

Grand Pass, Olympic National Park

August 22 to 24, 2012

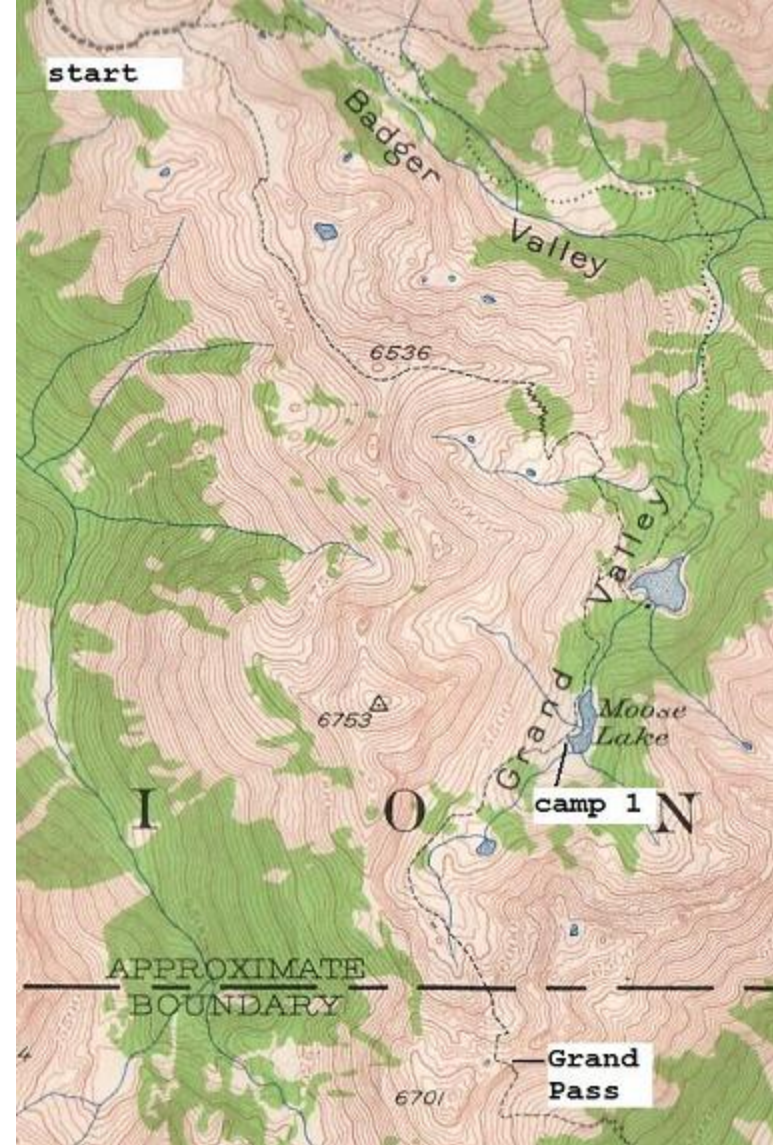
Wes Hayward, September 2, 2012.



(Ron Hayward photo.)

Thanks Ron.)

This is us on the summit. Left-to-right, it's yours truly, Libby, Bruce, and Ron. But I'm getting ahead of the story. So, let's start at the beginning.



This map shows our route from the trail head at Obstruction Point to Grand Pass. Ron organized the trip as something that I could still handle. (I suspect that my days of carrying a pack in these wonderful mountains are numbered.) This is an unusual trip, for it begins at fairly high elevation (6100 ft elevation) and then descends into a valley where lakes are to be found. It then climbs out of the valley to Grand Pass (6450 ft.) Ron got the necessary camping permits that would allow us to camp at Moose Lake on the first night and then at Grand Pass on the second. We still had to stop at Park Headquarters in Port Angeles to get the official paper work.



This is what we saw as we hopped out of the car. Although the western peaks were in the clouds, the numerous peaks provided more than enough views to keep us ecstatic.



We shouldered our

packs and hit the trail. It immediately goes up. But clearly, it can't go up very far.



Once on top of the ridge, we could see down into the cloud filled valleys.



We continued

for a couple of miles, eventually reaching a minor pass at about 6400 ft. We were surprised to see a couple of deer working their way up the snow field. This trip would evolve into one with numerous deer sightings.



By now, we can see down into cloud filled Grand Valley. We headed down. Clearly, the clouds are thin with little threat.



The hiking was delightful, taking us through meadows and eventually into heavier timber.



