

Olympic Mountain Hiking



My introduction to the Olympic Mountains came in 1966 after years of reading about them. I went with an old college friend, Parker Holden, for some climbing in the Sawtooth ridge region. Parker and I ended up climbing the Fin via a route that was a mixture of the easy one and the West Face. The final pitch was exposed Class 4, but on good rock. The summit, although not high, provided views into the interior, including Olympus. We rappelled down the back side for an easy descent. But I was hooked.

In 1970 I decided to do a solo backpack to Hayden Pass with a climb of Sentinel Peak, shown in the above photo. The pass is the right hand ridge low point, reached via a trail from Dose Meadows below.

I also visited Lost Pass, the site of the photo above. I was blown away by the beauty of it all. And I happened to hit it perfectly, just as the snows were melting from the meadows at the very end of June, resulting in nearly solid fields of avalanche lilies. It was the same in Hayden Pass. I didn't take a camera on that trip to save weight (dumb mistake!) and the photo above is one that Ron took years later.

I returned to Lost Pass in 1977, but that trip was in July and past the lily peak.



72.

For several years I continued to do long solo trips over the 4th of July. It happened to coincide well with other family activities. Perhaps the best of those trips was in 1972 when I did the Duckabush. The trailhead begins virtually at sea level on Hood Canal and ends in the high country, in LaCross Basin. The view above shows O'Neil Pass above Marmot Lake. There was, at that time, a shelter at Marmot Lake, but it was nearly snowbound in early July.



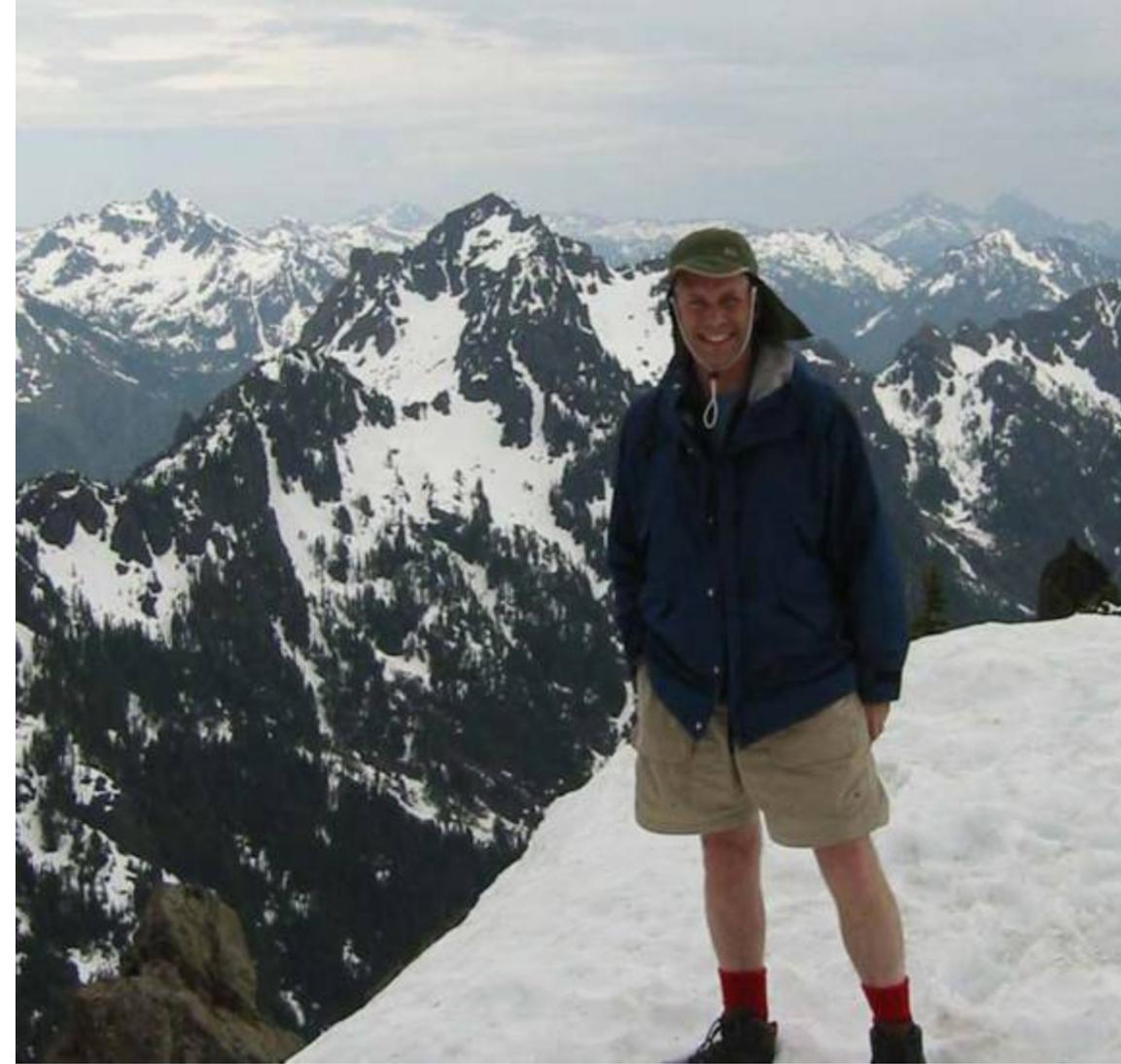
This view shows the upper extent of LaCross Basin with the lake completely covered on the 1972 Duckabush trip. Mt. Anderson can be seen peeking above the ridge. The most intense part of this trip was the loneliness. I was out for nearly an entire week and didn't see another person. I heard elk in the brush and saw bear and deer, but no people. (I've not done that since, but Ron and Tom pulled it

