

Some Special Olympic Trips -- 1976 and 1983

I'm sure that I will look back on the best of my hikes as those that we did in the Olympic Mountains of Washington. This section chronicles a couple of the special ones.

1976 -- Upper Lena Lake to First Divide

The first is the cross country traverse from Upper Lena Lake to First Divide. This is nominally a four day trek with two days of off-trail travel. But it's a long 4 days owing to the rigors of setting up a car shuttle at each end. The trip begins with the hike into Upper Lena Lake. We did the trip in mid September. By the time Shon's cousin Bruce Johnson and I had done the car shuttle and had done the hike in, we arrived at Upper Lena at dark. The place was deserted.



We woke to find a light layer of fog over the lake, but it quickly dispersed. After a quick breakfast, we broke camp and headed out, now leaving the trail.



A final view of the area produced a view of fog filled valleys.

Game trails took us through delightful alpine country.



We had lunch at delightful little un-named tarn before climbing a 1500 ft snow slope leading to a pass called St. Peter's Gate.



St. Peter's Gate offers views of several classic Olympic peaks to the north.

The other side of the pass produced south facing slopes, bare of snow. There were boulder fields with some boulders the size of two story houses. There were also several smooth glacier polished slabs of rock with a proliferation of small pebbles on them. Both Bruce and I slipped at one point or another, falling on our back. In both cases, we merely fell on our packs.



Here Bruce looks back at the slopes we had just descended.



The bottom of the slope from St. Peter's Gate brought us to Lake of the Angels, a wonderful place with a flavor that is a cross between classic Olympics and that of the Sierra, the later the outgrowth of glacial polished white rock. I returned to Lake of the Angels in 1980 with Ron so we could do a couple of climbs; he has been back many times including a trip in June of 2004 with a group of scouts.

Bruce and I got up the next morning and dropped over a headwall to enter the headwaters of the North Fork of the Skokomish River. From there we ascended to a pass called "The Great Stone Arrow."

