First Wednesday at 6 PM

Sept 2: Share the Wealth with Liz Kuehn

Have photos from your summer of butterflying prepared to share on Zoom.

Oct 7: Update on the Monarch Tracking Project

Nov 4: Rapid Butterfly Declines Across the Country with Cheryl Schultz

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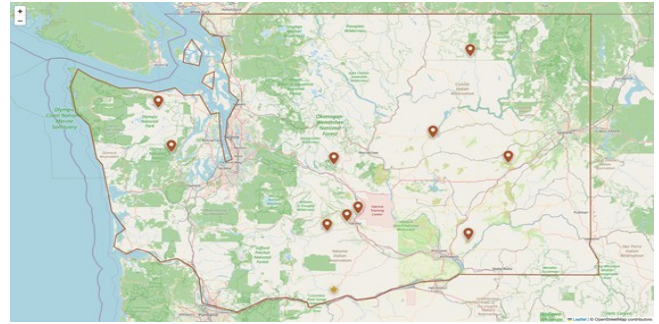
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President's Message

Dear Butterfly enthusiasts,

As we see news about the fires burning across the state, I hope that you and your families are safe and out of harm's way. In addition, I hope that our favorite Lepidoptera has the resilience to recover swiftly along with the burned habitat.



Field Trip Locations, 2026.

As summer wraps up and the WBA Field season draws to a close, I'm grateful for the enthusiastic leaders who guide us in the field and share their wisdom with us. This year, the team led us to pretty much every corner of the state, from Juniper Dunes near Pasco up to Ferry County near the Canadian border, and out west to Hurricane Ridge and Lake Cushman on the Olympic Peninsula. My many thanks to the trip leaders for making these field experiences available to anyone interested in learning about Washington butterflies! A huge thank you to David James, Karen Holtrop, Melanie Weiss, Cheryl Bellin, Jim Rauh, and Carter Urnes for leading this year's trips! There are still a couple of trips on the calendar with possible flash trips ahead. So, keep an eye on our website and your inbox for field trip updates.

Besides all the field trips, WBA also had some other amazing butterfly moments this year!

We kicked off another round of Big Butterfly Month this summer, and it was wonderful to see submissions from across the state and the different butterfly species. Regina Johnson, our WBA iNaturalist project administrator, will be sharing the results with us soon.

From June 12th to 14th, we had our annual Butterfly Study weekend in Goldendale Washington, and it was another fantastic get together! This year, we welcomed over 50 participants, and we had some truly wonderful butterfly moments. David James did a fantastic job scouting the area, finding some amazing butterfly spots for us. We're so lucky to have David share his expertise to help guide us at these annual events. Another highlight of the study weekend is an evening of moth watching with David Droppers. This year, we had a great turnout, with many locals joining us to experience the night flyers.

It was wonderful having an Idie Ulsh scholarship recipient this year, especially after a few years of no one receiving it! Ezra Matyas is our butterfly recipient for 2026, and she was such a delightful and energetic addition to our group! I hope she had as much fun with us as we did watching her explore the wonderful world of butterflies (and moths).

It was also such a treat to have Jon Pelham join us at this year's event! He was our program night speaker and one of our field experts. Jon knows butterflies inside and out, and it was a blast to have him with us to identify butterflies and share

stories from his field adventures. His keynote presentation, "Butterfly Distributions and How They Got to Be That Way," was a fascinating learning experience that I didn't realize I needed. I was completely captivated. Even though we ran into a few hiccups with the tech, Jon made sure we had a fun and enlightening experience!

You can catch a replay of his presentation and David's Goldendale preview from our blog at <https://wabutterflyassoc.org/2026-wba-annual-study-weekend-goldendale-washington/>

The area provided the butterflies, and David got us to the right spots. Still, the highlight of the weekend was the Gold Hunter's Hairstreak, found

(Continued on page 3)

Caitlin and Jon confer on an identification while John B. and Liz K. look on. (M. Weiss)



(Continued from page 2)

by a streak of good luck and an acute observation by Lori Salzer seeing a butterfly on the ground and noticing it wasn't quite like the others we'd seen that day. With David James and Caitlin LaBar confirming it was a Gold Hunter's, we capped the day with a big win!

