



ISSUE #134 | RESPECT BEER

# Beeradvocate

## THE HOPS ISSUE

ARE PROPRIETARY HOPS THE FUTURE OF BREWING?

NEIPA: THE BIRTH OF A BEER STYLE

LAWSON'S FINEST LIQUIDS MAKES A SPLASH

*Plus: Quick and Easy*  
**HOPPY CEVICHE**

**HIKING THE PACIFIC  
CREST ALE TRAIL**

**YAKIMA VALLEY'S  
INVISIBLE WORKFORCE**



# LIQUID REWARDS



## THE BARS AND BREWERIES OF THE PACIFIC CREST TRAIL

by Catie Joyce-Bulay  
illustration by Tom Woolley



At Oregon's Thunder Island Brewing, customers can pay it forward by donating to a beer fund for thru hikers.



Located in the Cascade Range, Washington's Dru Bru is open year round.

There's no better end to a day of good hiking than a cold beer. And more time in the woods only intensifies the craving. Pacific Crest Trail thru-hikers know this well. Emerging from the wild after racking up several 20-mile days in a row, beer and food are often the first stop. Caked in dirt and sweat, with a fierce need for calories, hikers' standards may be low, but they don't have to be—there are solid beer options along the 2,658-mile Mexico-to-Canada footpath, and a surprising number of trail town bars and breweries welcome these smelly, enigmatic nomads with open arms.

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*-Mountain Rambler Brewery  
co-owner Joe Lane*



## CALIFORNIA

The PCT begins with a large swath of desert that snakes in and out of rugged mountains. Surrounded by the San Bernardinos at mile 266 of the trail, the Bavarian-esque town of Big Bear Lake is a frequented resupply stop and a 9-mile hitchhike from the trail. Walkable from the hostel, **Big Bear Lake Brewing Company** is a cozy place for hikers to convene and refuel. The deep-fried avocado bomb is as delicious as it sounds and pairs perfectly with the brewery's High Altitude Hefeweizen. Wrightwood, one of the friendliest mountain towns on the PCT and an easy hitch from mile 369, is another popular stop. With its festive taxidermy namesake wielding a can of Bud Lite behind the bar, the **Raccoon Saloon** is arguably the trail's best dive bar. You've got to just order whatever domestic is on special, pick a song on the jukebox and play a game or two of pool with the locals.

Halfway through the Sierra Nevada Mountains the trail gets serious and an hour-long hitch from Onion Valley Trailhead to Bishop is worth the trip. After spending days crossing snowy elevations like 13,153-foot Forester Pass, the trail's highest, a hearty Dark Star Imperial Stout at **Mountain Rambler Brewery** tastes like liquid manna.

“Hiking the PCT is very much a wilderness endeavor, but much of the trail is a social experience, and many memories are shaped over pints in pubs along the trail,” says co-owner Joe Lane, who thru-hiked it in 2000. “It's cool to be a small part of their long trip.”



CANADA



BEAR'S  
DEA PUB



CRUX  
FERMENTATION  
PROJECT



DRU BRU  
BREWERY

THUNDER ISLAND  
BREWING COMPANY



ETNA  
BREWING  
COMPANY

WILLAMETTE  
PASS

CALDERA  
BREWERY

BREWER'S  
UNION  
LOCAL  
180

CALLAHAN'S  
LODGE & RESTAURANT

VANCOUVER

SEATTLE

PORTLAND

BRIDGE OF  
THE GODS

# THE PACIFIC CREST ALE TRAIL



MOUNTAIN  
RAMBLER  
BREWERY



RACCOON  
SALOON



BIG BEAR LAKE  
BREWING COMPANY



MAMMOTH  
BREWING  
COMPANY

FORESTER PASS

SAN DIEGO

LOS ANGELES

PACIFIC OCEAN

MEXICO

SAN FRANCISCO

PAYSTREAK  
BREWING  
COMPANY



N ← +

The Sierras keep going well beyond Bishop though, so another break in outdoors-loving Mammoth Lakes around mile 900 is a welcome reprieve from challenging climbs and post-holing through snowfields. The town is easily accessible by shuttle from Red's Meadow, a rustic trailside resort and pack station some hikers find hard to leave.

"I spent an extra zero [a term for a hiker's rest day] in Red's Meadow due to all the great people buying me beer," says Jeff "Roadshow" Poe, a thru-hiker based in Olympia, Wash.