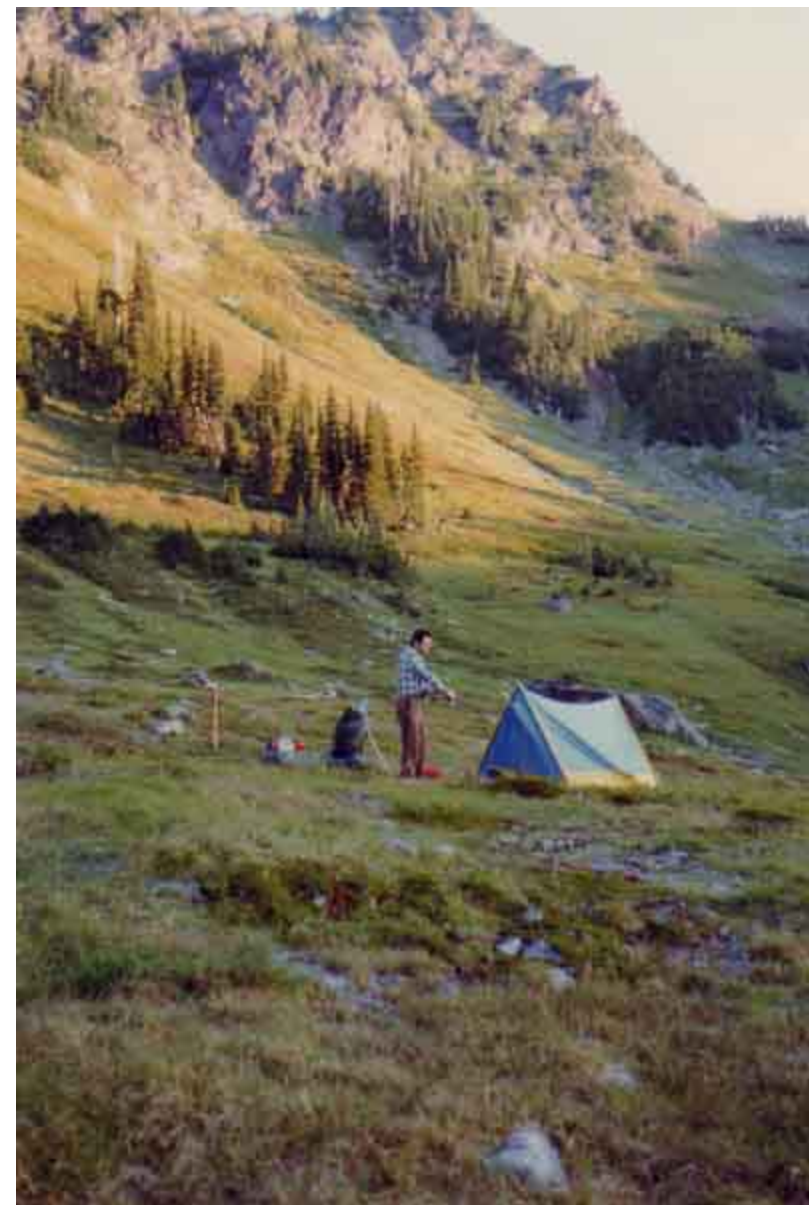


Looking back, we see Mt. Skokomish from the Great Stone Arrow. A turn of 180 degrees produces the following view down to Hagan Lake.



And turning east from the ' Arrow yields this view of the west face of Mt. Stone. Bruce and I tried, without success, to climb Stone via this route. I returned with Roger and with Bruce's son, Russell, in 1978 and we did the climb by that route.

After our attempt to do the climb of Stone, Bruce and I ran the ridge to the west for another mile or so.



Our camp that night was in Elk Meadow, the end of the off-trail part of our trip. The next day we picked up a 1 mile way trail that took us to First Divide. We then took the long trail down to Staircase, following the North Fork of the Skokomish most of the way.

1983 -- Mt. Anderson Climb

Mt. Anderson is not the highest peak in the Olympics, and certainly not the biggest. But it does have a special characteristic: It is the "hydrographic" center of the Olympic Peninsula. That is, the waters flowing from the glaciers on Mt. Anderson flow to all three of the available drainages of the peninsula: west to The Pacific, north to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and east to Hood Canal.



This is the north face of Mt. Anderson showing the Eel Glacier. This shot was taken in 1977 from a peak east of Sentinel Peak, above Dose Meadow.



This 1987 view shows the south side of Mt. Anderson as seen from La Cross Pass, featuring the Anderson Glacier.

Roger and I headed into do the climb from Anderson Pass in 1983. Our plan was to climb to the Anderson Glacier, but to then cross the ridge to the east to a pair of small lakes where we would make

camp. We would then climb the peak by "Route 3" in the climbing guide of the day. We figured that we would have the mountain to ourselves. It had been a light year owing to heavy rains. Also, Anderson is just remote enough that it does not get much weekender traffic.

The hike in produced a view up the hill toward the side of the peak we were to climb:



The SE Face of Anderson.



The Anderson Glacier with "Flypaper Pass" toward the right side. This pass drops down to the Eel Glacier.



View down to one of the small lakes.



The view across the small lake shows the slope to be traversed to find the route on up.



Once above the snowfields of the last photo, rock chutes produce an obvious Class 2 route. About 500 ft of easy climbing brought us out on the upper slopes. It was then about 2000 more feet of mixed scree and snow to the top.