Speaking of noticing things, our field trip leaders from Okanogan County, Cheryl Bellin and Jim Rauh, stumbled upon a huge accumulation of California Tortoiseshell *Nymphalis californica* larvae and pupae covering almost 2.5 miles of ceanothus during one of their walks. You can check out what happened next at our website blog post.

<https://wabutterflyassoc.org/irruption/>

Cheryl and Jim are also helping with the Bonaparte Meadow conservation project by checking out the butterfly species there and getting the local community involved with the site by leading a guided butterfly walk. To learn more about Bonaparte Meadows and the campaign to protect the Fen, check out their website and especially the news update about the Silver-Bordered Fritillary.

<https://okanoganlandtrust.org/protect-bonaparte-meadows-3/#anchor-story>

Thank you, Cheryl and Jim, for the work you do to support butterflies!

And thank you to the WBA Board for another wonderful year of butterfly events and programs! It has been a pleasure to work with this group of talented and enthusiastic people.

The WBA Board elections for 2026-2027 are coming up! Many of the current Board members are planning to run again, but we'll be saying goodbye to Carolyn Heberlein and Dan Dunphy. They'll both be missed. Carolyn has been with WBA since the beginning and has been a key figure in many activities, including the creation of the original

How To Find A Gold Hunter's Hairstreak

By Lori Salzer

At the end of a butterfly hike on the Klickitat River:

- 1) Find Liz's car
- 2) Grab 2 bags of potato chips
- 3) Stand next to Liz's car, potato chips in hand, and look down at the road
- 4) Spot a hairstreak on the road
- 5) Assess the situation. My net is in Regina's car but I do have a specimen jar in my pocket.
- 6) Very carefully lower the jar over the hairstreak
- 7) Use a ponderosa pine needle to gently move the hairstreak & slide the lid under it & secure it.
- 8) Voila! You have a Gold Hunter's Hairstreak!

website. And Dan, who's been on the Board for a bit less time, has really made a difference. He came up with great ideas and put in the effort to keep the Idie Ulsh scholarship going. Even though they won't be on the Board anymore, they'll still be part of the WBA family, and we'll see them around!

On behalf of the WBA Board of Directors, we wish you all a safe and healthy end of summer.
Liz Kuehn

(R. Johnson)
Gold Hunter's Hairstreak.



Lori and Liz with the Gold Hunter's Hairstreak. (J. Baumann)



Spotted tussock moth.
(T. Thurber)



David Droppers 'conducts' Moth Night at Brooks Memorial State Park.
(E. Kuehn)



Dan, Ezra, and Cheryl confer at the ski area at Satus Pass.
(R. Johnson)



Great Arctic on Regina's hat. (C. Clark)



Watching a butterfly get pulled into the sand by a sand wasp on the Klickitat River bank. (R. Johnson)

Two opposite
reactions to
predation!

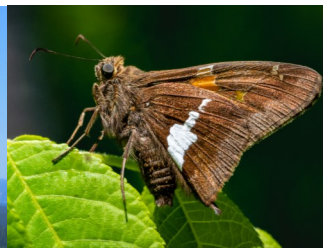
The Green Hairstreak
that Kim saved from a
crab spider. (R. Johnson)



Ezra, the Idie Ulsh Scholar, photographing a Tiger Swallowtail. (J. Baumann)



Cheryl at Simcoe Butte, Mt. Adams in the background. (J. Baumann)



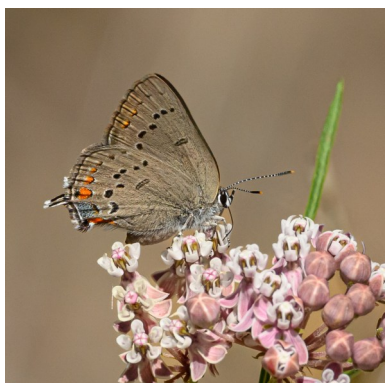
Silver-spotted Skipper.
(T. Thurber)



John Baumann and David James determinedly hunting down a skipper on top of Simcoe Butte.
(R. Johnson)



Everyone wants a shot of the Gold Hunter's Hairstreak that Lori Salzer found on the ground. It was fine; and it was the only one we saw that weekend. It did eventually fly away. Yay Lori! (R. Johnson)

