

# Wonderland Trail 08/19/2023 – 08/24/2023





## What is the Wonderland Trail?

The Wonderland Trail is a 1.4 mile long trail at Acadia National Park. Just kidding! It's a 93-97 mile, 23,000-27,000 vertical foot gain trail that circumnavigates Mount Rainier. The trail was carefully designed to avoid traveling on glaciers and technical terrain, although there's a few spots where a slip off the side of the trail would be ill-advised.

It's a strenuous, mountainous trail [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wonderland\\_Trail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wonderland_Trail)] – the most similar trail is probably “*Tour du Mont Blanc*” [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tour\\_du\\_Mont\\_Blanc](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tour_du_Mont_Blanc)] – with a lot less cell service and mountain huts. In 2020, when “*Ultra Tour Du Mont Blanc*” was canceled, some of the contestants went to Rainier to try and set a record on the Wonderland Trail instead. <https://fastestknowntime.com/route/wonderland-trail-wa> – shows that the records broken & re-broken during the 2020 season when organized races were shut down all are still standing today.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1x8x0au8RU>

There are 3 major resupply locations – Longmire (south), Mowich Lake (northwest), and White River / Sunrise (northeast). There's also a few roads on the southeast – Box Canyon, Reflection Lakes both have road access that can be used in emergencies or as a starting location depending on the condition of Steven's Canyon road. The trail can be completed clockwise or counterclockwise.

It is worth noting that while the trail is non-technical, it's not necessarily non-consequential, so it's worth a quick overview of the hazards (more details in Appendix). These hazards are not mutually exclusive – a person can fall into a creek, and emerge hypothermic and disoriented if they are fortunate enough to handle the river hazards.

Surprisingly, the innocuous looking Wonderland Trail might be more dangerous than a guided Rainier summit climb on the standard route<sup>1 2</sup>.

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1 Mount Rainier Climbing fatalities have declined per climber – previously at 1 / 3000 from 1950-1990, and now at 1 / 9000 from 1990-2010. Mostly due to modern weather forecasts.  
2 There is not a good statistic for the wonderland trail. But there's about 500 people per year & there was a wonderland-hiker fatality in the Winthrop Creek in 2018. So 1 / 2500, but not enough samples.

## Red Tape & Cast of Characters

It feels like yesterday that I lost the “Mount Rainier Early Access Lottery” in 2022. And 2023. It doesn’t make sense to bore people with the details of the permit system, but the quick summary is that a mix of the following are needed to make an itinerary.

1. Permit-lottery luck & coordination<sup>3</sup>
2. Start-time flexibility – 30% of campsites are reserved for last minute “walk-up permits”<sup>4</sup>
3. Shoulder season risk management<sup>5</sup>
4. Single-day distance flexibility<sup>6</sup>

But fortunately, a single permit win allows a trip size of up to 5 people, and Claire won the permit lottery! She invited Liz, Ariana, and myself along for the journey. Liz is a civil-engineer turned landscape-architect and was Claire’s college roommate. Ariana, Claire, and I are all Seattle software engineers who frequently hike and climb mountains in Washington.

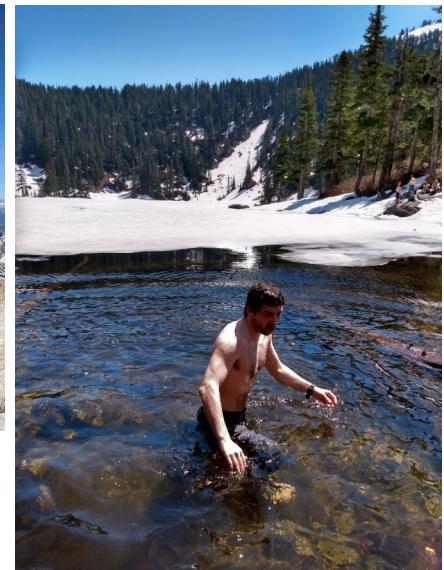
Claire



Ariana



Peter



Liz



<sup>3</sup> This favors groups of people that apply for many different contested permits, and agree to invite each-other if they win. *Half Dome Cables Route, John Muir Trail, The Wave, Mt. Whitney Trail, Enchantments, etc.*

<sup>4</sup> Generally good for locals, and for repairing itinerary’s that have fallen behind

<sup>5</sup> There are permit scraps that no one who won the lottery wanted. June or October usually have reservations that no one wants, for good reason. Either hiking the trail early season (with intense river crossings, snow on the route), or hiking the trail late season (winter storm possibilities, snow on the route)

<sup>6</sup> If half the sites are full, an itinerary will still work if a person can travel 15 miles per day, since they will pass about 3 campsites per day. But if a person can only travel 5 miles per day, a single missing campsite will result in being unable to select a full itinerary. There are also weather-related factors, where the weather & route conditions becomes more unpredictable the longer the trip.



Claire's Team!

## Itinerary

Claire wanted to push herself, so she decided on a 6-day itinerary. She won a very early lottery spot, so she was able to select a time in the middle of August – after the snow melts and before the fires start. Unfortunately the fires were a bit early this year, but nothing unbearable.

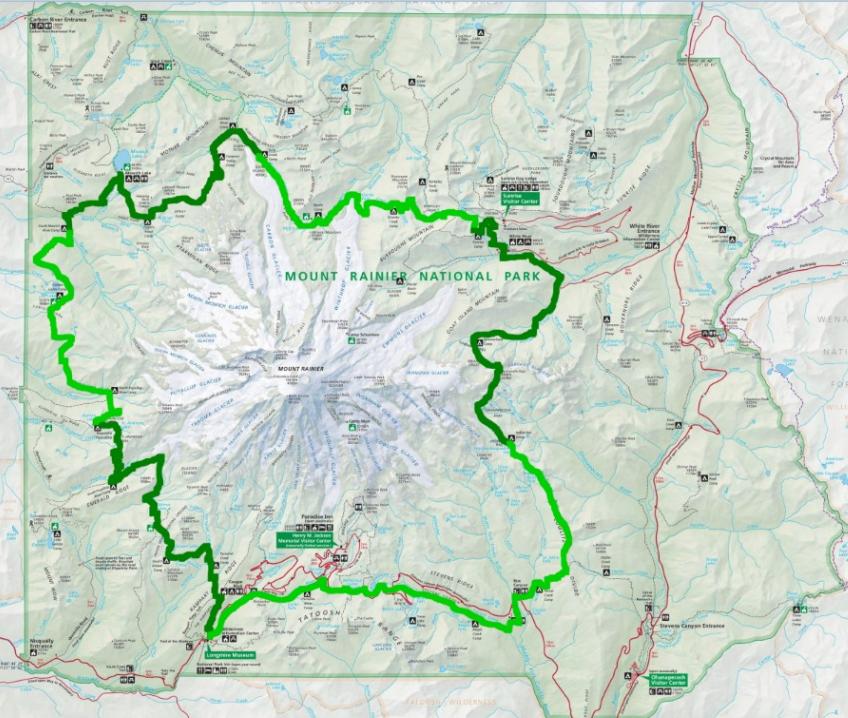
<https://hikingtahoma.com/Planner.html>

via Spray Park:

Day 1	Longmire	to	Klapatche Park	via	Spray Park	16.4 miles, ↑ 6800' ↓ 4000'
Day 2	Klapatche Park	to	South Mowich River	via	Spray Park	13.5 miles, ↑ 2200' ↓ 4900'
Day 3	South Mowich River	to	Dick Creek	via	Spray Park	14.2 miles, ↑ 5600' ↓ 4300' 
Day 4	Dick Creek	to	Sunrise Camp	via	Spray Park	12.4 miles, ↑ 5000' ↓ 2800'
Day 5	Sunrise Camp	to	Indian Bar	via	Spray Park	15.2 miles, ↑ 3600' ↓ 4900' 
Day 6	Indian Bar	to	Longmire	via	Spray Park	21.3 miles, ↑ 4600' ↓ 6900'

93.0 miles, ↑ 27800' ↓ 27800' [Export](#) [Import](#) [Share](#) [Reset](#) [Auto CW](#) [Auto CCW](#)

[about alternate routes](#) | [about the Auto buttons](#)



The permit-booking website has some defects – notably it requires every single day to be under 17.5 miles, except for the first and last day<sup>7</sup>. The website does not consider vertical gain. Day 1 was hard, with too much vert, while day 2 was on the short side. It would have been preferable to camp at South Puyallup River, rather than Klapatche Park. If the team camped at South Puyallup River though, it would have been over 17.5 miles to South Mowich River. This would pull in South Mowich River all the way to Golden Lakes, making 6 days no longer feasible.

Day 1	Longmire	to	South Puyallup River	via	Spray Park	12.3 miles, ↑ 4700' ↓ 3200'
Day 2	South Puyallup River	to	South Mowich River	via	Spray Park	17.6 miles, ↑ 4300' ↓ 5700'

A preferable but unbookable itinerary – 17.6 miles on day 2.

<sup>7</sup> This can be overridden in person at the permit office, but not during the lottery season.

## An Inauspicious Start – Day 1 – Longmire → Klapatche Park South Puyallup River Camp

The plan was to leave at 5am but in reality it ended up being 5:36am. I wasted time doing rather uncritical things like “mapping out every single lake along the wonderland trail” instead of “packing my backpack”. I also went to grab some food at QFC. Made sure to get lots of fresh fruits to make sure I had enough heavy items to carry up the mountain.

There was a bit of a snarl almost immediately – what was intended to be a 45-minute detour to drop off our food cache at White River CG turned into a ~2.5 hour ordeal due to the sunrise visitor center line, pushing our start time from 9am to 11am. And the ranger station is a good 3 miles past the entry line. We considered sending 1 person to run past the line on foot, then hitchhike or run past the car line. But it’s not possible to run with two five-gallon buckets of food, and we figured it would be hard to hitch a ride from people we just ... cut in line by running past the cars on foot... At least the line was long enough that we finished eating all of the heavy fruits I got from QFC!

I also made an inadvisable drive to Paradise – I figured since Liz had traveled all the way here, may as well see the Paradise region as well of MRNP when we drove past! Only 20 minutes extra! But the alarm bells were ringing, it was 11:30am and we hadn’t started a 16 mile, 6000+’ vertical foot day in August. At any rate, we got to Longmire.



12:00pm – Off we went at noon! The stoke was high! The team was doing well, and having a fantastic time. Well except for me since I got stung by a ground-hornet.

2:00pm – The team had gone 4 miles and 1700ft of vert in about 2 hours. The pace was solid, but the astute observer might start noticing there's about 6 hours of daylight remaining and still a good bit to go. But I wasn't that astute, and decided this was the perfect time to go on a detour. Mt. Ararat (5985ft) was 600 vertical ft and 2 miles roundtrip off the trail, with the intersection at 6.7 miles. To avoid subjecting the team to my side-quest, I went ahead solo to build up a lead so I wouldn't get too far behind.

2:53pm – I reached the saddle at Indian Henry's Hunting Ground (6.7 miles from Longmire) and dropped the pack. Claire was skeptical I could pull off Mt. Ararat in a reasonable time – but since they had to eat lunch anyway it wasn't a huge deal if I missed. I promised her it'd take me 30 minutes, which in theory would avoid any delay since I had built up a ~1 mile lead in the past hour. She said something prescient about Mt. Ararat not being as smooth as a running track before I left.



Ariana and Liz @ Indian Henry's Hunting Ground

3:17pm – On summit of Mt. Ararat. There were many bushes blocking which slowed progress up the mountain especially since I was eating my subway sandwich and only had one free hand – it was indeed not a track. On the way down I saw a shortcut – just 100ft separated me from the kautz creek trail! Unfortunately it was 30ft of class 4<sup>8</sup> down so I had to go back the long way. Just small enough for the cliff to hide from the topographic map.