Eventually the cloud cover burned away, leaving us with a view down to Grand Lake. We elected not to descend to Grand Lake. Ron had visited it in 2011. Although a destination for the anglers, Ron felt that the scenery was better at Moose Lake. (See Ron's website for the 2011 hike detail. <http://ronhayward.net/>)



Our first view of

Moose Lake.



We examined the

nine designated camp sites and picked one at the south end of the lake. We were visited by several

deer as we were setting up our camp. They were amazingly tame, bordering on being pests. We had dinner and relaxed in camp for most of the evening. Ron and I did slip out and explore a bit of the lake, but I left my camera in my pack back in camp. Ron has some good lake photos as well as great camp shots on his site at <http://ronhayward.net/grandpass12-0> .



We got up in the morning and headed out. The very first step out of camp started upward. We had only a few easy miles to travel, but there was some elevation to gain. This photo shows the trail close to a creek that comes down from the pass.



Here the creek is even closer to the trail. Most of the walk was on delightful trail with a distinctive alpine flavor. There were numerous meadow areas dotted with small tarns.



The trail became a

little bit steeper as we got higher. Now close to the pass, we can see down into Grand Valley.



Finally Grand Pass. We left our packs at a tarn where we will camp, but came immediately to the pass to take a look around. The valley on the other side of the pass (Cameron Creek) was filled with clouds.



We got our tents pitched near the small tarn at the edge of the snow field and then returned to the pass for more exploration. This was the dominant camp spot in the pass.



These were the

views that greeted us as we looked across the pass to the south. The cloud motion continued, providing glimpses to the country we wanted to see. After checking out the views from the pass, we headed up the peak just west of the pass. The maps and the books just show this as "Peak 6701," but a sign at Grand pass listed the hill as *Grandview Peak*.



Ron on the summit, looking westward toward the Bailey Range. Finally we have a good view into Cameron Basin, a high meadow area below Cameron Pass. Ron crossed this pass a few years ago on long loop trip that took him over several of the passes in the area. Ron and I were also in Cameron Pass in 1977 on a climbing trip with Russell and Cindy Johnson.



Ron put his camera on a rock and used the self timer to produce this group summit shot. (Ron's photo of me, Libby, Bruce, and himself.)



We descended from the summit to a ridge to the west. Although a little lower, it provided better views of the peaks immediately to the west. The remote meadows are dotted with lakes, some small and others large enough to have a name on the maps. We talked of explorations and climbs on these peaks as if they would happen. (Hey, the dreams keep moving forward!)



The views of Cameron Pass and Basin continued to improve. Mt. Anderson and West Peak are seen through the mist, although Anderson is still mostly in clouds. Roger and I climbed Anderson in 1983; it remains a favorite.

We eventually returned to the pass and then to camp. We ate dinner and hit the sack early, for the wind was coming up and the temperature was dropping. It was great to slip into the warmth of my down sleeping bag.



We expected it to be cool in the morning, for we had experienced frost on our tents even at Moose Lake. We were not disappointed. A thin layer of ice covered the tarn in the morning. There was an interesting fractal pattern on the surface.



A return to the pass revealed a complete lack of clouds and a perfect view of Cameron Pass. Although not shown here, the trail on the south side of Grand Pass drops to 4100 ft to Cameron Creek before again climbing back through Cameron Basin and Cameron Pass at 6500 ft.



This view shows our return route down to Moose Lake and Grand Valley. Hurricane Ridge can be seen in the distance near the left edge of the photo.



The hike down was

just as delightful as the walk up of the previous day.



Back to Moose

Lake in time for lunch.



break for lunch.

A marmot greets us as we are about to



The view from our lunch counter.

Some campers at the lake were fly fishing, although we saw no fish caught.



Again on the trail,

we pass through meadows at lake's edge.



One of the resident deer relaxing in

the meadow.



A final view of
Moose Lake as we begin our final uphill push.

A final view of



After a while, we
approach the 6400 ft pass crossed two days earlier. Here we catch a final view of Grand Lake and

After a while, we



The 6400 ft pass offers views of the Bailey Range and Olympus to the west. Here Ron points out some of the details to Bruce.



A small lake sits

high in a cirque at the head of Badger Valley.



Just a final mile or

so and we will be back to the car.

Many thanks to Ron, Libby, and Bruce for an outstanding trip! Be sure to also see Ron's trip info at <http://ronhayward.net/grandpass12-0>.