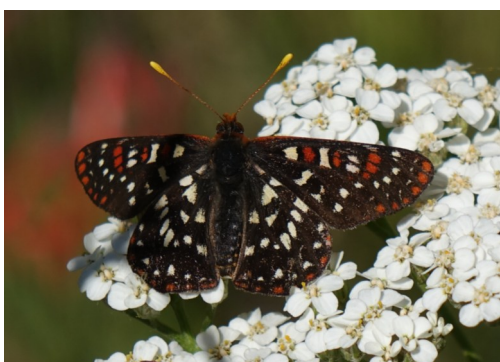


California Hairstreak. (J. Davis)



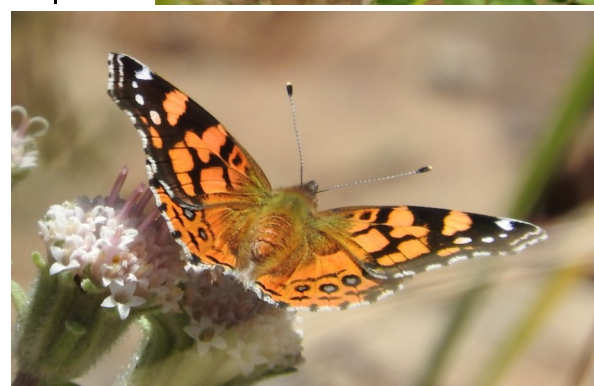
Lilac-bordered Copper.
(R. Johnson)

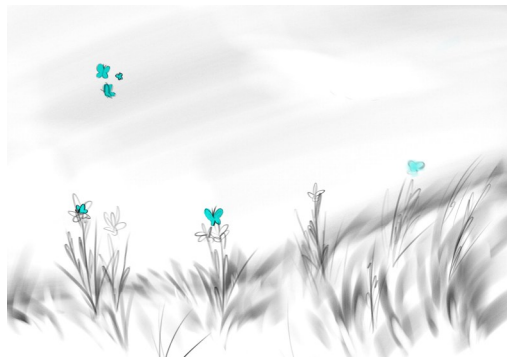
Pale Tiger Swallowtail on Scarlet Gilia.
(R. Johnson)



Snowberry Checkerspot.
(R. Johnson)

West Coast Lady. (K. Holthrop)





I have always been interested in insects. Attending the 2026 Washington Butterfly Association (WBA) Study Weekend in Goldendale helped me develop a greater interest in and knowledge of butterflies and moths.

That weekend, I saw more varieties of butterflies in nature than I had ever noticed before. At every stop, we saw Boisduval's blue butterflies. Because there were so many everywhere, it was one of the first butterflies that I learned to identify.



David Dropper's Moth Night event was one of the highlights of the trip. Looking for moths at night was a new experience for me.

Attending WBA's moth night event boosted my confidence handling moths and talking with people about them. In late July, I attended a Moth Ball event on the Olympic Peninsula. That was their first time organizing a moth event, and they were not very familiar with moths. I was able to help catch moths for visitors to look at up close and share what I knew about them.



My favorite butterfly of the weekend was the silver-spotted skipper. It changed my notion of what a butterfly looks like. I always thought of butterflies as being slender and hairless, but silver-spotted skippers are chunky and fuzzy, and more like moths. If you see one fly by, it is easily recognizable by the large splatter of silver on its wing.

Thank you for welcoming me into the WA Lepidoptera community and sharing your knowledge with me. I'm really excited to have a new way to experience the natural world.



Special thanks to Dan Dunphy for telling me about the Idie Ulsh Study Weekend Scholarship Program and mentoring me; Carolyn Heberlein for telling me about the scholarship and about the Scarabs Insect Field trip; Liz Kuehn for showing me the Magnuson Park Butterfly Meadow (along with Dan Dunphy) and how to use a butterfly net; and Jon Pelham and Jerry Austin for helping me access the Burke Museum Butterfly collection. Thanks also to everyone who shared beautiful gifts with me; they will always remind me of my first butterfly weekend in Goldendale.

Big Butterfly Month 2026

[https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/big-butterfly-month-washington-state?
tab=observations](https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/big-butterfly-month-washington-state?tab=observations)

I don't know about you, but I can see way more butterflies than I can photograph. I swear they can feel when I've just about got them in the viewfinder – and they're off. Skippers, of course, are really uncooperative, being tiny to start with and skipping all over the place. Getting what shots I did of Dun Skippers was especially challenging, since they're so dark, I could barely see them as they skipped all over the ground, and the slightest movement on my part sent them skipping off again. Margined Whites are also difficult to photograph, at least for me. They're unnaturally bright! And they totally wash out in my photographs, a little patch of burning white that may or may not be a butterfly. I have to crank the exposure way down for them, and then remember to open up again when I move on to something else.