Rainier from Mt. Ararat (5985ft)

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8 It's Claire's expedition, and it'd be incredibly rude to sprain an ankle doing something so unnecessary.

3:31pm – Back on the Wonderland Trail. Claire was right (again!), it took 38 minutes. But I had eaten my subway as well on Ararat so it was ok if I missed lunch.

3:59pm – Arrived at Mirror Lakes at the lunch spot – left hiking pole marking turnoff. Had a nice swim.

4:05pm – Team arrives at Mirror Lakes and starts lunch. Liz doesn't seem hungry though – highly unusual for 4 hours of tough hiking. Liz starts studying the map and is correctly concerned with nightfall but we have headlamps. I figure we are good as long as we cross the Tahoma Suspension Bridge before nightfall.



Mirror Lakes

~6pm – Ariana crosses Tahoma Creek suspension bridge.



~7pm – Liz starts pushing the pace massively up the hill to Emerald Ridge. Oof. I got stung by 4-5 more ground hornets! Why is it always me?

At first I thought it was my shorts. But then I realized that I'd been poking my hiking poles in holes in the ground, thinking that I'd get better traction like on snow. Turns out that hornets live underground in holes. Oops.

On Emerald Ridge, we saw some mountain goats, probably 3-5 of them.



Mountain Goat





Topping out Emerald Ridge



Wildfire-assisted sunset on Emerald Ridge

8:35pm – We round the corner and Liz starts hurling just after sunset 4 miles and 2,000 vertical feet from Klapatche Park. She eats a few pretzels and unsteadily rises. We can't risk having a 'personal growth journey' this early in the trip. The warning lights are on. Everyone's tired. While we could push for Kalpatche park, it feels like there very little redeeming value in pushing someone slowly up 5-6 hours in the night when we could do it in 2-3 hours the next day. And if there is a medical issue, hiking up the mountain, getting further from Longmire, is not useful.

There's two main possibilities – GI distress or Hyponatremia. Hyponatremia is likely when people are drinking water but not eating. Liz had probably drank ~3-4L but not ate – this would really need 3-4 grams of sodium to stay at equilibrium. The body then expels excess water via vomiting to keep electrolyte concentrations at a safe level. Unfortunately that tends to also expel food that might help... I got a ramen packet and Liz became very interested in eating my dry ramen and eating the salt. Looks like we have our answer – hyponatremia. Rare in the PNW vs the desert, but still possible if a person ascends 5k vert with a pack in the afternoon...

We found a small clearing and camped illegally 50 yards from the South Puyallup River Camp Toilet. Sorry MRNP rangers we'll plan better next time... at least South Puyallup River is a relatively uninteresting forest although that's not my call to make. A fun but tough day, between the traffic, hornets, and hurling.

Down but not out yet!



At least we saw unusual rocks the next morning that we would have missed!

## Puke & Rally – Day 2: South Puyallup River → South Mowich River

It's a slow-ish start the next morning, but it's hard to start much later than noon on day 1. It's nice having a stove and real food since the last time I was on this trail I was mostly eating peanut M&M's and liquid calories. With 4 people we can get away with a good bit of luxurious items like a tent, stove & gas, hammock, etc.

Liz and I had a quick discussion about our options. If she needed to exit, it made sense for me to head back from South Puyallup River to Longmire, and pull the car around to Mowich. I could then descend to South Mowich River, and she could drive away on day 3. This decision has to be made by Klapatche Park for me to have enough time to pull the car around and get to South Mowich by nightfall with a pack.<sup>9</sup> Liz said she doesn't bail or quit things, and that was that.

With the trip hanging in the balance, Claire hinted I should stay focused. I canceled today's side-quests Aurora Peak and Sunset Marker. Staying with the group would add more opportunities to assist if necessary and avoid unnecessarily committing the group to catching up with a tent that might be a few miles away at any given time.

Everyone crushed it today. Including everyone rotating carrying the tent! And I stopped getting stung by hornets now that I stopped poking holes in the ground with my hiking poles.

8:42am: Exit camp

10:42am: Arrive at Saint Andrews Lake. Snack & swim break.

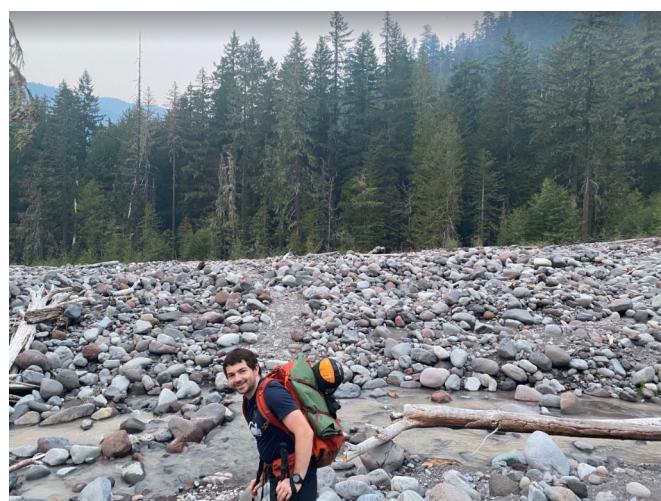


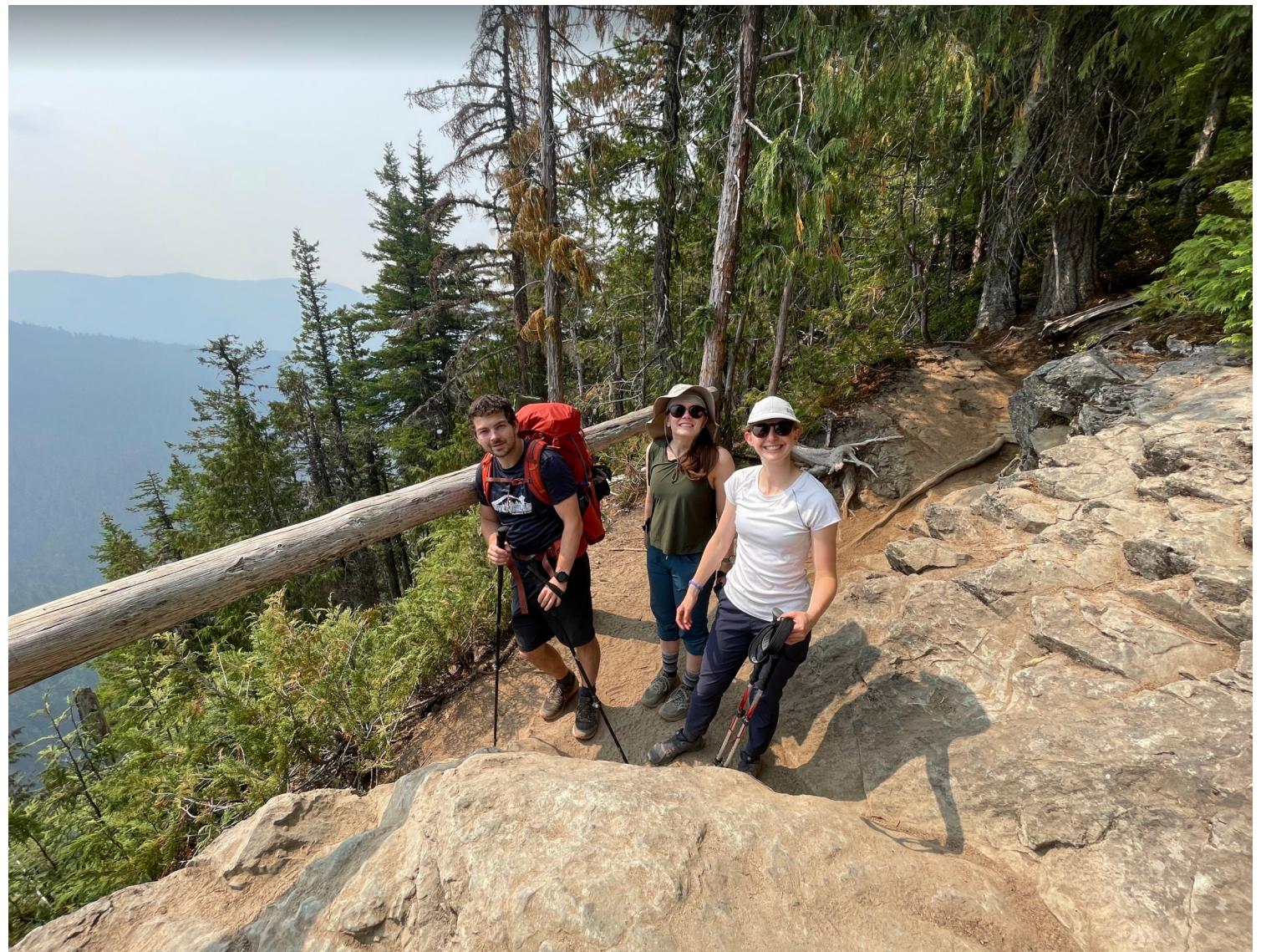
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<sup>9</sup> In a pinch, North Puyallup works as well, if Ariana or Claire carry my pack forward while I run back to get the car.

11:35am: Depart Saint Andrews Lake.

12:00pm: Pass Klapatche Park. It would not have been a good idea to push for Klapatche Park the previous night.





4:30pm: Arrive at Golden Lakes. We take a delightful swim in Golden Lakes. It's a little cool but near the surface it's lovely where the sun has warmed the water. We burn enough time relaxing that it's time to chase the sun.



6:00pm: Liz expresses interest in arriving at camp before sunset, and Claire realizes that she's never actually made it to camp by sunset a single time in all of our scuffed backpacking trips. Liz and I agree to proceed at 3mph until camp, while Claire and Ariana go at a more reasonable pace. Great conversation and time flies as we descend a gentle -10% grade to South Mowich River Camp.

8:00pm: Arrive at South Mowich River Camp with Liz. Tent is set up in the day! Ariana and Claire were happy to arrive to a set up camp just after dark.

While most of day-2 was a tree-tunnel with only occasional motivating vistas, getting back on track was its own reward. And golden lakes was a wonderful morale boost!

## The Escaping Garish Sleeping Bag – Day 3: South Mowich River → Mowich Lake → Dick Creek Camp

Another luxurious stove-cooked breakfast has us on the road at 8:28am. Perhaps a bit slow by thru-hiker standards but it's warm enough that we can take our time in the morning. I'm looking forward to a side-quest up Mt. Pleasant, and perhaps Fay Peak.