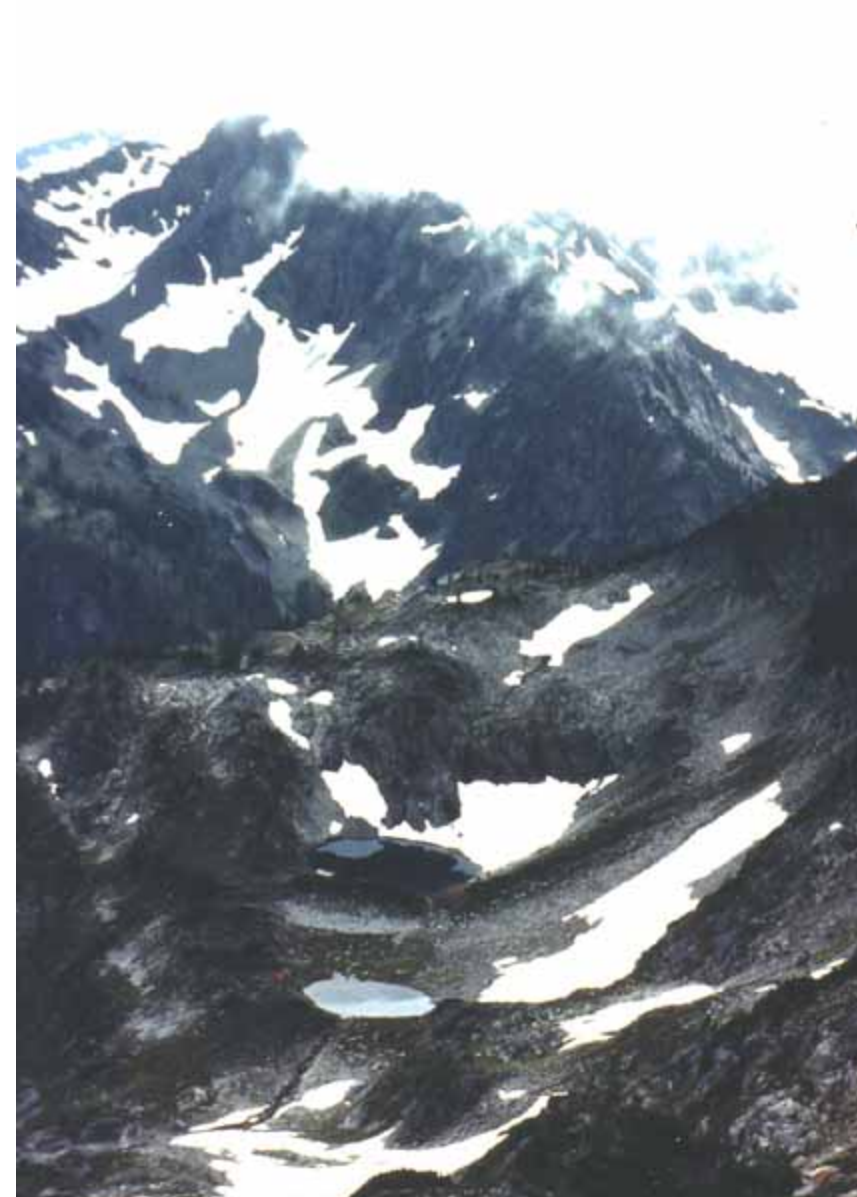
Yours truly on the way up.



Here Roger stops on the way up to chat with a couple of Canadian radio amateurs. They could not understand how they were being heard so far south until we explained that we were in a position to nearly see them. Roger would later have them stand by for a couple of minutes so we could make a contact to Beaverton. We then did an "auto patch" to Shon who was at work at the time.

Just below the top we hit the very edge of the Eel Glacier. We did not venture onto it, for we had neither crampons or a rope with us. There was a little bit of rock at the top.

There were no views from the top, owing to fog blowing in from the Pacific. This persisted for the whole time we were on our trip.



View from high on the face, looking down at our lakes. The higher resolution photos showed the red rainfly on our tent just to the left of the lower lake. After the climb, we dropped back to our gear, broke camp, and hiked part way out that night. We caught some snow that evening, so were pleased that we had managed to fit the climb in before the end of the season. On checkout out at the Dose Ranger Station, the ranger told us that we were climbers #49 and 50 for the peak that season, illustrating how little it is climbed. We may well have been the last for that year.