What I Did on My Summer Vacation:

The summer is often a time for catching up. For students, they might take one or two classes to get ahead on credits for the upcoming year, or begin data collection for their thesis. For MES staff and faculty, the summer is the time for updating program resources, handbooks, syllabi, and preparing to welcome a new group of graduate students in the fall.

Summer is also a time to have adventures. Pacific Northwest summers are incredibly beautiful. Long and warm days bring access to high alpine hiking and camping near our multiple mountain ranges and old growth forests, and opportunities to get out on the water, whether in a lake, river, ocean, or one of Olympia’s several Puget Sound inlets.

Assistant Director Andrea Martin spent 15 days backpacking through Oregon on the Pacific Crest Trail. She and a friend started at the California border, and walked more than 300 miles through a lot of late-season snow to finish their trek just north of the Three Sisters Wilderness.

Program Director and member of the faculty, Kevin Francis, had several hiking, backpacking, and trail running excursions in Washington’s North Cascades. One or two more sentences.

Core faculty member Shawn Hazboun spent part of her summer in Alaska, teaching a field based course for undergraduate students in the Wrangell-St Elias Mountains – the United States’ largest national park. Students in the course spent three weeks backpacking through Alaska’s wilderness completing data collection to assess botanical diversity, geologic succession, and environmental adaptation in the face of a rapidly changing climate.

Current student and MES Program Assistant Trudy Gritsch spent the first part of her summer away from the PNW Wonderland, and in her home state of Kansas, where she got married! One or two more sentences.