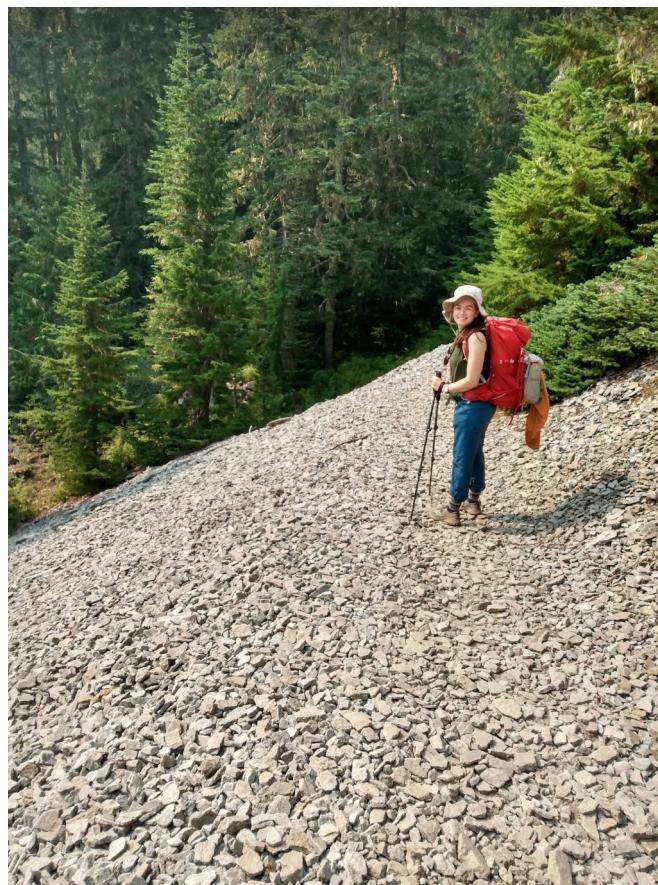
8:28 AM – Head up the mountain to Mowich Lake. I was expecting a good amount of day-hiker traffic, but I think almost everyone prefers to head north from Mowich Lake. After thinking about it, Spray Park, Knapsack Pass, and Ipsut Pass are all superb, non-committing day-hikes out of Mowich. Heading south from Mowich is more committing – and who wants to drive up a gnarly alpine national forest road only to immediately drop 2,000' vert back into the trees?

11:00 AM – Arrive at Mowich Lake. Our first glance at civilization in 3 days, suddenly we see tons of cars and tents. The rangers are unloading the buckets, and we all volunteer to carry buckets. Little did I know the cache is half a mile from the road!

We get our supplies, eat lunch, repack, and I swim at the lake. A bit colder than Golden Lakes.

12:49 PM – Depart Mowich Lake for Spray Park.

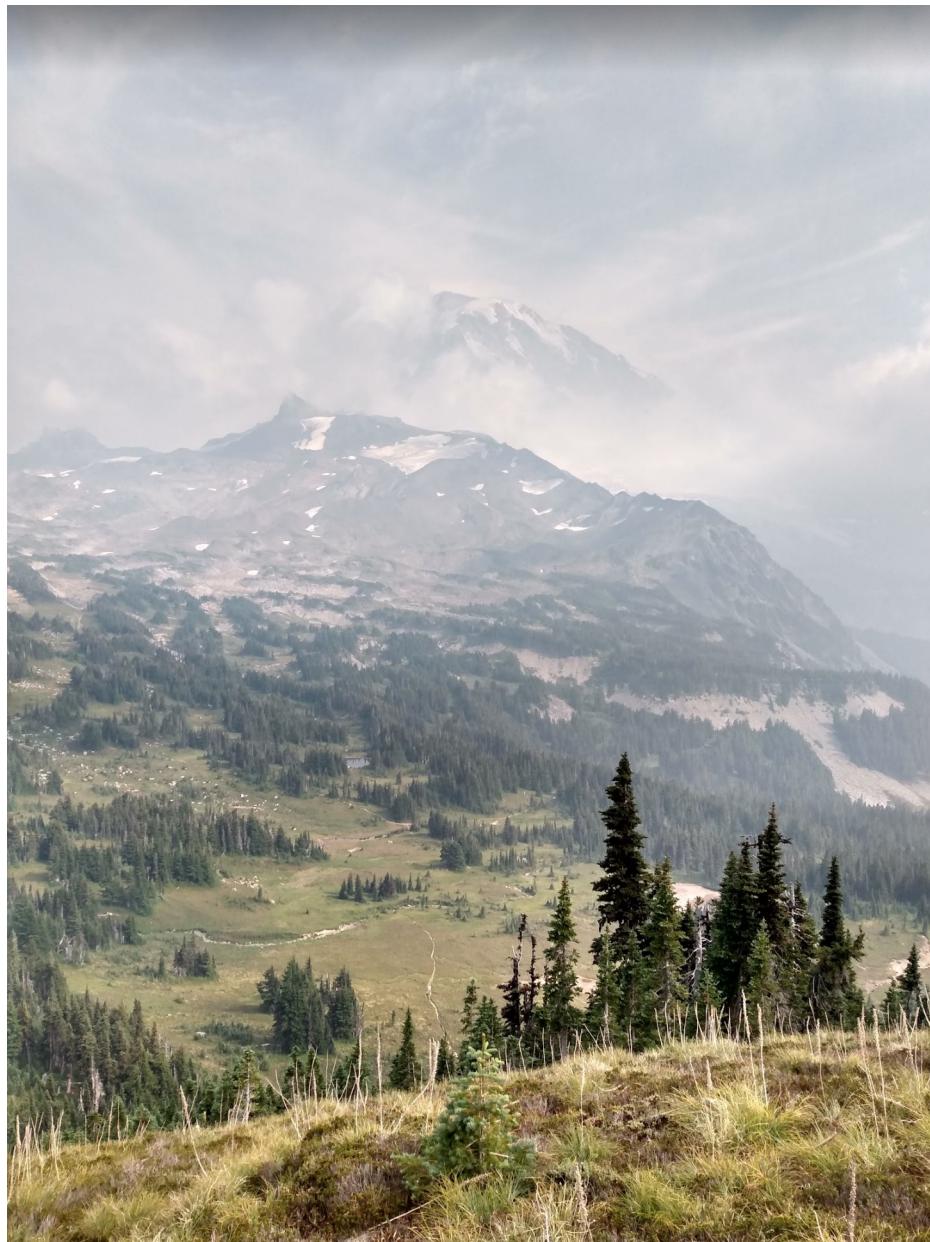
2:00 PM – Arrive at Spray Falls. I convinced people to go on a highly worthwhile 0.2 mile detour to Spray Falls, giant hundred foot waterfall. Well worth the detour, but perhaps we are low on time given how long we relaxed at Mowich Lake. Nice high-pressure shower.



2:30-3:00PM – Saw our bear of the trip – a hefty adult black bear. This one was used to people and didn't particularly respond to yelling or banging hiking poles. I decided to head north and climb Mt. Pleasant rather than have a showdown with the bear. [What did Ariana, Claire, and Liz do about the bear?]

~4:00PM – Mt. Pleasant (6421ft) took a good bit of effort from the trail at 5721ft. Since there was a bear *right there* I could not justify leaving my pack on the ground while I climbed it, so I carried it up. Imagine my surprise when I climbed down the back of Mt. Pleasant, ran down Knapsack Pass Trail and I rejoined the Wonderland Trail at ~6000ft. A vert refund! 50% off! Thanks Bear! [if I didn't bring the pack, I'd have had to descend to 5721ft to collect the pack]

I could see Ariana from the top of Mt. Pleasant with her red pack. She was headed up out of Spray Park, and I resolved to catch up as soon as I could!



Rainier & Wonderland from Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Pleasant Ridgeline, and Mt. Pleasant Summit Block



Enjoying Spray Park



~5:00PM – I catch my first glimpse of Claire around the corner. But then I see something funny on the map – Lee Peak (6589ft) has a USGS marker and is a mere 0.2 miles and 200 vertical feet away from the trail. How could I skip it? After summiting Lee the day is getting long though, I’m getting tired, and it’s time to focus on going to camp.



Lee Peak – It's as small as it looks.



USGS Employee takes a half-day

As I run down the snowfield from Lee, I see a garishly-styled couple pause. I’m wondering why they stopped, so I stop to talk for a bit. They tell me I should be careful running on the snow, since I might fall<sup>10</sup>. They look *really* out of it and tired, and tell me they are going to Mowich Lake [to bail out?]. I’m no one to talk about getting to camp after dark after my day 1 errors but it’s clear they are not going to get there by nightfall. I probably should have asked if they had headlamps since I had an extra. I head down wonderland.

Then I see Claire, racing towards me down the trail with no pack, a giant, garishly colored giant synthetic sleeping bag streaming behind her. Why is she sprinting down Wonderland the wrong way?

Before I could even crack jokes about Claire getting turned around on wonderland again<sup>11</sup> she kept racing down the trail past me. She had to be running from something – or chasing something. What’s going on?

<sup>10</sup> "It's the perfect texture for running. Very low impact and it's dry snow so your feet don't get wet. It's too nice to not be out here! [crash]" <https://www.cnn.com/videos/topvideos/2014/02/10/newday-must-see-moment-snow-blooper-make-it-warm.cnn>

<sup>11</sup> "no, you're going the wrong way!"

She started yelling after the garish-styled couple, who were then slowly trudging uphill, about to crest the ridge.

**It was their sleeping bag. They were about to get benighted and somehow managed to leave behind their sleeping bag at >6000ft above treeline.** Fortunately Claire found it, and was willing to chase them for half a mile uphill on the off chance it was their sleeping bag. And if there was any wind at all... it would have been gone. Suddenly I understand how people have died of hypothermia on this trail in August<sup>12</sup>.

Nonetheless, I have to give them some props for giving it a go. Ariana, Claire and Liz talked to them and they had flown here from Europe with a permit and no plan, grabbed supplies at the thrift store, and got pretty far around – perhaps even completed the trail.



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<sup>12</sup> Without a sleeping bag, they probably would not die on 08/21/2023 night unless they got lost above treeline. On 08/22/2023 night there was 37F rain and wind @6000ft – pretty serious depending on the cotton content of the garish clothes. As a point of reference, WillisWall (the person, not the mountain), was on the trail at this time with no tent, and delayed his speed attempt to avoid being caught in the storm above treeline. <https://www.williswall.com/willis-wall-blog/2023/8/26/wonderland-trail-35-821-232023>.

