

Mt. Hood North Side Via Lolo Pass

27 Dec 04

This trip started as a mere conditioning hike, something to prepare for a more intense effort in Washington's North Cascades in the following weeks. However, it was a good hike in itself and justifies some web space, even if it is in often traveled country. Although the hike was filled with people, there were few camped in at my destination.

I wanted a reasonable elevation gain as well as some mileage, but still wanted some good scenery. The latter goal would be served by the northwest corner of Mt. Hood while I could start the hike at the point where Lolo Pass intercepts the Pacific Crest Trail rather than the usual trailhead used for hikes in this region to satisfy the former criterion. The view from the place where I parked the car is shown below:



The initial few miles was easy, yet interesting. This part of the trail would be delightful early in the season owing to many rhododendrons. It was unusual this time because I encountered a group working on the trail, using a small, very narrow Back Hoe. My destination for the evening would be Cairn Basin, which is near the left hand skyline ridge, behind the tree in the photo above.

After a few miles of hiking through forest and along the ridges, with only fleeting views, I broke out into a clear spot with this view:



I continued hiking first through more forest and then in meadows. I crossed a couple of creeks and eventually came to Cairn Basin, a camp located in an open grove of trees near timberline. Several small creeks flow through the area with one shown below.



I found an out of the way place to camp and enjoy the sunset, shown below:



Alpine glow on Mt.

Hood at sunset.

The sunrise was equally interesting.



My camp was typical of those that I enjoy, with low impact and a minimum of fuss.



Cairn Basin has a shelter for those needing a more substantial roof over their heads.



I got up in the morning and ate a sparse breakfast and then headed out. I took a side trip to visit Eden Park, not far below. This place is more secluded than Cairn Basin, but would not have the views. It would still be a good one to visit, especially if Cairn Basin was crowded.

A photograph of a wooden signpost in a forest. The signpost is made of a vertical log with a horizontal board attached. The board has the words "EDEN PARK" and "ELEV 5500" carved into it. The forest is lush with green ferns and other vegetation. Tall trees are visible in the background.

EDEN PARK
ELEV 5500

The hike out was a bit warm, but otherwise uneventful.