

### **Entiat peaks:**

**Cardinal peak** (Middle 8590')

Cardinal Peak (South 8588')

Cardinal Peak (North Plateau, c8440')

**Peak 8023'**

**Emerald Peak** (8422')

**Little Sahaska** (c8240)

**Saska** (8404')

July 3-4, 2010

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Plan was to spend three days catching five of six peaks in the Entiat area. Not having been there it looked like a good selection for new terrain and riding up the North Fork Entiat (best would be the ride out). Had a late start getting out of town after work, passing Wenatchee around midnight. North up the Columbia I found a nice car camp. A few hours of sleep, sunrise and to Entiat for coffee. Was early and had to wait for the Shell station to open at 6.

By 7:00 at the TH full of vehicles. Unloaded bikes and saddled up. Immediately down a rocky hill and across shallow Crow Creek. Riding felt like a lot of work –must be the heavy pack. In the first 1.2m came to bigger South Pyramid Creek with a bridge and the trail up South Pyramid Creek (1439). Another 1.7 miles (2.9 from TH) to the Pugh Ridge trail. It was very tiring riding and pushing the bike –roots, rocks, some steeper than I felt like spending the energy for hills. Was this really worth it? After 4 miles a meadow opening with a horse camp hidden to the south near the river. Another short ways and another larger meadow. The trail had ups and downs and worked me. I met a father and son coming out that warned of snow ahead and windfall.

At c5 miles Grouse Creek with a camp site. Upstream 75' several large logs made a good crossing. I locked the bike and walked on. The snow and windfall in the last ½ mile had me thinking from here out would be hiking. After a third mile the trail was in good condition and very ride-able, would be great coming out. Along the way I cleared logs and trees I could move. Amazing levering a 16" diameter chunk. I had plenty of time waiting so walked back and rode/pushed the bike further up the trail.

Around 5000' frequent snow patches and more blowdown –time to lock the bike and leave it. Soon the trail disappeared covered with snow. After the turn off to Fern Lake, I followed footsteps that were too far up hill. Not wanting to lose my hiking partner I waited about 20 more minutes and we continued on together. Snow was less than a foot deep to start and a few spots saw a trail. Ran into a group of six that had hoped to fish and had found the lakes frozen over three feet thick. One had summited Cardinal. He wasn't sure if the Middle or South peak were highest. Having walked over to the South peak turned around finding it technical and sans rope.

Around 5650' veered from NNW following the creek to NE up the hill. No visible trail so headed straight up. Took a lunch break at a dry mound above a wet flat area (c5900'). No sleep on Thursday night (out walking the mountains looking for wayward buddies) and only a few hours last night –I was bushed. C6500 bare dirt and rock and the pitch leveled a bit. At c6600' an aerial snow level station. Traversed from here –darn too high. Should have gone lower for easier going. Traversing the side hill was more work than the flatter terrain at 6600'. Suncups were 10-14" deep and closely spaced. Tedious travel... Past Cardinal on the right and then past Peak 8023. Found out later we were about 1-200' above the trail. Would have been much easier traversing lower. Before a trail bend (on the map (snow covered trail today) found a nice area past the avy slope with a flat non-sun cupped patch. I ventured further. A beautiful basin area less than an eighth a mile and up –we had good protection where we were so it would be fine (would have been running water up there though).

I ate a snack, loaded a summit pack and walked back east to the wide open basin west of Cardinal Peak (4:00p). Rising on snow with Peak 8023 on the left. No tracks of the other guy's summit. Hmmm, which way did he go? The pitch steepened. c8100 I spotted kicksteps coming from a ridge on the right. I kept heading up to an obvious saddle left of the middle summit. A large plateau north with a large cairn. Up right, steep, some rock, a ridge heading south to a dry rocky summit 8590. Found a small cairn with a

newer Mountaineer register (6pm, 2hrs from camp). I followed tracks south along the ridge, down rock and traversing the east steep slope to the north side of the south peak. About 20' up was the top – straight up. Walked around and only way up was to climb. Good thing I brought a rope (thanks for the warning Matt). I slung some rocks and cleared the top. A thin short ridge with old tat rap station (7pm, 3rs from camp). At the highest point an aluminum T tube –a Wenatchee Roamers register from July 4, 1965, FA recorded 1962 (left by Singleton who made the FA). Sounds like a lot of people, but I was the 63<sup>rd</sup> person to sign in since 1962. Last before me was July 3, 2005 (Tod Bloxham).

I took several satellite readings on both summits and also Barometer readings. I could prove both peaks same height, though through statistical analysis the middle summit read around two feet higher. I headed to the Ancient cairn on the North Plateau, finding an original FA reg from 1941 by Austin S. post Aug 10, 1940 and again the following year including a map of route from Holden. I love history and this made my day, heck my month!

Bounding back to the saddle and down I traversed right over a ridge to a rock ridge leading NW down then up to tag Peak 8023 and watch the sunset. Worked SW down rock and brush to snow with a glissade and walking traverse to camp at 9:00 (5hrs RT camp to summit). Tired from a long day, I changed to dry clothes crawled into the sleeping bag and ate. A nice evening, stars out and a beautiful day in the mountains and drifted off to sleep.

### **Morning, day 2...**

Lazed a bit and off for a day trip at 6:20a. North up the hill, past a steep gully and NE up another col with rock ridge on the left. Topping off the east col (9:00a, c11:10a), the peak was on the left a hundred feet higher. Oops, wrong col. I went down several hundred feet and scrambled cl4&5 NW to another col the headed NE. To do this right it would have been good to keep heading north to before a saddle in the east to west ridge then turn right (NE) up the broad and shallower slope. Up that slope and move right after passing a short steep rock/point on the left (Little Sahaska). This smaller col on the right heads up to a small (10-20' wide) saddle between the true summit on left (8422') and south summit on right (sketchier scramble to it).