Once again, David James blew everyone else out of the water, with as many observations as the next 4 participants. David had 252 observations; the next highest total was Lisa Hill with 66. We had 17 participants total this year, who created 835 observations, with a range from 1 to 252, and a median value (without David's) of 23, average of 30. The most commonly observed species statewide was the Lorquin's Admiral, with the Snowberry Checkerspot and the Western Tiger Swallowtail tying for second. Interestingly, the ubiquitous Cabbage White only showed up in 17 observations out of 835, tying with the not nearly as widespread Hoffmann's Checkerspot. I think this is something like the Starling problem on eBird, where people don't want to bother recording Starlings. Also, at least in my yard, our Big Butterfly Month fell mostly between flights for the Cabbage Whites, and too early for the as-ubiquitous Woodland Skipper. There are about 156 species of butterflies in the state, and we recorded 108 all together.

One way to look at our results is how many species did the different participants record. For instance, David's 252 observations recorded 66 species, giving a ratio of 0.26 species per observation. On the other end, we have John Baumann, who only recorded 11 observations, but every one was a different species, for a ratio of 1.0 species per observation. The average, not including David, is 0.68 species per observation.

We didn't cover quite as much territory this year as last. I know that I had trouble finding good butterflying worth traveling for, between wildfires and heat waves and rain – the gamut of things that butterflies don't like. That, and gas prices. No one went to the Outer Coast, the Blue Mountains, the San Juan Islands, the Palouse or the Columbia Basin. Our most distant observations are a Pale Tiger in Kooskooskie, Walla Walla county by Nancy Laframboise; a Lorquin's Admiral in Usk, Pend Oreille county by Nancy again; another Lorquin's Admiral in Vancouver by Mike Clark; and in the northwest corner, Travis Thurber and I both submitted the same Spring White caterpillar from Hurricane Hill on Carter Urne's trip in Olympic National Park.

Only a few species were recorded in every quarter of the state: the Western and Pale Tiger Swallowtails, the Lorquin's Admiral, the Cabbage White, the Painted Lady, and the California Tortoiseshell. If you were looking for a candidate for a State Butterfly, it should be one of these first three. The Woodland Skipper should have been as widespread, but due to the timing of the season, it only shows up in the eastern Cascades this year. Some of the more frequently observed species, like the Snowberry Checkerspot and Zerene Fritillary, have limited ranges and were only recorded from limited areas in the mountains. But they are charismatic lepi-fauna so people go out of their way to photograph them, which no one does, ever, for the Cabbage White.

Only 4 Species of Greatest Conservation Need were observed this time around. One Puget Blue; 3 Propertius Duskywings; and 8 Yuma Skippers, 7 of them on David's field trip. But! Twenty-two Great Arctics! From 6 different

(Continued on page 8)

people! Only 13 were by David James! No Monarchs this year, but we did get 3 Viceroy's (not a SGCN) – all from David James' Yuma Skipper field trip.

Cheryl Bellin gets the award for most unique observations – species that no one else got. I believe she won this category last year too. Cheryl had 15 species that no one else got. David James came in a distant second, with 4 species no one else got. Most of these are uncommon or at least not widespread species, but some surprises – the Red Admiral? Liz Kuehn was the only one recording that; the Brown Elfin only recorded by Mike Clark; the Pine Elfin by Cheryl and the Pine White by David. It's all in the timing, I guess. Of John Baumann's 11 species, 2 were unique, the Edith's Copper and the Northern Blue.