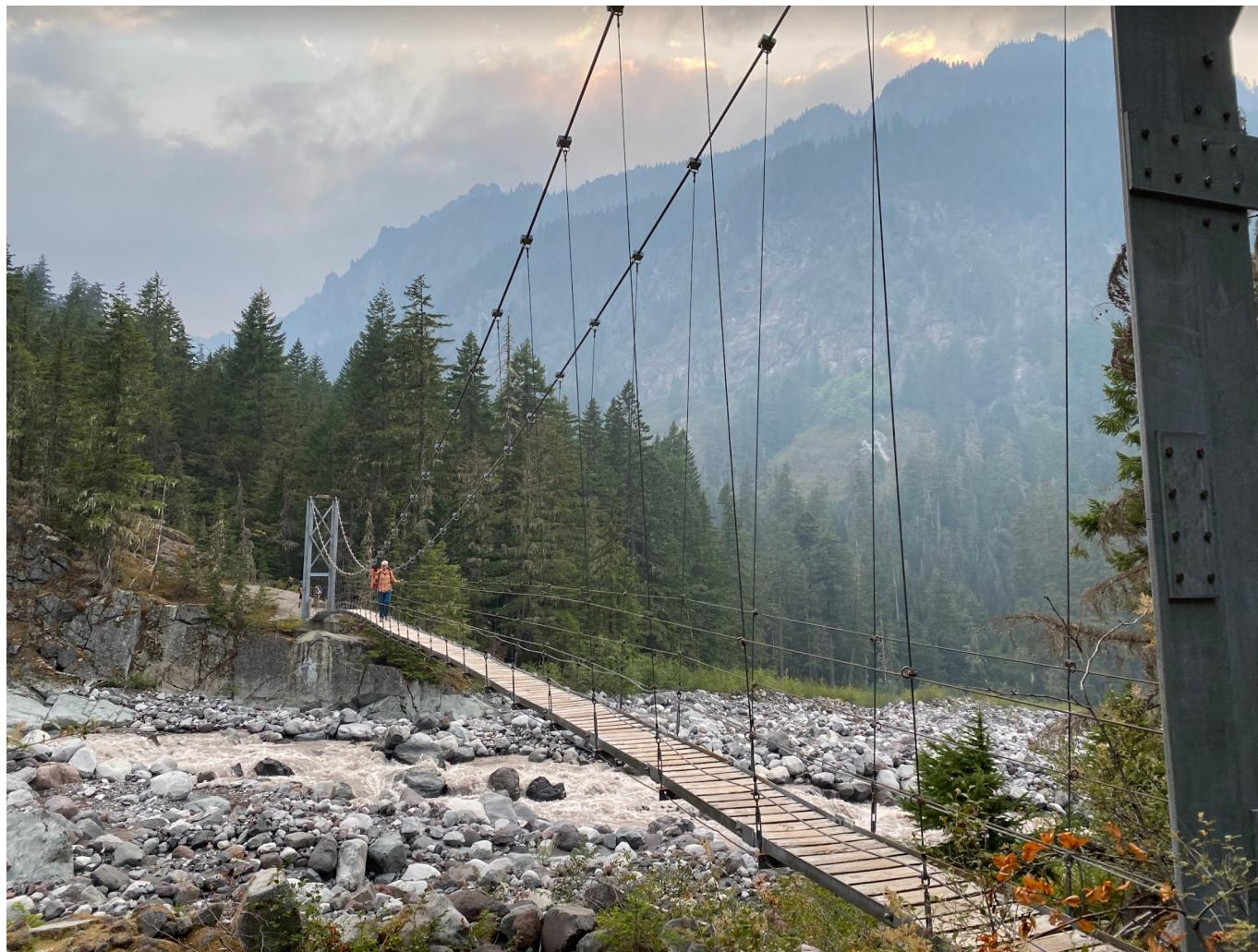
**~5:10pm** – Claire and I run through the last bit of Spray Park and catch Liz and Ariana. It's time for one of the longest descents of the route – from 6300ft down to 3200ft. This will allow us to traverse below the Carbon Glacier, the lowest Glacier in the lower 48 states.

I don't understand the details of how a glacier works, but the general gist is that the top half of the glacier gets more snow than melts each year. The snow turns to ice over time. Then it slowly slides down to the lower half of the glacier, where the ice is melting faster than accumulating. While the ice moves slowly relative to a living being, it's quite fast for a geologic process, and shapes all of the rock & hillsides under it.

The Carbon Glacier is unusually low. Above the Carbon Glacier on Rainier is the Willis Wall. The Willis Wall of Mt. Rainier is an eroding, 3,600ft vert cliff of crumbly volcanic rock. As if these rocks falling like artillery wasn't enough, there's a 100ft overhanging ice cliff at the top, which occasionally smashes down once it overhangs too much bringing down the rock with it. Needless to say no one climbs it, although a few people have done it. All of that junk falls onto the carbon glacier, forming an insulating blanket of rock over the ice over the summer. This blanket slows the melting of the ice, and allows it to get further down the valley. At its thickest point, the carbon glacier is >500ft thick.

As the crow flies, we are 2-3 miles from Mystic Lake Campsite. But that will take ~6 hours since it's necessary to descend 3,000ft, cross below the carbon on the suspension bridge, and ascend 3,000ft on the other side. Fortunately we don't have to get all the way to Mystic Lake – our campsite is Dick Creek Camp, which is just ~800'ft above the suspension bridge. Claire and I saw a large deer (or elk?) as we passed Cataract Valley camp.

**~7:20pm** – Ariana crosses the Carbon River suspension bridge





Peter and Claire cross the bridge.



Liz with the Carbon Glacier

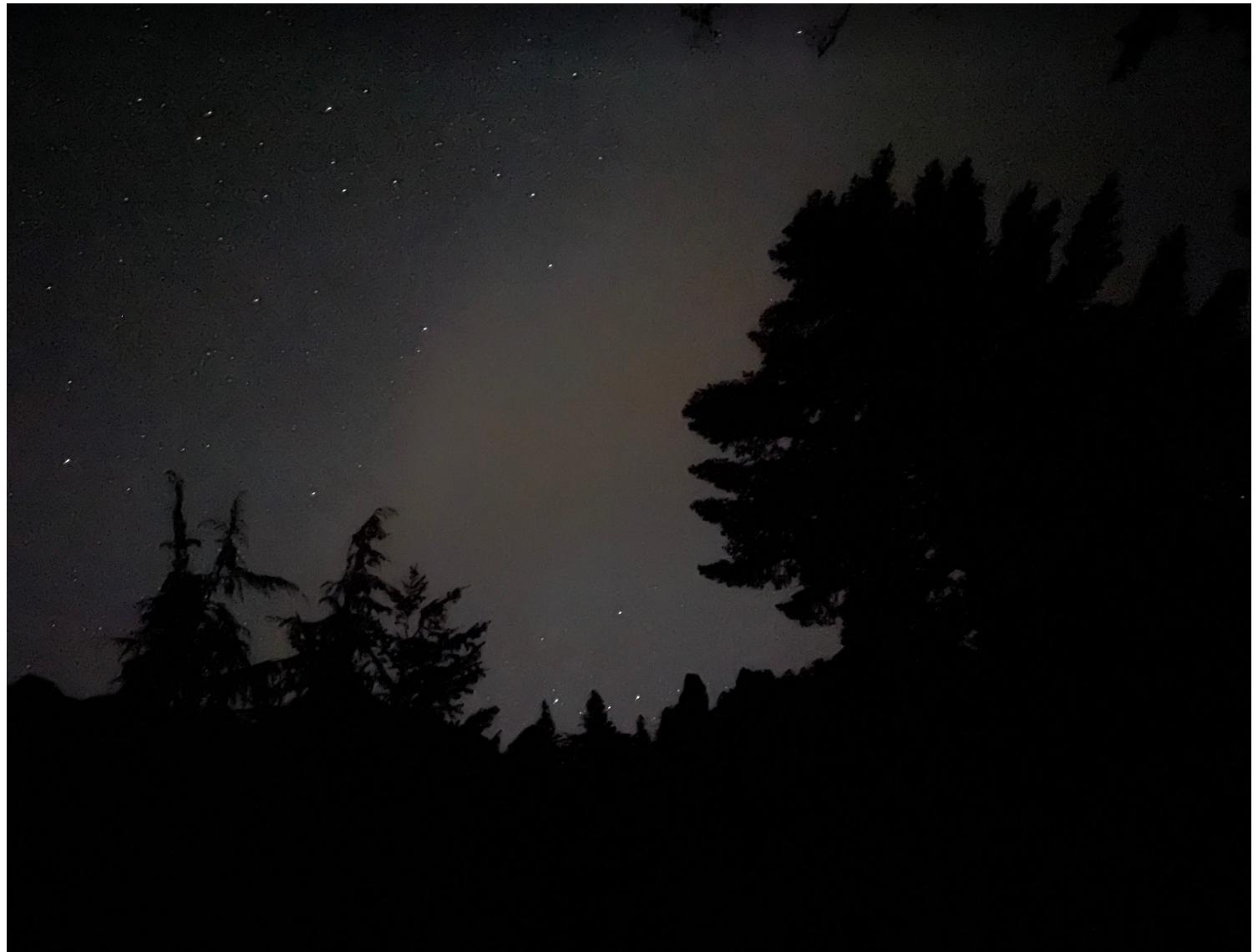


Exhausted, 30 minutes of vert, and 30 minutes of daylight

**~7:55pm** – I go ahead to the campsite. It is very close to darkness and manage to get the tent up right before dark. I hear a bunch of banging and crashing as the group makes a wrong turn and ascends some weird scree slopes outside.

**~8:10pm** – Everyone is back and happily eating and looking at the stars. I put the hammock up just to be ornery since I've been carrying it for 3 days and never used it.

**~9:00pm** – I head to sleep while Ariana, Claire, and Liz look at stars. I look directly forward and see the big dipper and call it a night. I'm exhausted from a tough day of peakbagging.



Claire Star Photo

## Closing Time at the Bar – Day 4: Dick Creek Camp to Sunrise Campsite

It's a chilly morning and we are again spoiled with the luxurious camp stove cooking breakfast. We meet our neighbor Stephanie, an ex-park-ranger PCT hiker who decided the wonderland trail was a better challenge and hitchhiked over here from the PCT. She said this trail is kicking her ass, and that the PCT is graded for horses at a max of +/-15%. But she's here doing it, 50 miles in.

She had some complex logistical situation I didn't understand, but the general gist was that she planned to do 2/3rds of the trail then hitchhike from Sunrise into Seattle, do a proper resupply, then hop back onto the PCT. She started somewhere in Oregon? Stephanie had a neat career path, as a park ranger for ~12 years in a variety of different places. She said she used to be in better shape until she switched jobs, being a park ranger is good for staying in shape. She told us she would leave the campsite first, but we'd beat her to sunrise camp, both of our destinations. She would be correct on both counts. Stephanie was predictably good at packing up and exited about 30 minutes before us.

Ariana, Claire, and I are all familiar with this section, since we camped at the same site a month ago on the training hike. That original hike was a tough one for Ariana's side.<sup>13</sup>

8:00 AM – WillisWall (the person) passes our campsite, although I was too busy packing to notice & introduce myself. <https://www.williswall.com/willis-wall-blog/2023/8/26/wonderland-trail-35-821-232023> – 30:50-31:50. This Rainier regular (35<sup>th</sup> wonderland trail circumnav, 68 years old) would expand the gap from 20 minutes to 50 minutes despite us going all-out for the snack bar. *His pack is 12lb including food and water.*

8:20 AM – Depart camp. Each day a little earlier.

9:45 AM – Arrive at Mystic Lake. I go for a cold swim, not joined by the group. At this point, we do some math and realize that the sunrise bar is going to close at 5pm. It's going to be close. Claire and I were tasked with making a run for the sunrise bar! We had no idea what food was being served, so at this point it was necessary to make a food tier list while walking towards Winthrop Creek.

