

Long Mt (5113'), Silverton, Mt Loop Hwy

April 11, 2010

Dicey & fwb2

The Short story:

Hiked up Marten Creek trail to second avy clearing. Up 400' then exit into the woods left. Up to upper Basin at 4200'. Hop tree island to tree island, up to top of gulley, west ridge and to summit. Explore route to Viking Horns, then rap off east ridge to play in snow basin with giant pin wheels and snowballs (6-10' dia). Down via a route further north to clearing #3 and back to car being quiet and polite past tree research area to not disturb the trees.

Rather longer story for those wanting more details:

What to do on the weekend after a great day skiing? Improving and clearing weather and consolidating recent snow pack opened up a summit close by and with very few reports. Last year I did a nearby peak (Long south ridge) and was able to view into a beautiful open cirque style basin. On my way out I tested a few ways in. With the ample snow above 4000' I also hoped the last stretch would be snow instead of loose rock.

Very few TRs on this summit and most only get close with no summit so most of the route we'd make up on the fly. Dicey was game and with packs loaded with options to assure not getting turned around for not having the right gear we were ready to go. Excess weight for training or gear? -probes, transceivers, shovels, helmets, ice axe, ice tool, steel crampons, harnesses, doubles, pitons, ice screw, more slings, pro, 60m rope... everything but sunglasses :-o . Figured if the snow pack was safe enough we had about all we'd need for whatever we encountered.

We check up Deer Creek road showed the north route would be miles of road slogging. Back to Marten Creek to park amongst the heavy road work equipment and the repair of the washout. Left TH (c1420') at a leisure 8:20, Old road trail switching back, past 1912 Douglas Fir research test plot (c1900') and up to a leveling of the trail c2400'. Morning was warm compared to the day before and even warmer with the load. Light snow (a few inches) on the trail, dipping then following the creek now gently rising. Past clearing #1 (c2650') with a foot of new snow. Opening #1 is on only the right and looks to a cliff. Time for snowshoes and another few minutes at clearing #2 (c2730', 1h10m from car). #2 clearing is an avy chute and the first clearing that is on both sides and has a gulley that leads to the top of the Long south ridge (last year's hike to "Long Not").

Dicey lead up and leftish into BW2 brush for about 400' (c3150') and well below the cliff entered the forest seeking respite from the Bushwhacking. Snow depth was shallow and loose. Steps sinking 6 inches in the denser tree area and some spots over a foot deep. We took turns weaving in and up, Over logs, around little and large trees, routing around steep spots moving up and slightly left. Travel was slow and a work out, patience avoiding most holes and soon at c3800' the underbrush cleared and up through old trees with the lower south arm of the upper basin on our right. We stayed near the trees for the denser snow. At the top of the trees (c4400) Dicey took pity on me for a food and rest break. Great views of the rest of our route and the sun was out.

The warming sun had snow dropping from tree branches. We headed up to a large tree island and then north below a major saddle on the right (c4800). Would have been nice to have looked over the south side for return route beta. Along the way I dug several hasty pits. Some place consolidated snow 3-4 feet deep. We travelled several hundred feet apart, keeping an eye around. Passing the saddle over the last large tree island and to a small grouping of trees below a buttress and beside the upper gulley (c4980'). Up the tightening gulley, option of steep snow leftish or mixed thin snow on steep crap rock

right. We went left and up to the ridge (c5060). Another nice small level spot to take in views and prep for the last bit. Leading NW was a lowering knife ridge with cornice. SE the ridge was narrow cornice and drop on the north and rock drop on the right. We belayed the final short bit of ridge, using a couple double slings on what little rock that didn't move when pulled. After 30-50' the ridge widened and a flattish walk to the summit. YIPPIE! Summit 5113' (GPS was close at 5124'). 3800vert, 4h50min (1:10pm), blue Skies, slight breeze and awesome views. What a great day ☺

We spent an hour and a half enjoying the summit views, looking down into Silverton, playing 'name that peak', and what the X@*\$, was I ever doing up that mountain...

Gordon Ridge, Liberty, Three Fingers, Whitehorse, Jumbo... Helana, Glacier masked by clouds, Forgotten, Sloan... Impressive was Hall and Big 4 like thin blades rising from the river floor and the wide upper expanse leading to Sperry/Wolf/Vesper. Del Campo and Gothic hiding behind and the Monte Cristo's holding in their own corner. Locating Sloan and to the right our trip with Stefan up 6215 a few weeks ago. Clocking around looking at the south ridge of Long looked steep and like a blade. And... way off in the distance, Mt Pilchuck seemingly by itself.

Check out the 360 pano

<http://www.fwbdesign.com/hike/pano/360long/>

We'd planned to try for Viking Horns if all looked good. Snow was softening and the way down looked steep. Explored on belay and found a 60 deg drop to lower off. Easy down, though not sure of getting back up, or if the cliff on the south side would keep us from making it to the Long Basin saddle. We could do it and return via Deer Creek or bushwhack to Silverton and highway walk. None of the options sounded good. Instead rapped off the east ridge back into the gully. Snow falling from the trees made pin wheels that stopped. We nudged them on and tried our own. Dickey won with one that was well around 8-10 feet tall. A nice food break now off the steep warming area and snowball making. Dickey's thermometer on black pants peaked at 83F!

For our descent we took a snow finger north of the one we came up. It got us down with some sagging to c3500. Then we worked left dodging stream gulleys, cliffs and thin snow over deep holes. Our route up may have been a better choice. 45 minutes from the Upper Basin we were back on the trail at clearing #3. Saw signs of two hikers with dogs that had turned around before the clearings. The forest was beautiful with snow, then deep green mosses. We took care to not disturb the tree research and were back to the highway by 5:35 (an hour from clearing #2). Almost odd to be back at the car and have so much daylight.

Trip stats:

ascent: 2.65m, 3750', 4h50m

descent: 2.7m, 220', 2h50m from summit

total: 5.4m, 3970+ vert, 9h15min

Gear used: Snowshoes, ice axe, avy kit, helmet, double slings, 60m rope. Could have used safety glasses, sun glasses.