Top 10 Observer-Species	# Species	Rank
David James	66	1
Cheryl	54	2
Lisa Hill	45	3
Melanie	38	4
Travis	34	5
Regina	34	5
Nancy	28	6
John Davis	23	7
Sally	22	8
Mike Clark	19	9
Liz Kuehn	14	10

Top 10 Observers	# Observations	Rank
David James	252	1
Lisa Hill	66	2
Regina	60	3
Travis Thurber	60	3
Cheryl	59	4
Melanie	56	5
John Davis	54	6
Nancy Laframboise	52	7
Sally Friou	36	8
Mike Clark	28	9
Karen	23	10

Top 10 Species	# Observations	Rank
Lorquin's Admiral	39	1
Snowberry Checkerspot	38	2
Western Tiger Swallowtail	38	2
Zerene Fritillary	33	3
California Tortoiseshell	32	4
Sylvan Hairstreak	28	5
Painted Lady	26	6
Common Wood-Nymph	25	7
Pale Swallowtail	25	7
Columbian Blue	22	8
Great Arctic	22	8
Mylitta Crescent	22	8
Clodius Parnassian	21	9
Mariposa Copper	21	9
Woodland Skipper	21	9
Great Spangled Fritillary	19	10

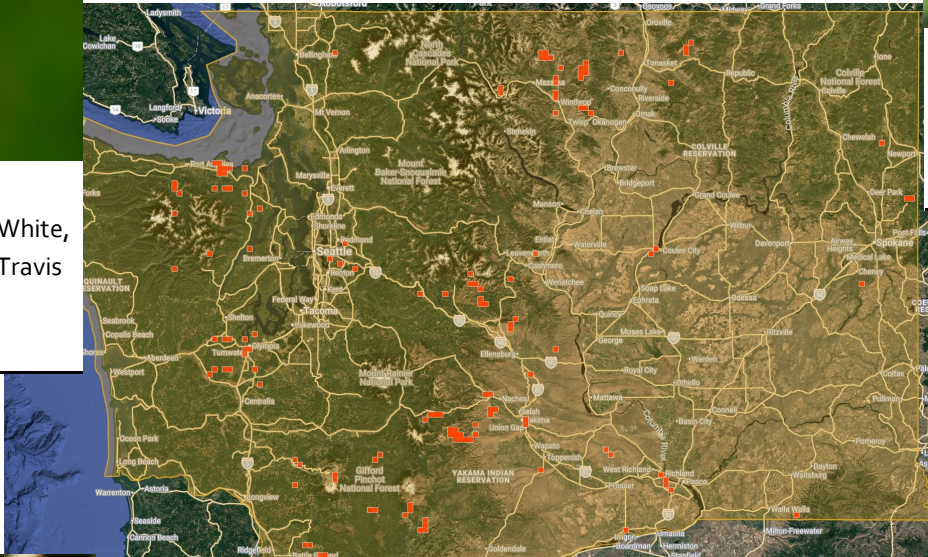
Species with just 1 observation	Observer
American Red Admiral	Liz Kuehn
Arrowhead Blue	Cheryl
Atlantis Fritillary	Cheryl
Becker's White	Lisa Hill
Brown Elfin	Mike Clark
California Hairstreak	Lisa Hill
Christina Sulphur	Cheryl
Chryxus Arctic	Cheryl
Common Alpine	Cheryl
Common Sootywing	David James
Coral Hairstreak	Cheryl
Eastern Tailed-Blue	Nancy Laframboise
Edith's Copper	John Baumann
Green Comma	Cheryl
Hoary Comma	Cheryl
Long Dash	Cheryl
Mormon Fritillary	Cheryl
Northern Blue	John Baumann
Northern White-Skipper	David James
Northwestern Fritillary	Cheryl
Peck's Skipper	Cheryl
Pine White	David James
Pink-edged Sulphur	Cheryl
Puget Blue	Regina
Rocky Mountain Clearwing	John Davis
Sandhill Skipper	Nancy Laframboise
Tawny-edged Skipper	Cheryl
Two-banded Checkered-Skipper	David James
Western Pine Elfin	Cheryl



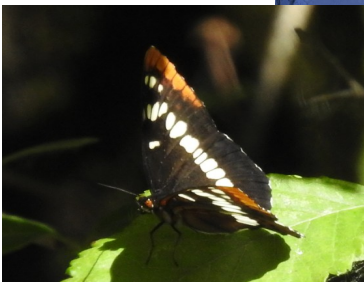
Northwest-most observation: Spring White, Clallam Co, by both Travis Thurber and Regina Johnson.