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*13 Last time, Ariana had a giant blister on her toe on July 2nd and decided to 'nap right here' in the middle of the trail. Right in the center. No sleeping pad or anything, just lying on the ground. Initially I thought I should try and at least carry her to the next switchback. It's a bit uncouth to block the entire trail to sleep, but on the other hand if you are that tired people will understand. She got some better trailrunners and did a ton of training since. And the training worked unreasonably effectively.*

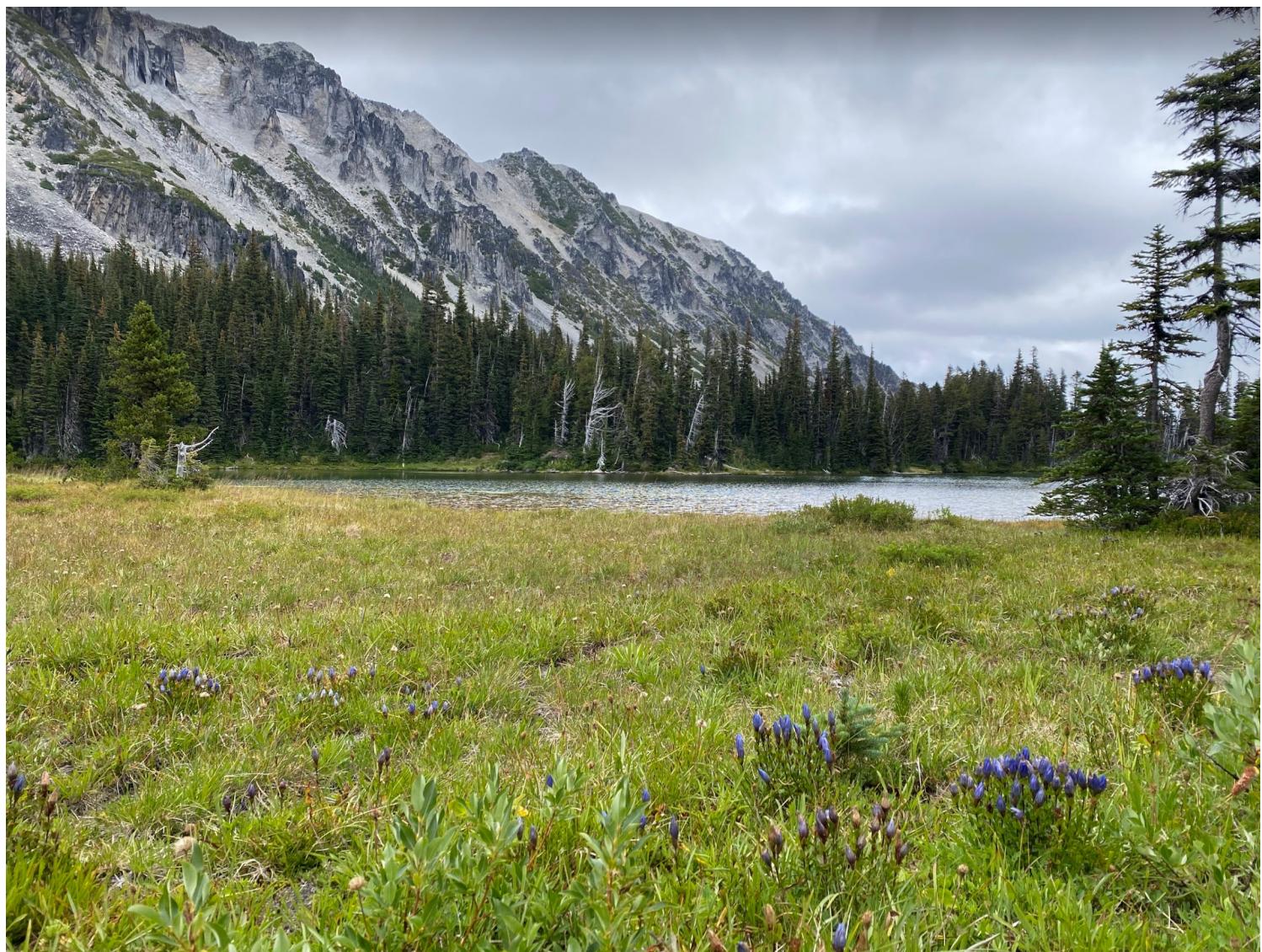
*Ariana's elapsed time on 07/02/2023: 12 hours 24 minutes*

*Ariana's elapsed time on 08/26/2023: 9 hours 30 minutes*

*Some of this can be chalked up to a longer break in mystic lake in July, a bit to sunrise camp being a slightly different location than sunrise parking lot, perhaps it's the magic shoes. There's no way around it that she did the same route and was done at 5:30pm instead of 9:30pm.*

*I did the math on the mystic lake climb after she gassed me while I was trying to eat some doughnuts – Ariana was moving at 85% of her 1-hour vertical-feet-per-hour test, with 3 days of fatigue & with a 9-hour day ahead. The only explanation is that her 1-hour vertical-feet-per-hour test result would now be significantly different. How did that happen in under 2 months, for someone who was already fit?*

*Whatever it was, it worked.*



Mystic Lake

**Liz Food Tier List:**

S-Tier: Hot chocolate or chocolate milk, Salad, Soups except Fish, Potatoes

A-Tier: Pizza

B-Tier: Burgers

C-Tier: Wings

F-Tier: Spicy foods, Beers

**Ariana Food Tier List:**

S-Tier: Non-caffeinated beverage, juice, Burgers with mustard (no ketchup)

A-Tier: Spaghetti

B-Tier: Pizza

C-Tier: Ciders

F-Tier: N/A

12:10 PM – Arrive at Winthrop Creek (4605ft). Armed with our memorized knowledge of Ariana and Liz's food preferences, Claire and I begin to grind up the hill. The plan is to drop the pack at sunrise camp, then jog the 1.3 mile trail to the sunrise bar.



Rainier socked in above the Winthrop Glacier

1:50 PM – Claire and I arrive at Skyscraper pass (6714ft). Considered a quick blitz to skyscraper mountain (7,078') but poor weather conditions convinced us to stay on task. I think we could have gotten it with a <30 minute round trip, but it would have been close. Lunch break!



Ariana underneath skyscraper mountain (above). Liz with Burroughs mountain range in the background. (below)



~3:00 PM – Claire and I pass frozen lake at 6700ft. Although we didn't see it. It's a reservoir so I can't swim in it.

3:30 PM – Claire and I arrive at camp and drop our packs in the bear boxes

4:00 PM – Claire and I roll into sunrise SNACK BAR. It closes at 5pm, so we decide to eat our food hot, wait until the last minute before closing, then bring back Ariana and Liz's 'orders' to the best of our interpretation. There were hot dogs, salads, and clam chowder.

4:50 PM – Claire and I each ate a hot dog and half a clam chowder, then went back. We got Ariana and Liz each a hot dog, a salad, a drink (hot chocolate & non-caffeinated soda), and I grabbed a sandwich as well.

5:30 PM – Ariana and Liz had already set up camp, and Claire and I return from Sunrise Snack Bar with the dinners. It's Liz's birthday and she turned 25 on the trail.

~6:00 PM – Hammock goes up

~6:30PM – Stephanie rolls in

~8:00 PM – Rain is eminent. Hammock goes down, packs go in bear box, and I jump in the tent.

~8:15 PM – Floodgates open<sup>14</sup>

~8:18 PM – Ariana, Liz, and Claire pile into the tent. It felt great to be inside the tent just in time for all the rain to really pound the tent.



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<sup>14</sup> WillisWall, an experienced ultrarunner, made the tough decision to bivy instead of pushing through the night as planned at panhandle gap. <https://www.williswall.com/willis-wall-blog/2023/8/26/wonderland-trail-35-821-232023>

## The Counterproductive Coffee Run — Day 5a: Sunrise Camp → Indian Bar Campground

In the morning of day 5, we were pleasantly surprised with our tent blocking 99% of the water. It's never 100%, but it was enough that our sleeping bags and clothes were quite dry. It was lucky that the bear-boxes are waterproof, since I had not been waterproofing my pack. Usually I don't backpack in the rain, and it rains so rarely in August in the PNW that I've gotten quite lazy about water.

8:42 AM – Ariana, Liz, and Claire start the descent to White River CG. I am sent to sunrise snack bar to acquire coffee (since I had eaten '5 cups worth' of Ariana's instant coffee) and toilet paper. Unfortunately the SNACK BAR opens at 11am! This gives me a great idea for a prank though. I picked up a discarded fancy coffee cup...

9:00 AM – Instead, I go to the gift shop in hopes of finding some instant coffee to give Ariana. This was also unsuccessful – this is an educational gift shop, with books! Instead I purchase a 1.5lb book, "*The Measure of a Mountain*". What's a backpacking trip without an unnecessary, heavy, non-waterproof item?

9:15 AM – Leave Sunrise Gift Shop

10:00 AM – Enter White River Campground, to find that Ariana, Claire, and Liz have just arrived. Liz got the buckets and it was time for a resupply.

I give Ariana the coffee cup filled with water. Ariana groans and spits out the water from the coffee-cup-prank (which I was pretending to carefully carry all the way from Sunrise). At least I got the requested toilet paper?

Along the trail to frying-pan-creek, we encounter the first patch of cell service thusfar. Ariana's much more popular than me and got about 50 different notifications. Unfortunately her snapchat streak of 1600 days had expired<sup>15</sup>.



*Smartphones users*

Off we went up the trail near my old nemesis, frying pan creek<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> She'll probably call customer support to get it restored...

<sup>16</sup> I fell in on an icy June day in 2022. Fortunately it only had 8 inches of water in it so I could get out before I was swept far.



Goat Island Mountain







## **Young & Wild & Free – Day 5b – Summerland → Banshee Peak → Indian Bar**

~2pm: We traversed around Goat Island Mountain, and arrived at Summerland camp for lunch. We met a friendly guy who was amused to hear about my lake-jumping goal (trying to swim every day in a lake). He said there's no way I can swim in the Panhandle Gap lake – it's too cold – and he heads off to Panhandle Gap. I invited him to Banshee Peak on my side-quest later today. He told me he'd think on it. He's wearing mountaineering boots so I figured he might be up for some climbing.

~3:43pm: Exit Summerland and begin Panhandle Gap ascent.

~4:20pm: We see our friend at the unnamed lake (potentially the one that WillisWall bivied at last night?). He asked “Are you going to swim in it”? I told him I was going to swim, and with my metabolism still sky-high from climbing the hill it was the perfect time. Well, it was the only time, because it's already dumb enough to submerge oneself in icy water on a partially-cloudy day with a high of 54F and a low of 43F... past 4pm...



Brrrrrr

Some preventative measures were required to avoid dying of hypothermia, which I'll leave to the imagination. It's important not to soak one's clothes because it's going to evaporate. I jumped in and after about 10 seconds jumped out. Our 57-year-old friend laughed, said `if i was 30 years younger`, and headed over the hillside to Panhandle Gap [*he declined my banshee peak invite, which probably was smart unless he wants to get benighted*].

Claire arrived over the hillside, observed the situation, and went for the lake now that our 57-year-old friend was over the hill. It's even dumber to jump in an ice lake twice, but given the situation it seemed like a requirement.<sup>17</sup>

This set our record for highest alpine lake swim in WA, at ~6400feet above sea level.

*"So what we [night hike]*

*So what we [ice swim]*

*We're just having fun*

*We don't care who sees*

*So what we [run far]*

*That's how it's supposed to be*

*Living young and wild and free"*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wa5B22KAkEk>

Liz and Ariana, wise beyond their years declined this hypothermia-inducing opportunity. I was cold so it was time to speedwalk up the hillside over Panhandle Gap.



Claire with a strained, shivering smile.



Peter calculates the viability of Banshee Peak.

~5:20pm: The entire team reaches highest point on Wonderland Trail, Panhandle Gap (6750 feet). Ariana and Liz take the tent, since Claire and I are unlikely to reach Indian Bar before Liz and Ariana. Claire agrees to join on a side-quest to `Panhandle Balcony`<sup>18</sup>. It takes some weaving around on 35 degree scree but we eventually get up onto the summit plateau at ~7150ft. We descend the scree back to Panhandle Gap by ~6:00pm.

<sup>17</sup> While I didn't bring a towel, my usual tactic is to dry off using my shirt, then wear my puffy [without the shirt under it] while the shirt dries on the back of my backpack.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.peakbagger.com/peak.aspx?pid=-71825> or a nearby peak.



*Panhandle Balcony*

~6:00pm: There's still some energy for Banshee Peak<sup>19</sup>. But is there time? Claire declines, takes the stove & gas & lighter from my pack, and heads the 3 miles down to Indian Bar. She doubts I can pull it off by nightfall, but I have a headlamp & gps & puffy.

I leave my pack again and make a run for Banshee Peak. On paper, this itinerary is possible in two hours with ~6 miles and about ~1200ft of gain to camp. But it's going to be a push (especially with my pack for some parts). Storm-clouds are brewing at 10,000ft, but not on Banshee Peak at 7400ft. The cross-country travel to Banshee Peak was speedy and non-technical class 1, with bootpaths existing for most of the route. I reached the summit of Banshee at about 6:35pm.

