

Lennox Mt (5984')

March 6, 2010

Dicey, Yana, Matt & fwb2

Another beautiful weekend and time to get out on a hike after a month off (at the Olympics...). It was nice to be home though not quite recovered. A few brief flurries of emails and we nailed the objective of Lennox via the route AndyD had done. Given time and conditions we also hoped to get in Canoe. Reports from all approaches were of the joys of slide alder and brush whackin (BW3 <http://www.alpenglow.org/themes/subalpine/brush-ratings.html>). I didn't remember mention of the constant devils club... knowing how some people just love it ;-). Good thing I'd brought leather gloves and extra whacking layers.

We parked at the washout of Money Creek road past MP3. Hiked past MP4 (.7m from car) and took a left up the Basin towards Crystal Lake. After 4 or 5 creek crossings and a mining claim we decided we needed to stay further right. Forest opened to joyous slide alder, devils club... Was that a good change from the ice covered logs and rocks of the stream crossing?

We found a dry creek to follow then up the left side of the slope –waterfalls on the right. A little left over very firm avy snow to speed the going through the boulder field. Snow started c3400 and we traversed right to Goat Basin and Crystal lake for a deserved break (c3500', 2.2m, 2h50m).

Abundant snow at the lake and it was frozen over. Two upward options –east up an old avy slope then clockwise over the cliffs or west counterclockwise around the cliffs. The west route looked the safest and more known. Firm snow through the trees some used crampons, some not. Above the cliffs the trees opened to high alpine and vast open snow fields. Softer snow warranted snowshoes with mixed results. We think Dicey had been sandbagging earlier, with the open area we looked up and she was gone... we figured we see her returning from the summit soon... The still low winter light and the rolling contours created gorgeous scenery.

We kept ascending nearly south, Around some mounds Dicey was patiently waiting for us. All took turns breaking trail direct to the SW Lennox ridge (c5600'). Great views from the ridge. Amazing how much snow up high and the distinct snowline and dryness below. Dodging trees, cornices and a giant drift hole we play catch up with Dicey who was waiting for us on the summit (5984', 3.7m, 5h40m).

Lunch, views and relaxing, then headed SE along the ridge toward Canoe. Snow was soft to 5" then firm enough to support. We hit a cliff drop in the ridge traverse and looped east around it regaining the ridge losing nearly 700' along the way. At time the ridge was only a few feet wide, dropping west to Lake Kanim (3941' and frozen over). At 2:20 we talked it out and decided it was still at least 2 hours to Canoe and not as quick as we'd expected. We called it there and headed back to Coney Lake for a little relaxing rather than pushing hard and into the dark. In retrospect it would have been a great settling for an un-planned bivy.

Yana lead the way traversing to the buried outlet area of Coney Lake (5155', 5.6m, 7h50m). Surprising on the east ridge were two people (Andy? and his mom –I forgot their names) and three happy dogs. Hmmm, aren't most dogs happy being out exploring in the mountains? They'd come up from Miller Creek. A 3 mile abandoned road walk, brush whacking and knee plus deep snow. Another hour or less and we'd see them on the summit.

Another relaxing break and off to leave our mark on the lake. Matt not finding any holes to dip in surmised that the definition of swimming is being suspended in/on the water –so close enough for his high alpine swim.

For our way out Yana lead north up to Coney Lake saddle (5326, 5.9m, 8h20m). More taking in of the views and then traversing NW above the cliffs. Coney Lake area and the upper Goat Basin were

breathtaking, textures, subtle curves and hues. Well worth the trip just to see. More so than the still great clear day views from the summit.

We intersected or upward tracks and followed to Crystal lake, regrouped from massive shutter delay (like we'd been experiencing all day) and traversed back to the boulder slope. Working the snowfield for all we could then the puzzle of the boulder field, this time we headed down aiming for the creek below the waterfall (climbers right). Refreshing water and easier travel following it to within a quarter mile of the road.

Darkness came and I found I'd grabbed my emergency headlamp with nearly toasted batteries, no bother, it was fun leading in the darkening woods, finding creek crossing then running into a steep hard dirt bank. Yes! The road ☺ a pleasant walk with stars overhead (and Yana spotting some red dwarfs...). Back at the car at 7:00p (c1780', 9.4m, 11h45m). We guessed if we had continued and bagged Canoe our return would have been more around 11p to midnight (unfinished business...).

Another great day in the mountains, great company, beautiful scenery and perfect weather... But you know somebody will hate it ;-). Almost. Well almost had me forgetting about the devils club, ice covered logs and rocks and slide alder... almost.

Gear: trek poles, ice ax, crampons, snowshoes, sunglasses

Happy trails!

fwb2