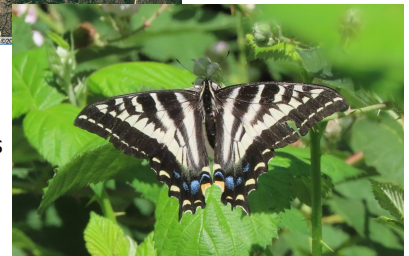
Northeast-most observation: Lorquin's Admiral, Pend Oreille Co, Nancy Laframboise



WBA Big Butterfly Month 2026 map. Usually in Washington, nature observations cluster around the bigger cities (Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane) and the major universities (UW Seattle, WSU Pullman). Not us! WBA butterfly observations cluster around the eastern Cascades, where the butterflies are.



Southwest-most observation: Lorquin's Admiral, Clark Co, Mike Clark



Southeast-most observation: Pale Tiger Swallowtail, Walla Walla Co, Nancy Laframboise



John Baumann's Northern Blue, from Mt Spokane.



John Davis got the only Rocky Mtn. Clearwing Moth, from near Mt. Adams.



And JB's Edith's Copper, also from Mt. Spokane.

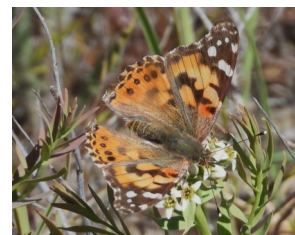


Chery's Chryxus Arctic.

Trip Reports April-May 2026

Juniper Dunes, April 29 David James

Following on from our WBA field trip in April 2025 seeking proof of life for the Columbia Basin segregate of the Juniper Hairstreak, we again made a trip on April 29 2026 to the surreal landscape of Juniper Dunes, just north of Pasco, WA. Both years, we failed to spot any evidence that the Juniper Hairstreak still lives at Juniper Dunes as it used to do up until about 2010. In 2025, we had about half a dozen WBA members searching the Junipers and the Dunes. This year, sadly, it was only me and Don Grinolds from Tacoma. Nevertheless, we gave it our best shot but rapidly realized that the advanced spring of 2026 had done us no favors. The ubiquitous Gray Hairstreak which is normally fresh and in great numbers during the second half of June when Juniper Hairstreaks used to fly, was present in very low numbers and all that we spotted were 'rags' to use a lepidopterist term for an old, worn butterfly. Don and I were very likely way past prime time for Juniper Hairstreaks this year. However, our wanderings across the dunes did enable us to find what appears to be prime habitat for Juniper Hairstreaks that we have not explored before. This area is slightly moister with more junipers and nectar resources and I plan to survey it for Juniper Hairstreaks in future years.



Painted Lady. (D. James)

Don and I did see six species of butterflies on the dunes including an Anise Swallowtail ovipositing on northern Indian parsnip (*Cymopterus terebinthinus*) an unusual host. At least 20 Painted Ladies were seen, a species surging in from the south and shaping up to be the butterfly of 2026.

Cowiche Canyon, Yakima, April 25 David James

The Cowiche Canyon Conservancy in Yakima has held an Annual Earth Day celebration of nature in the canyon for many years. For at least 15 of those years, I have had the pleasure of hosting a butterfly station in the canyon where I would have books and pictures of butterflies as well as some live butterflies and caterpillars. This year, I was joined by Melanie Weiss and our President Liz Kuehn and they brought along a table and a lot of WBA information and handouts as well as butterfly-themed games for children. I brought along some of the cases of WA butterflies from the 1970s that were recently gifted to WBA as well as a few live spring butterflies, elfins, beckers, cabbage whites etc. We also showed some Milbert's Tortoiseshell caterpillars collected from a very nearby nettle patch plus one lonely woolly bear caterpillar. Well, Mr Woolly Bear did not remain lonely for long as he spent most of the morning in the hands of children, besotted by this miniature furry creature! They loved him and one little girl in particular did not want to leave him (much to the consternation of her mother...). So, after 15 years, I have discovered the magic ingredient in getting and holding the attention of children at this Earth Day event: holding a woolly bear! Mr Woolly Bear enjoyed his morning and has now pupated and should eclose as a Nevada Tiger Moth before too long. Melanie, Liz and I also enjoyed our sunny spring morning in the canyon and we got many people excited or maybe just interested in butterflies and WBA. Asher's Blues were flying along with Beckers Whites and Painted Ladies and it was a great way to start off our WBA field trip season!