My descent was blocked by a rut of mountain goats! A group of five, two kid & mom pairs and one menacing looking male around. I gave him a wide berth since he looked a bit stressed, and jogged down to Panhandle Gap to retrieve my hopefully undisturbed pack.



Looking down at the Sarvant Glacier from Banshee Peak (7400ft)

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19 <https://www.peakbagger.com/peak.aspx?pid=2307>



Two goat families on Banshee Peak

~7:00pm: Returned to Panhandle Gap a third time (6750 feet). Now it's time to make the push to Indian Bar. The descent is steep enough to make running with a backpacking pack problematic, which sort of capped the speed around 3mph on this descent.



Liz arrives at Indian Bar around 7:00pm with the tent

~8:00pm: Arrived at Indian Bar, and saw Ariana, Claire, and Liz waving and looking relieved at camp. While I didn't have a chance to talk to our 57-year-old friend, he was at an adjacent site a quarter mile away judging from his bearbag.

Another delicious dinner with the unnecessary stove luxury. Ariana's Coconut Curry was sublime. Claire's Green Curry was disastrous<sup>20</sup>. I ate some Ramen and Rice & Beans & Chicken.

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<sup>20</sup> "This is more effective than a bear hang, potentially could be used as bear spray. Unfit for human consumption." Still might have been better than my pasta that somehow was excruciatingly spicy. I must have got the quantity wrong of the spice packs... or perhaps the spices were supposed to go into the water instead of the sauce.



Delicious curry - 4.8/5

PEAK REFUEL  
TOP RATED  
\$13.95  
Quantity 1  
This product is currently unavailable. We can notify you as soon as it's ready to order.  
Email \*

### Backpacker's Pantry

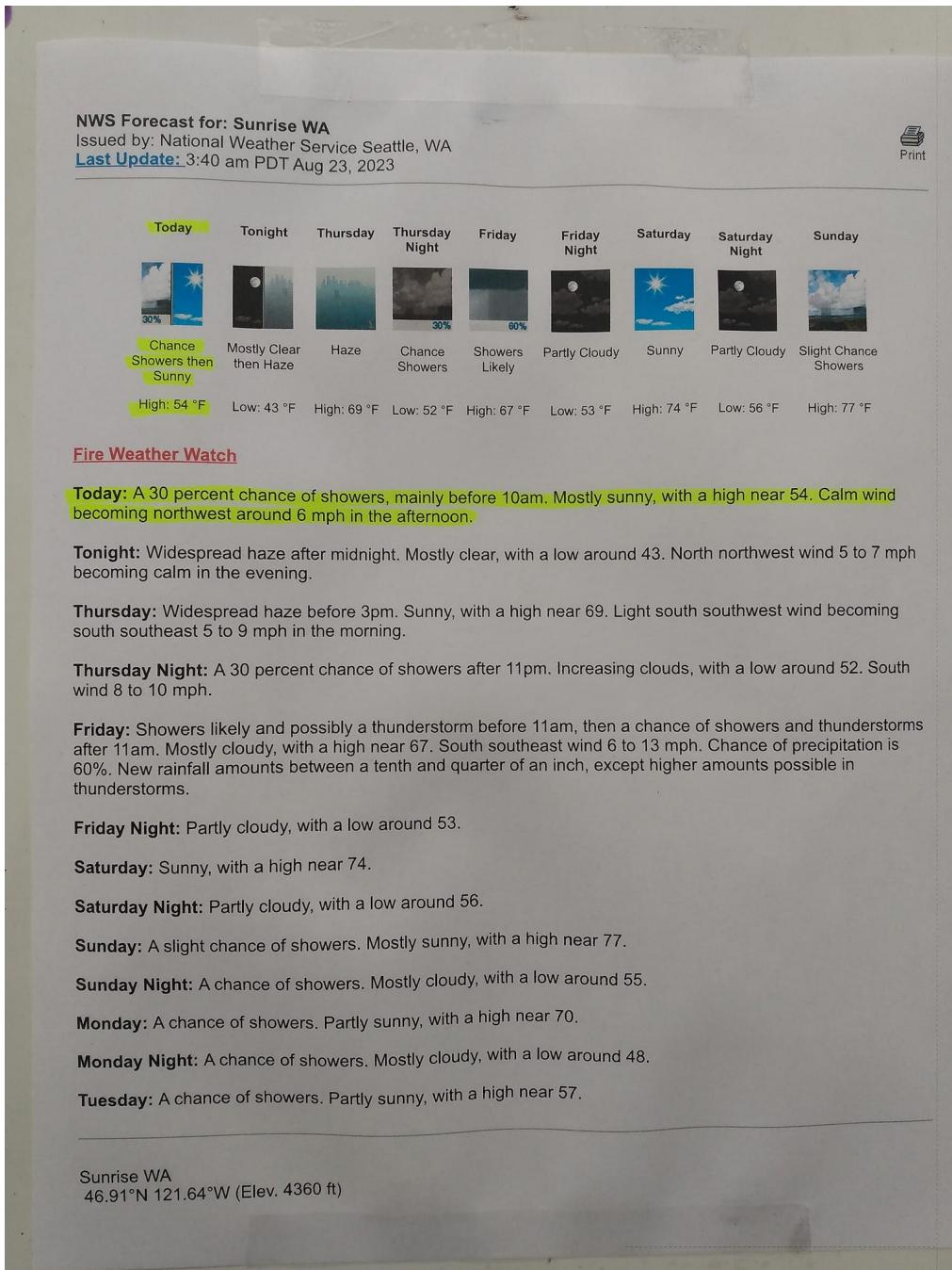
## Backpacker's Pantry Green Curry - 2 Servings

