

Cascade Pass Hike, September 7 and 8, 2004

Wes Hayward, Sept 13, 2004, cleanup editing June 12, 2024.

A hike in the Pacific Northwest that had long been on my must-do list was Cascade Pass and the connecting Sahale Arm. It was a long drive from Oregon that always seemed to be dismissed because of the long distance. The trip finally came together in 2004 when Ron's flight schedule provided several free days in early September.

I drove up to Ron's on Monday, Labor Day, September 6th. He had a BarBQ going in his back yard for friends which I got to attend. We then headed for the hills on Tuesday, September 7th. We drove north on I-5, through Seattle and on to Washington Highway 20 where we turned east, through Sedro Woolly, Concrete, and Marblemount where we left the main road. We stopped at the National Park Service office in Marblemount and got a back country permit, allowing us to camp in Pelton Basin for the next two nights. We then drove on a back road for 25 miles to road's end. There was a large parking lot there and it was nearly full with 2 to 3 dozen cars. We changed into our boots, grabbed our packs, and headed up the gentle, well graded trail toward Cascade Pass.



After a while in the trees we finally broke out and started to catch some views. (Photo above.) This was to be the best view we got of Eldorado Peak. The closer rocks at the right of the picture are part of Forbidden, a peak largely hidden from us by Sahale. Glimpses of these mountains the next day were often obscured by clouds.



Reaching the top of the pass brought some views of our camp location for that night. (Photo on left.) The flat meadow area, 400 ft below the pass, is Pelton Basin. Our camp site was in the trees on the left side.

The next morning brought hints of the foul weather that was to come later. We loaded our packs to be stored in the trees at Cascade Pass so we could use the available good weather to explore Sahale Arm. As we hiked up to the pass, we could see weather from

the Pacific spilling over the pass, a view that would present itself often through the day. This cloud movement is shown in the next photo.



After stowing our packs in the pass, we started up Sahale Arm, which is the ridge on the north side of the pass.



There were occasional moments of clear weather in the pass, shown in the photo to the left. The Triplets and Cascade Peak are behind the pass with Mt. Johannesberg further to the right, rarely seen through the fog of the day. We did, however, hear ice falling from Johannesberg a couple of times through the day.

After climbing for a few hundred feet, we pulled out onto a flat area on the "Arm," followed by a long ridge extending upward toward the summit of Sahale Peak. Ron adjusts his camera



for one of his many photos while on the flat before we continued up the hill. The photo of Ron on the flat is shown above. The peak behind Ron is Mixup Mountain while the dominant wide peak is Magic Mountain. Pelton Peak and Trapper Mountain are further to the east (left).

Climbing higher on the Arm brought expanded views, hinting at the next layer of peaks behind, shown below. (Use your imagination.)



Our goal was the base of the glacier on Sahale Pk. The peak is the sharp point in the following view, peaking at us from the clouds:



Below is the base of the glacier's west segment with a terminal moraine.



Below is a view of Ron from near the top of the rocks, looking down the expanse of Sahale Arm with Doubtful Lake 2000 ft below.





Above is another view of Doubtful Lake, taken from partway down the Arm. The cascading waterfalls from the glacial basin were quite picturesque.

As we hiked down, the weather finally changed in earnest, producing showers strong enough to prompt us to don our rain gear. We ended up hiking out that evening rather than camping again down at Pelton Basin. A couple of shots of the hike out are shown below, for this was the flavor of the trip. Finally, we have a panorama that Ron made from his photos. Many thanks, Ron.



Overall, this was a really wonderful hike. Reviewing it in 2024 makes me wish I could get back, but also pleases me that I got to see some of it.



Me in rain gear on the hike out.