But a hiker doesn't always have to wait for town to quench their thirst. Generous trail angels sometimes leave beers in coolers near road crossings. In the heat of the summer, these typically cheap, easy drinking lagers are often the pick-me-up a hiker needs to crush those extra miles. If beer-seeking backpackers make it into Mammoth Lakes however, they'll be encouraged to stop at long-established **Mammoth Brewing Company** by a pile of packs outside the door. Tasting room manager Chase Williams says the brewery loves hikers, but prefers their odiferous backpacks to stay outside, a common sentiment. Thirsty mountain rambles frequent the beer garden during peak season, sipping Mammoth's Wild Sierra Session Saison, flavored

with the same pinyon pine needles they've been traipsing through on their way north.

By Etna trail travelers have covered 1,597 miles and are afforded a pleasant surprise with not one, but two local breweries in this town of 700. Follow the unassuming "down the hill" sign to **Etna Brewing Company and Brew Pub**, where hikers fit in with the regulars among red-checked tablecloths. Since you're in the State of Jefferson territory, honor its short-lived but bold notions on self-governance with the full-flavored XX Imperial IPA.

Helping to revitalize the sleepy Main Street is **Paystreak Brewing Company**, which saw its first hiker season in 2017. With a "PCTers Welcome" sign in the window, the no-frills brewery and restaurant offers hikers healthy food options, a growing list of beers like a Golden Ale and an ESB, and a place to charge phones.

## OREGON

Since 2008, Ashland's **Callahan's Lodge and Restaurant** has helped hikers celebrate the momentous occasion of crossing the Oregon border with a free pint of beer. A 0.8-mile spur trail leads hikers to the swanky inn where they're invited to camp on the lawn, shower, and

do laundry for a small fee, but many splurge for a jacuzzi tub room and take advantage of the bottomless spaghetti plate special.

"There is nothing you can do wrong with hikers," explains owner Donna Bergquist. "They've done without for so long that they are a thousand times more appreciative than the average guest... And other guests love chatting them up and finding out who they are."

Ten miles north, in the hippy university town of Ashland, you'll find **Caldera Brewing Company**. Sidle up beside a local in the brewery's airy taproom with its extensive beer list (45 taps at last count) and gourmet menu, and you know you've landed in Oregon. If you're too exhausted to know where to start, try the award-winning Ashland Amber.

From here, the trail traverses its flattest stretch. Although easily accessible by hitch from the Willamette Pass Trailhead (mile 1,905), tiny Oakridge is better known for its great mountain biking. If hikers do venture into town for beer however, they'll be transported from the lichen-draped forest to a public house inspired by the British Isles. **Brewer's Union Local 180** is one of the few places in the state where you can sip an imperial pint of cask-conditioned English-style ale.

## OK, WHICH ONE OF THESE BAD BOYS IS IT?

Height	Growler 1: SS Growler by Brewsuit.com	Growler 2: The World's 1st and notorious flip-top stainless steel growler designed for craft beer	Growler 3: STEP FORWARD and ask your favorite brewery, fill spot or homebrew supplier for the Most Wanted Line Up of our Single and Double-vacuum, Packed 32 & 64oz SS GROWLERS®	Growler 4: Perfect for Beach Games, Concerts, Golfing, Biking, Camping, Hiking, Boating, Loafing
7'0"				
6'6"				
6'0"				
5'6"				
5'0"				
4'6"				
4'0"				
3'6"				
3'0"				

@ssgrowlers

INDEPENDENCE MATTERS

For Wholesale Rap Sheet please inquire at [www.brewsuit.com](http://www.brewsuit.com)

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Further north, and before heading back into the mountains, beer-loving hikers often take a break from the lava and obsidian fields at McKenzie Pass in Bend. “Hikers that I shuttled last year were amazed by Bend,” says Woody Keen, a local trail angel. “Their eyes got huge as we drove through town: good food, lots of breweries, and of course, legal dispensaries.”

While you can’t go wrong at any of Bend’s more than 20 breweries, **Crux Fermentation Project** is a Pacific Crest Trail Association sponsor. Sip a barrel-aged sour while watching the sun set over the mountains or play a game of cornhole on the sprawling lawn with a PCT Porter in hand. Appropriately, the can is adorned with artwork from the trail journal of local hiker Kolby “Condor” Kirk.