2.1 | 108 Reviews

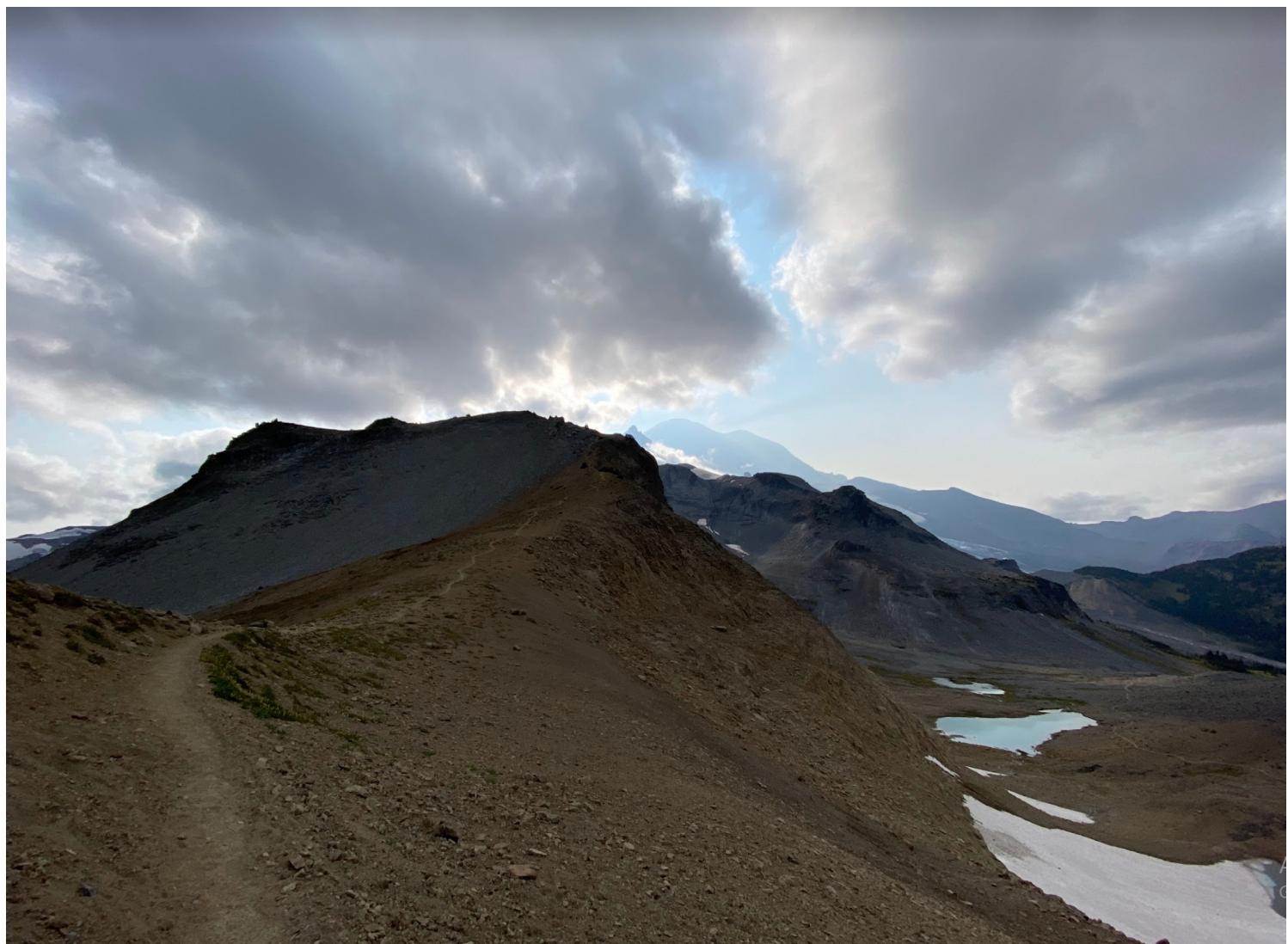
Item #207775

\$9.95

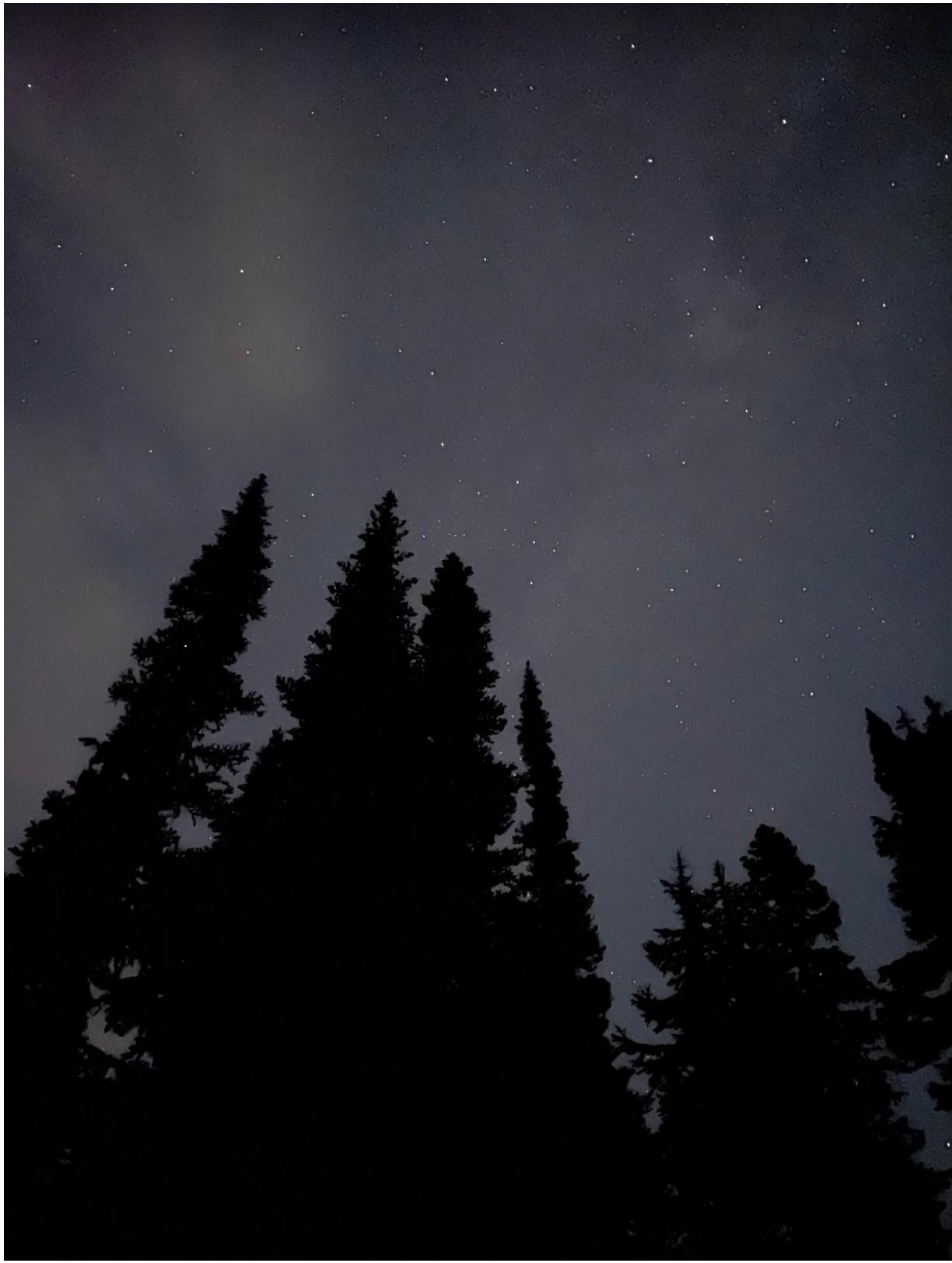
Green curry inedible even after +5,000` vert - 2.1 / 5



An unwise forecast for swimming in icy lakes



Panhandle Gap



Claire's star photo

## “Personal Growth Journey” - Day 6: Indian Bar → Longmire

Today was the final & longest day of the itinerary. Various parties clocked this section at 22 miles to 24 miles. It's a net downhill (-6800, +4000) but still has a pretty significant climb to reflection lakes and out of Indian Bar. As far as we can tell Claire's 6-day itinerary is the most even itinerary possible to book without asking a park ranger overriding the 17.5 mile limit on days 2-5. (*we're using the last-day glitch to get 22 miles*).<sup>21</sup>

It's a distance record for Claire and Ariana<sup>22 23</sup>. Liz added on a day-7 paradise river camp permit 4 miles from the car. But a passerby let us know it's new name was “Parasite River Camp” so we decided to finish it out on day 6. Ariana remembered she had an appointment at 7am the next day so that settled the matter. This was the only day we didn't use the stove. I ate 800 calories of doughnuts for breakfast and we headed out early.

7:33 AM – Team leaves Indian Bar camp. Ariana insists on carrying the tent. Everyone has really been doing their share of tent carrying, an even 25%/25%/25%/25% split. Liz and Ariana prefer the downhill w/ tent, Claire prefers the uphill. Since I'm not carrying the tent I eat another 700 calories of doughnuts on the ascent. Delicious.

8:15 AM – Ariana tops out the Cowlitz Divide and begins the traverse & descent to Nickel Creek Campground. Great swim at Nickel Creek. And Maple Creek. You get the idea. I'm not taking any chances with my goal to swim every single day.

We pass Box Canyon, and Claire's pole makes an escape attempt down the 115ft canyon. Fortunately it doesn't fall. Ariana risks her iphone to take a photo down the slot canyon, but doesn't drop it. At this point it's time to break out “*The Measure of the Mountain*” as we go down the endless green tunnel on the south of the park. There's a reason they put the paradise parking lot up at 5500ft and not down the forest.

I read out loud five chapters from “*The Measure of a Mountain*”. First, the author had an extremely inauspicious 12-day wonderland trail attempt, ending in an a hypothermic day 5 exit via Mowich Lake. It really must have been disastrous to hike with only cotton fabric available. Synthetic fabrics are unreasonably effective, as are raincoats, gps devices, and weather forecasts. Next, there's an excruciating amount of detail into the naming dispute between Tacoma/Tahoma vs Rainier.<sup>24</sup> There was a chapter on ice worms and various ice microbes, which survive on the glacier by eating insects being blown by the wind. A chapter on glaciers carving up the mountain. Finally, we skipped ahead to learn about Camp Muir and the job of a climbing ranger.

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21 If someone was to remove 0.1 miles from any leg from South Puyallup River to South Mowich River, it would go from 17.6 to 17.5, suddenly a Cougar Rock → South Puyallup → South Mowich → Dick Creek → Sunrise Camp → Indian Bar → Cougar Rock is best.

22 Liz runs an official marathon now and then, and I've run/hiked a [long day](#) on Glacier Peak with Chris once.

23 Ariana's current record was set on Day 2 of this trip.

24 [Admiral Peter Rainier](#) had acquired a substantial fortune by conquering cities in Indonesia for the British Empire ([250000 pounds, which is still solid but was even more so in 1800](#)). This fortune exceeded possible accumulation from his base pay, but there were bonuses involved for successful conquering. At the time of MRNP's founding he was controversial not for his brutal conquest of Indonesia, but for his failed role in suppressing the American Revolution. Also, it's not even clear if Rainier ever even saw Mt. Rainier – it was named after him by his friend George Vancouver, who happened to create the best navigational charts. The name stuck, despite never being the local choice.

On the other hand, Tacoma/Tahoma movement had it's own imperfections. The city of Tacoma was probably more motivated by gathering glory for the city, which was being supplanted by Seattle. There were a variety of inconsistencies in the etymology of the word Tacoma, with several spellings and meanings. Local tribes have unified around Tahoma. There was an attempt to name the national park “Washington National Park”, but something about the teapot dome scandal... at any rate this was a long chapter. The author has no on-the-record opinion on the name Rainier or Tahoma, but other group members tend to favor Tahoma.



Rainier from the Cowlitz Divide



Reflection Lake Reflecting

There's some dubious washouts around Steven's Canyon, which require me to put away the book and stay on a 12-inch trail above a 50 degree slope for about 30 feet. The team gets to Louise Lake and goes for a celebratory swim (6/6).

We relax at the lake for an hour. Everyone goes for a swim. It's been 16-18 miles and 4k vert. The hurt is starting to pile on, but we're still fine, flush in our all-but-certain 6-day circumnavigation. Claire picked the perfect itinerary. At this point the car can be pulled around if necessary, we are in the civilized part of the national park. I suggest we drop our packs, jog in the last 6 miles, then pick up the packs with the car. The team objects. Claire, Ariana, and Liz all want to carry the backpacks all the way around!<sup>25</sup>

Still, people are hurting. Claire's toenail & blister situation has gone critical, now stretching across two full toes, and her arches are continuing to hurt. Ariana's calves and outer hips are aching worse each day, eventually heading towards a calf strain if we kept going for a few more days from her description. Liz had a tough start metabolically but seems to be largely fine from a muscular-skeletal perspective. Liz & I split a ramen salt pack. The bottom of my feet are a little bruised and are starting to hurt, and my watch claims "recovery needed! 60 hours!".

This is where the concept of a "[Personal Growth Journey](#)" (PGJ, as the cowgill trail collective would call it) comes in. It's possible for a training session to be too hard, such that it's counterproductive. But at that point, there's sometimes another benefit. This whole team had a goal, we are all going to accomplish it, and it's OK if we have to skip a few training days – or weeks – as a result.<sup>26</sup>

Everyone sped through the last 6 miles, and off we went to the [Trailhead Bar & Grill in Ashford](#). It's the only thing open past 8pm and it had delicious pretzels, fries, burgers, and salads! What a fantastic journey with an incredible team.



<sup>25</sup> I was gifted & consumed a Luna bar with an inspirational message "You are powerful, beautiful, brilliant, brave" earlier in the trip. Which translates to "keep carrying your pack so we don't have to drive half an hour to pick it up Peter".

<sup>26</sup> This is easy to say for this trip, since no one actually tore a tendon or muscle. It's a fine line.

# Appendix

## List of Hazards

Hazard	Probability	Consequence	Seasonal?	How to mitigate?
Falls off the trail in exposed regions	Very Low	Critical	N/A	Use trekking poles. Keep pack well-adjusted and all items secured. Stay aware of surroundings.
Falls into rivers or creeks	Low	High-Critical	Early Season Risk	Wait until bridges are in. Be willing to hike for <u>days</u> to retreat from an uncross-able river.
Cold temperatures – possible hypothermia	Moderate	Moderate-High	Early Season Risk / Late Season Risk	Bring insulating layer and rain jacket. Check weather forecasts. Remove wet articles of clothing. Keep moving through high elevations, stop at lower elevations for the night in places with tree cover.
Getting Lost	Very Low	High	Early Season Risk / Late Season Risk	Bring map & altimeter & compass. GPS device with extra battery. Headlamps help.
Heat Related Illness	Moderate	Moderate	N/A	Electrolytes / salt-tabs, avoid sun-exposed ascents at highest points in the day.

## Risk Management

I was planning to bring 5,000 calories per day, and suggested that everyone else bring 4,000 per day. I want to deliberately bring a bit extra, because if a bridge is annihilated by a [Lahar](#), the worst case is a 35 mile detour out of the park. While lack of food tends to be merely unpleasant rather than deadly, it could cause people to try and swim an unswimmable river or make other poor decisions. I have a few scenarios in mind, and my goal is to pack as light as possible while still keeping some thin margin for error.

*The goal is to be able to still complete the trip if any of these issues occur:*

1. Itinerary stretches to 7-8 days due to general fitness
2. Single missing food cache
3. High river / bridge out delays progress until low water levels the next morning
4. Minor weather systems

*The goal is to be able to self-rescue from the following situations:*

1. Group member sprains an ankle and needs to leave the trail
2. One high river / bridge out eliminates forward progress and requires backing out to the nearest road or otherwise modifying the itinerary
3. Contribute to the stabilization / rescue of any groups in distress – even a few raincoats extra could really help someone with a broken leg while they wait for rescue
4. Small group member breaks a leg (<130lb)
5. Medium weather systems that would delay us for a day below treeline
6. Multiple missing food caches

*The goal is to be able to stabilize in place for several days until rescue in the following situations:*

1. Broken legs or badly broken ankles on the large group member (guess who can't be carried...)
2. Large weather systems
3. Multiple high rivers / bridges out eliminate both forward and backward progress
4. Volcanic activity destroys large sections of road or trail

### Ariana's food plan:

A	B	C	D	E
White River			Mowich	
buffalo style mac and cheese	580		chicken teriyaki	480
chicken coconut curry	850		pad thai with chicken	480
pepperoni	750		pepperoni	750
chex mix black	1040		chex mix orange	1040
pistachio	680		banana chips	750
cliff bar white	780		cliff bar white	780
cliff bar mint	750		cliff bar mint	750
mentos .5	75		mentos .5	75
gummi worms .5	300		gummi worms	300
motts x3	240		motts x3	240
pickle almonds	510		pickle almonds	510
kind bar x4	800		kind bar x4	800
kroger trail mix .5	975		kroger trail mix .5	975
<b>total</b>	8330			7930
<b>target</b>	8000			7500