On the summit a nice large area for a group to hunker down protected (now also very windy) and on the ridge of the peak rock a flat spot to stand and pose for summit photo. Another newer Mountaineer reg placed same trip and group as the middle Cardinal register.

Heading down about 5-600' I waited for the others to come up and re-ascended to summit. On the way down I went up the spire on the NW of the col, finding an original register in a tin can. Little Sahaska c 8240', FA July 27, 1951, 8:15AM by Don Moody and Chuck Franklin "Cascade Crag Climbers Wenatchee".

To the west clouds had been covering the higher peaks. As I turned to look east Emerald was being temporarily washed in thin clouds. By the time I down climbed the summit was clear again.

The going went quick heading down and toward the left (east) flank of Saska. Dropped only as low as needed staying a few hundred feet above the meadow area with creek (snow covered). Now solo again I sidehilled around the SE ridge. Now views ahead (west) of Golpher and Saska Pass. Turning right (north) and traversing up into a wide basin. At c7800+ the basin narrowed and I could see the saddle up left mentioned in Smoot's book. In retrospect, go right as soon and low as you can to the face to the right of the basin and left (west) of the SSE rib. Then up it to cross the ridge to the lower angled SE ridge/face to summit.

I followed the Smoot's hints. Up the ever steepening slope to the left saddle (12:33p, c8140'). Going to NW side did not look inviting so went up a dicey rock ridge, dropped back to snow and followed til snow ran out less than 100' below summit. I tried going up a small gulley with crappy every piece portable rock. Wasn't as comfortable with the crampons on so hung on and removed them. Some calm and care and was up the 10' crux and back to cl 2-3. If there again going right (east) would provide a better op to gain the right (east) ridge.

On the summit of Saska at 1:05p, 1h30m from the meadow area. This was the first one this weekend to have the cairn snow covered. I spent 20 minutes excavating where I thought a cairn would be. No luck... oh, well... Great views, warm and weather looking better east and drenched in clouds west. Jack and Carolyn were trying for Maude—I wonder how it was going for them—looked cold. I relaxed, played name that peak, ate a little then headed down the SE leading rib. At a snow notch (c8200'), I crossed right (west) and glissaded the face. Cliff out around 7600' I moved left and down catching my up track at 7400'. Following it east under and descending around the rib. Then East to the flat meadow with creek, under the large rock knoll and camp at 3:04p, 8h45min, c6830'.

What to do? I was even more tired from yesterday. I'd thought of Golpher as I came down, but not the energy. I didn't have the energy to pack over Saska Pass for Pinnacle and decided to save those two for another day. I thought it good to head halfway out. Was planning on it being a long go. Rather than re-traverse to where I thought the trail went down. I headed down east side of the outlet creek staying far east (heading "S"). Sun cups a pain and runnels making it easier. Even with the warm temps the snow was well consolidated. I forced myself to traverse high with only a little descent, though tempted to drop to the creek. Proved wise for good snow bridges over the many creeks (3-4). An eighth of a mile west of where I'd gone up at c5780' a slot looked good for walking (snow covered), then I noticed cut logs. A few hints and followed to the flat along the creek. Snow thinning, some bare spots then snow again. At c5420' a horse camp toward the creek and two minutes later a nice meadow (c5430'). Found the sign for the turnoff to Fury Lake (4:50p, c5270), then bushwacked uphill in the snow to find the trail and my bike (c5230'). Only 3 logs to lift over and in six minutes at Grouse creek camp. The others took over twice as long walking the same distance. Hmmm, this bike out may be good.

I was ready to camp out, Asked, but no answer on to camp, sounded like they wanted to hike out so off we went At the second meadow I waited and ventured around finding a path on the west side of the meadow that lead to a large horse camp next to the river with a small creek practically running through camp. I waited at the main trail and was set to settling in and taking a nap before dinner. Again wishy-washy and then mosquitoes started making a presence. So... the bugs swayed the choice to ride out. I figured an hour out so not bad, but didn't like the idea of being trashed and driving home.

No wonder the ride in was a ball breaker coming in. Going out was coasting, root hoping and a only couple places to push. A small creek cross on an improvised twig bridge. Trail to Pugh Ridge 1.7m to the next trail and another 13 minutes for the final 1.2 miles to the TH. The last creek before the TH I didn't make it all the way across and stepped down—splash. It was more than a walk and ride, there was so much to see and enjoy. This would have been nice with less snow because the trail further up looked better for riding. The riding itself was not that fast, average speed of 5mph, still nice to ride and get a load off the bike. Before you try it though get in practice of carrying a heavy pack and balancing on single track trails. The backpack riding is a little more work that it may seem. Oh, and if using a full suspension adjust the rear shock "sag" since you will be weighing significantly more—or lock out the rear.

All in all a beautiful place to go. Large trees, nice undergrowth and gentle terrain. A beautiful valley with a few meadows on the way up. Upper area full of larch and the promise of high alpine smells in the summer. Three days would make a nice trip and add two with a car at the Main Entiat River TH for Pinnacle Peak. I was more ambitious of what I would do. With a strong group we could have nabbed Pinnacle and out in three tiring days. But why? Too beautiful of an area to rush.

Happy trails!  
-fwb2

Gear: Mt bike, ice ax, crampons, 30m rope, webbing, slings (dbl & single), sunscreen