Milbert's Tortoiseshell Caterpillars on nettle (D. James)

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Lake Cushman. (J. Barreca)

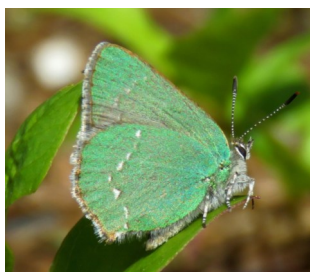
Bear Gulch Fire, Lake Cushman, May 4

Karen Holtrop

On May 4th, nine WBA members enjoyed a memorable survey in the Cushman area of Olympic National Forest: Tanna Knouse, Karen Holtrop, Jeannette Barreca, Travis Thurber, Cathy Clark, Dan Dunphy, Melanie Weiss, Paulette Murphy, and Liz Kuehn. Despite some initial uncertainty around wildfire-burned areas, the day proved to be a rewarding one, with the group documenting 16 butterfly species.



Two-banded Checkered Skipper and Silvery Blue. (T Thurber)



Green Hairstreak. (C. Clark)

Among the species observed were Echo and Silvery Blues, Satyr and Hoary Commas, California Tortoiseshells, Julia's Orangetips, Pale Swallowtails, Painted Ladies, Silver-spotted Skipper, Two-banded Checkered Skippers, and Green Hairstreaks. (Please Note that the Staircase and Lake Cushman area remains partially closed for public safety. For the latest trail, road, and fire closure updates, check the Olympic National Forest website.)

Selah Cliffs Natural Area Preserve, May 9 Melanie Weiss

WBA received an off-trail permit from the Department of Natural Resources to survey the beautiful and unique Selah Cliffs Natural Area Preserve. If you choose to visit, be aware that regular visitors are asked to remain on the 2 mile trail to avoid crushing native plants and the sensitive cryptobiotic soil crusts, communities of living organisms that help prevent erosion and feed nearby plants. Although butterflies were not abundant, nine species were detected on our visit including Western and Pale Tiger Swallowtails, Becker's White, Cabbage White, Boisduval's Blue, Clouded Sulphur, Coronis Fritillary, Ochre Ringlet and Juba Skipper. Mustard was the most common nectar source. Also present were Purple Sage, Lomatium, Fiddlehead, Yarrow, Globe Mallow, Eriogonum thymoides and Eriogonum heracleoides. In addition to butterflies and native plants, there are other items of interest. Cracks in the basalt cliffs of the canyon support the protected Basalt Daisy. The plants are high on the cliff face and difficult to see without binoculars or a zoom lens. The Natural Area designation for Selah Cliffs was created for the protection of this species. We were awed by beautiful lichens and the fauna present, especially the Common Side-blotched Lizard with its turquoise and orange patterns. The area can become quite hot, so the end of our trip was spent near the only water present in the preserve. Unsurprisingly, this is where half of our species were sighted!



Side-blotched Lizard.
(T. Thurber)



Basalt Daisy. (B. Skotland)



Becker's White. (M. Weiss)

2026 Field Trip Protocols

Non-consumptive appreciation of butterflies is central to our purpose, basic to our approach, and the guiding principle behind general membership field trips. Collecting of adult butterflies is not allowed on these trips. Collecting of eggs and larvae for rearing is accepted on condition that individuals raised to adult stage are released at their original location. This is to prevent the introduction of genes adapted to a different locality, which can lead to outbreeding depression.

HOW TO SIGN UP: Anyone can sign up by contacting the trip leader. (See trip description for contact information)

Check our website and Facebook page for last-minute additions (Flash Field Trips!).

DIFFICULTY RATINGS:

- 1 Easy, mostly by car, minor walking along roads.
- 2 Fairly limited walking, some slopes may involved.
- 3 Moderate, 3-4 miles walking, or with some slopes.
- 4 Difficult, hiking required off road, may have short steep sections, total of 4 miles or so.
- 5 Strenuous, extended hiking on trails with steep terrain, 4-8 miles.

Board Members

Committees

President	Liz Kuehn	pres@wabutterflyassoc.org	Science Advisor	Jon Pelham
Vice President	Dan Dunphy	vp@wabutterflyassoc.org	Membership	Reg Reisenbichler
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At-Large	Carolyn Heberlein		Publicity/Website	Carolyn Heberlein
At-Large	Paulette Murphy		Newsletter	Regina Johnson
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