### Liz's Food Plan

	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	total
<b>breakfast</b>	trailhead breakfast						
calories	250	250	250	250	250	250	1500
<b>tailwind</b>	throughout day	throughout day	throughout day	throughout day	throughout day	throughout day	
calories	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	6000
<b>snack</b>							
calories	250	250	250	250	250	250	1500
<b>lunch</b>							
calories	530	250	250	250	250	250	1780
<b>snack</b>							
calories	500	250	250	250	250	250	1750
<b>dinner</b>	pad thai	sweet pork and rice	mac and cheese	pad thai	sweet pork and rice	snacks + front country	
calories	820	800	790	820	800	500	4530
<b>total calories</b>	3350	2800	2790	2820	2800	2500	17060
							20000
							15970
							9970

3000 cal per day + some extra (+500 each 2 day)

Liz's Food Plan Part 2:

	3000 cal per day + some extra (+500 each 2 day)		
Food	cals	quantity	total
motts	80	4	320
chewy bar	110	2	220
swedish fish	110	2	220
reeses	110	2	220
jif cup	250	1	250
m&ms	160	1	160
pb m&ms	170	1	170
olives	35	1	35
fig bar	200	2	400
honeystinger	160	0	0
applesauce	270	1	270
clif bar	250	4	1000
tuna	70	0	0
oatmeal	160	0	0
mango	30	3	90
trailmix	400	1	400
pretzels	110	2	220
sour patch	360	0	0
clementine	35	2	70
tortilla	190	1	190
nutella	200	1	200

Peter's pack: <https://lighterpack.com/r/88k14g>

## Wonderland Trail Gear List



Category	Weight
Group Gear	100.68 oz
Hiking Equipment	107.7 oz
Food & Water System	18 oz
Shelter / Sleep / Clothing	73.5 oz
Unjustifiable items	41.9 oz
Total	341.78 oz ▾

### Group Gear

		Weight	qty
Tent	REI HALF TON	74 oz ▾	1
Fuel	1x	300 g ▾	1
Stove	Jetboil	13.1 oz ▾	1
Lighter		3 oz ▾	1
		100.68 oz	4

### Hiking Equipment

		Weight	qty
Pack	25L fastpacking pack	20.8 oz ▾	1
Sunscreen		5 oz ▾	1
Headlamp	Black Diamond Astro 250	1.9 oz ▾	1
Shoes	Asics Fuji Lite 2	18 oz ▾	1
Poles	Cascade Mountain Tech Poles	16 oz ▾	1
Phone		11 oz ▾	1
Sunglasses & GPS Watch		3 oz ▾	1
24000mAH battery pack	keep gps charged. A bit large but used by many group members	32 oz ▾	1
		107.7 oz	8

### Food & Water System

		Weight	qty
Water bladder	1.5L	5 oz ▾	1
Filter	soft flask water filter	3 oz ▾	1
Spoon & Bowl	heavy bowl	6 oz ▾	1
Nalgene	1.5L	4 oz ▾	1
		18 oz	4

### Shelter / Sleep / Clothing

		Weight	qty
Clothes	1x shorts, 1x pants, 1x shirt, 1x rain jacket, 3x socks, hat, gloves, 1x puffy	40 oz ▾	1
Sleeping Pad	Nemo Switchback (Foam)	14.5 oz ▾	1
Quilt	Magma Trail Quilt 30F	19 oz ▾	1
		73.5 oz	3

### Unjustifiable items

		Weight	qty
Hammock		16 oz ▾	1
Second headlamp	you never know	1.9 oz ▾	1
"Measure of a Mountain" book	1.5lb book	24 oz ▾	1
		41.9 oz	3

## Water Sources:

Detwiler, Bryan D

Sat 8/5/2023 8:18 AM

To:NPS MORA Carbon River <MORA\_Carbon\_River@nps.gov>

Cc:Killam, Daren T <daren\_killam@partner.nps.gov>

FYI

--  
Bryan Detwiler (635)  
Wilderness Ranger  
Mount Rainier National Park

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**From:** Detwiler, Bryan D <bryan\_detwiler@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 31, 2023 3:16 PM  
**To:** NPS MORA White River WIC <MORA\_White\_River\_WIC@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** WLT and Northern Loop Water Sources

Hi all,

As we get later in the season water sources are becoming an increasingly important conversation point to have with hikers. Many camps on the west side of the park are now "dry" camps.

### Westside Section of WLT

- North Puyallup: water source .3 mi north of camp.
- Klapatche Park: still has water in camp. When that dries up St. Andrew's Lake will be the next best option .7 mi to the south.
- South Puyallup: dry camp. Water source .5 mi up Emerald Ridge.
- Devil's Dream: dry camp. Water sources .5 miles south of AND north of camp.
- Pyramid Creek: water source .25 north of camp.

### Eastside Section of WLT

- Indian Bar: good water sources at camp but dry on WLT south until Nickel Creek.

### Northern Section of WLT / Northern Loop:

- Berkley Park: good water source but dry between camp and Van Horn Falls just west of the West Fork crossing.
- Fire Creek: dwindling water source.
- Yellowstone Cliffs: dwindling water source and dry down to WLT / NL intersection at the Carbon River.

If anyone has more updated info on any of these areas feel free to chime in.

Thanks,

--  
Bryan Detwiler (635)

Wilderness Ranger

**Permit:**

**Group Size - Passes**      **Total Group Size: 4**

**Itinerary Details**

CHECK-IN	CHECK-OUT	LOCATION
Aug 19, 2023	Aug 20, 2023	Klapatche Park Camp
Aug 20, 2023	Aug 21, 2023	So. Mowich River Camp
Aug 21, 2023	Aug 22, 2023	Dick Creek Camp
Aug 22, 2023	Aug 23, 2023	Sunrise Camp
Aug 23, 2023	Aug 24, 2023	Indian Bar Camp

**Vehicle Information**

**Vehicle #1 - Make:** Hyundai Elantra 2018

**Vehicle #1 - License Plate:** BUB6306

**Vehicle #1 - State:** WA

**Additional Details**

**Activity Type:** Wonderland Trail (2/3 or more of the Wonderland Trail)

## **Lake Report (mileage was not quite correct – the trail winds):**

### **Day 1:**

Kiya Lake (previously known as Squaw Lake) @ Devil's Dream Camp, mile 5.5  
[no name lake] @ Indian Henry Hunting Ground, mile 6.3

Mirror Lake, mile 7 (halfmile detour, well worth it!)

Saint Andrews Lake, mile 14.3

Aurora Lake (at the camp), mile 15

Total miles - 15 miles

### **Day 2:**

Golden Lakes (@ 7.2 miles)

Total miles - 12.5 miles

### **Day 3:**

Mowich Lake (@4.1 miles)

Total miles - 13 miles

### **Day 4:**

Mystic Lake (@3.3 miles)

Frozen Lake, Shadow Lake are reservoir so a person can't swim.

Total miles - 12 miles

### **Day 5:**

[no name lake] (@10.7 miles)

Total miles - 14 miles

### **Day 6:**

Louise Lake @ 12.6 miles

unnamed lake @ 13 miles

Reflection Lake @ 13.3 miles (no swimming)

Bench Lake and Snow Lake are ~0.5-1 mile detours but let's save milage day 6

Total mileage - 22 miles

**Strava Links & Stats** (with side-quests to Ararat, Mirror, Pleasant, Lee, Sunrise Bar x2, Banshee Peak, Panhandle Bench<sup>27</sup>):

Day 1: <https://www.strava.com/activities/9707545880>, 16.71 mi , +5,509 ft

Day 2a: <https://www.strava.com/activities/9707546927>, 3.36 mi, +1,919 ft

Day 2b: <https://www.strava.com/activities/9707549954>, 15.74 mi, +2,730 ft

Day 3a: <https://www.strava.com/activities/9707553110>, 4.81 mi, +2,358 ft

Day 3b: <https://www.strava.com/activities/9707554571>, 12.07 mi, +3,502 ft

Day 4: <https://www.strava.com/activities/9707558400>, 15.27 mi, +4,961 ft

Day 5a: <https://www.strava.com/activities/9715721876>, 11.15 mi, +2,340 ft

Day 5b: <https://www.strava.com/activities/9715722368>, 8.62 mi, +2,538 ft

Day 6: <https://www.strava.com/activities/9715722853>, 22.78 mi, +4,040 ft

$$16.71mi + (15.74mi + 3.36mi) + (12.06mi + 4.81mi) + 15.27mi + (8.62mi + 11.15mi) + 22.43mi = 110.15 \text{ miles}$$
$$5509\text{ft} + (1919\text{ft} + 2730\text{ft}) + (2356\text{ft} + 3501\text{ft}) + 4961\text{ft} + (2339\text{ft} + 2536\text{ft}) + 4039\text{ft} = 29,890 \text{ vertical ft}$$

<sup>27</sup> Reached summit plateau, but not necessarily on the highest point of Panhandle Bench

# Accuracy & Corrections

My recollection is not always accurate. And when the recollection is correct, the underlying information might have been plain wrong. One should look back somewhat skeptically on noncontemporary accounts. Claire and I have even climbed most of the wrong mountain before in the Teanaway, only corrected by cacophonies of falling rocks. “This is way too hard to be Bean Peak!” The GPS data later revealed it was a steep face on the adjacent Judy Peak.

**Locations:** The amount of digital evidence [gps data, copious photo metadata] used in this compilation means that all locations should closely track reality – certainly more-so than our non-gps-assisted predecessors. The times are close but not exact. However, certain events are not recorded digitally, and the truth might never be known for certain! For example, I recall Liz puking close to the South Puyallup River campsite. Claire writes Liz puked on Emerald Ridge, two miles earlier. Either are plausible scenarios, since it’s downhill. Two downhill miles might be considered close, to someone hiking all day<sup>28</sup>.

**Trail Mileage:** Mileage appears to become ever-more-flattering with every software update when on a trail. There has probably been some change in philosophy, where previously someone would draw a 10-segment line between say, Box Canyon and Reflection Lake, and now people have 10,000-segment tracks. The 10-segment line is going to cut a lot of switchbacks and details out. The 10,000 segment track will accumulate gps errors with the gps jumping back and forth, which is corrected for in the software. To attempt to minimize this error, I have used the “Correct Distance” strava feature on each of the above gpx recordings.

I recorded day 6 as 22.0 miles with a Garmin Forerunner 955. Claire recorded the same route as 24.0 miles on a Coros. Strava with distance correction calls it a 22.78 miles. The “wonderland trail planner” website has it at 21.3 miles. The truth is no one knows how long the wonderland trail is, unless someone walks along the entire trail with a measuring wheel.

**Vertical Gain:** No statistic is less accurate than vertical incline. The air-pressure-based altimeter is thrown off by everything from a cold front, jumping into water, or simply taking 10,000 data points each of which is off by 10 feet in a different direction. The best way to measure this is to use the gps data combined with basemap data, which is done after-the-fact using the `correct elevation` feature. All of the above strava posts have used the `correct elevation` feature, which much to my chagrin removed 500 vertical feet from some days!

Even after meticulous correction, the reported mileage & vert should be considered +/- 5% from the true value.

**Food:** Claire said she actually cooked a disastrous Pad Thai on night 5, and that the disastrous Green Curry was earlier in the trip.

[AlpineAire Foods](#)

## AlpineAire Foods Grilled Chicken Pad Thai - 1 Serving



3.1 | 19 Reviews

Item #183481

<sup>28</sup> Tourists in the park, for which 400 meters is a significant distance, should be careful interpreting wonderland hikers or PCT hikers if a given destination is ‘close’. Yes, Burroughs mountain is close to Sunrise – within a day even!