Before the trail walking mass crosses into Washington via the iconic Bridge of the Gods at mile 2,144, it swarms the little town of Cascade Locks. Trekkers will feel at home in riverside **Thunder Island Brewing Company’s** industrial-style taproom where hiking memorabilia

adorns the walls and thirsty visitors can get a free pint from the patron-fueled pay-it-forward trail magic system. Since Thunder Island’s first hiker season in 2014, it has served over 1,600 free pints to deserving hikers. Excess funds go to the PCTA (PCTA trail crews also get a beer on the house). “They have been working tirelessly around the clock to restore the trails that were destroyed during the Eagle Creek Fire,” says co-owner Caroline Park of one of many fires that closed down a large portion of trail in 2017.

## WASHINGTON

Hundreds of miles beyond the Columbia River, hikers face some of the PCT’s most rugged landscape in Washington’s Northern Cascades. A good brew is harder to come by here without a serious detour, but a short walk down the ski slopes of Snoqualmie Pass brings you to another PCTA sponsor, **Dru Bru Brewery**, just off Interstate-90 by car or mile 2,393 on foot.

In the chic après ski taproom, migrating



Crux Fermentation Project





backpackers converge with vacationing families and jetlagged brewers on their way from Seattle's airport to the Yakima Valley for the annual hop harvest. Try Pacific Crest Pale, a hazy Pale Ale hopped with Eukanot and Mosaic. "During late August and September, it is a normal occurrence to have a brewer from Ireland, South Africa, or Tennessee sitting right next to a thru-hiker from an equally distant location," says co-owner Sara Giuffrida.

## CANADA

Although the trail officially ends at Monument 78 deep in the Washington woods, most hike an additional eight miles into Canada's Manning Park Resort. Then, at the onsite **Bears Den Pub** they'll hunker down by the fire-place under the wood-carved mounted bear in this bar that resembles a log cabin. Pairing a local ale with pou-tine—a Canadian classic—is the perfect calorie-loaded post-hike reward. The last official trail beer is bound to be a little bittersweet, but by the second round, most hikers are already plotting their next hike. ■

Walla Walla, Washington-based freelance writer Catie "Comet" Joyce-Bulay thru-hiked the PCT in 2015 with her husband "Not-a-Bear."

# MEET THE BREWING HIKER

Matt Leef, trail name Brewhiker, has two passions: beer and hiking. After graduating with a degree in fermentation sciences from Oregon State University and following a short stint with Boston Beer Company, the San Diego native decided to hike the PCT. Not wanting to abandon brewing, he packed some yeast—a unique *Saccharomyces* strain from White Labs that could withstand drastic temperature changes—and dry malt extract and set off on the trail in 2016. He completed 1,700 PCT miles before a bad fire season left him short of completion. The next year he hiked another 1,000 miles, brewing and foraging for bittering agents along the way.

Leef often replaced hops with sage (plentiful throughout the California desert), pine needles, and pine cones, and once boiled a Steinbier with hot rocks. Sometimes he omitted bitter ingredients altogether. In Washington, he turned to

making berry wines, using the plentiful blackberries, blueberries, and huckleberries along the trail.

Taking a break at a brew festival in Northern California's Downieville, he procured some hops. "I pulled off a few vines, strapped them to my pack, and left them to dry for a few days, then on a lake in the mountains made an IPA," says Leef. "I wrapped the fermenter in tinfoil to avoid sun exposure. It was one of the best hoppy beers I've had."

To date, his yeast has traveled 4,000 miles with him including on the PCT, the 153-mile San Diego Trans-County Trail, and the 811-mile Death Q Trail, which crosses Death Valley. In 2018, while working at Hostel California in Bishop, Calif., a popular stay for PCT hikers, he brewed on section hikes and scaled up his Sage Saison from a typical pint-sized batch he ferments in an old Dr. Pepper bottle in his pack to five gallons—enough to share with co-workers and thru-hikers.

## FOLLOW @BREWHIKER ADVENTURES ON INSTAGRAM



Death Q Brew Batch 1. Restarting my hiking culture after last brewing on the San Diego Trans County Trail in January. | March 6, 2018



Batch #5 of #pct2017 brewed at Deadfall Lake over a campfire with #wildsage from 20 feet away and water from the lake. | August 2, 2017



First of many fruit beer batches in Washington. This was my second blackberry batch followed by 2 blue/huckleberry batches. Color went very #purple #trailbrew #pct2017 | September 12, 2017



Throwback to that time I brewed beer on top of the highest peak in the lower 48. This was taken inside the Whitney Hut on July 1st 2016. | January 22, 2018