off in 2007 in the Bailey Range.)

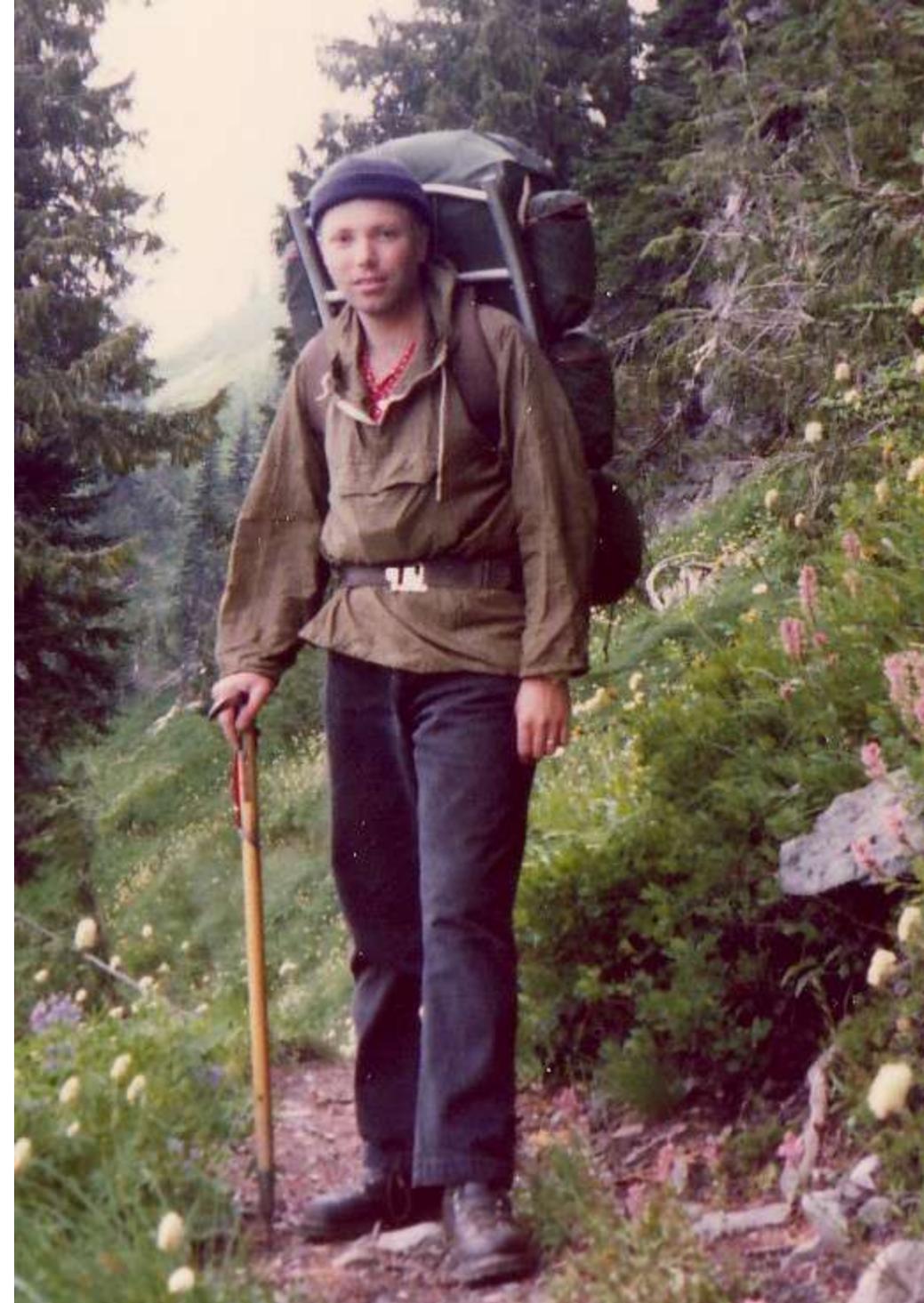


74

Soon I began to take the boys into the Olympics. One of the earlier trips was a one day junket to the summit of Mt. Ellinore, shown above. This was before there was a trail. We took the snow chute, which presented no problems, although I did rope them up so we could do an ice-ax belay if needed. This hike was probably in 1974. I had done a 1972 solo trek to the peak with a camp on the summit.



We have climbed the peak several times since then. The photo above shows Ron on the summit at the end May of 2003 after he and I did the peak. He has also climbed the peak often with his family.



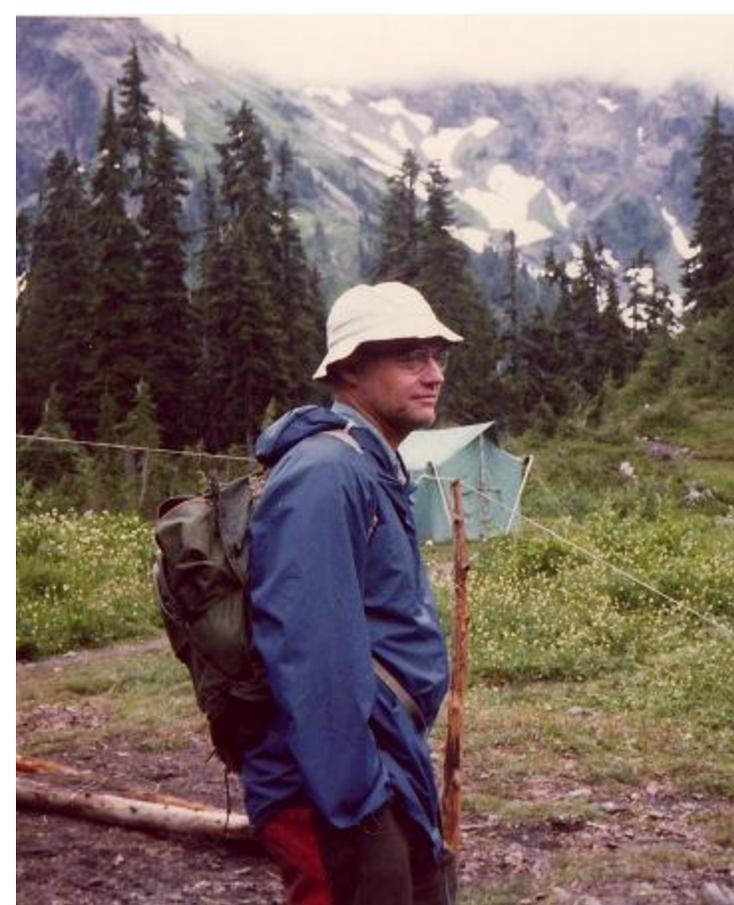
1975.

On LaCross Pass between the West Fork of the Dosewallups and the Duckabush, on our way to a return to LaCross Basin. This is perhaps the best trip that the boys and I have ever done. It was long and intense, covering 45 miles with 8 or 10 thousand feet of elevation gain in 5 days, with about half of the trip in heavy rain. From LaCross Basin we crossed O'Neil Pass into the Quinault, and then took Anderson Pass back to the West Fork. The boys were 11 and 13 at that time.

Just the other day I read a motto of sorts stating that "There is no adventure without adversity." Perhaps that writer was right.



The lush green was certainly a contrast to the first time I saw this meadow, then all in white.



75.

A highlight of our 1975 trip was meeting Bob Wood at Marmot Lake. Bob, shown above, was a noted author and history authority on the Olympic Mountains. His books formed the background for all of our planning.



This is a view, taken many years later, of the Blue Glacier on Mt. Olympus. Ron and I walked in to visit it with Bruce Johnson, Shon's cousin.