

Reynolds Peak 8512' via SE Reynolds Creek

May 1, 2010

Sunny morning, Summit like winter -cold, spindrift and high winds
Carla, Nikolia (TwoDogDad) and Bruce (Likes2thruhike)

Avoiding the Westside storms –Part 1:

For part 1 see Big Snagtooth TR May 2, 2010

The short version: 2.8 miles up the trail to 4780. Left across creek. Right side of creek joining heading up valley to end of basin. At end take narrowish gully up 700' to upper basin. Right NW to ridge south of summit block. Second gully from right (longer and steeper). At summit ridge go left 50' and celebrate. Return –reverse route (walking forward:-)

The detailed story version:

With mixed and rapidly changing weather forecasts the pick was heading east on Highway 20. TwoDogDad suggested Reynolds. A long drive through a snowstorm. Passing Washington Pass the snow stopped and skies cleared. The Klipchuck CG was empty as we drove in. Adding to the story, a lone young male figure walking up the middle of the road. Long skateboard in hand and flashlight. Some rather interesting tales about hunters being after him, claws, a VW because Alaska Airlines won't let him fly, his brown dog with collar (didn't see either) and the rifle is just a BB gun... oh...and he was reformed before being released. Well, this trip is starting out as an adventure. Did I mention the car died so pulled the Westie out of the mothballs... Every 10-15 miles it would chug and putter... just turn off the engine and restart...

Flash to morning. A warm sunny morning, stop at Java Man for caffeine and Breakfast burrito. Met TwoDogDad and Likes2thruhike at the Reynolds Creek TH.

We used the [SF Reynolds Creek route described by Paul Klenke](#)

And a [TR from b00 about the same time of year](#).

Looking at the high snowlevel I opted for snowshoes, TwoDogDad was the only one to opt skis. Checking gear, avy – yes, rope, picket, food, Yana flag... check... and we were off at the leisure hour of 9:00a (TH elev 3155 per satellite). It was warm like spring, I've become accustomed to colder on the west side this time of year. That would change around 8000'. The trail is obviously seldom used. Needing brushing and some older windfall. At c4000' snow covered the trail in places. A pleasant hike, at about 2.5 miles a glimpse of the peak and at 2.8m (c4777') a clearing were we left the trail going left and a gentle down and across the creek. Plenty of snow bridges and some large logs as well.

We were spot on the creek coming out of the valley we were heading up. The way was best up the right side, firm snow covering allowing a little weaving and fairly straight route. A little orange flagging to clean. Just head up leaving the creek on the left. It was all very straight forward. The pitch eased and passed two open avy areas from the slope on the right.

At 4.3m (c5670', 3hr30min) the trees opened to the end of the basin and the mess of a giant avalanche that came down from the slope of Reynolds. The debris was at least a week old, but not inviting to go this route. Heading SW and up a narrow (in comparison) 700' gully (5980'-6650', 4.8m, 4hr20min) to the upper basin below Camel Hump and SSE of Reynolds.

From the saddle direct up NW.

The summit block came into view and reached the ridge south of it at 8090' (5.4m, 6hrs). We'd been in contact via radio and found the TwoDogDad tried the steeper more direct route and was turning around. But wait... you have the rope and Yana flag... Oh, well, another break, leave the snowshoes and scoped out the route up the summit block. A gully to the right looked easy, but proved a deadend, made a go with some dicey mixed free climbing. Dicey went back down and around to the gully left and steeper (60+deg). I waited on the ridge and we both ascended the last 50' of the snow covered ridge together. Exposure each side and the wind pushing hard.

Summit -8512', 5.6m. Temps had dropped. Wind howling, spindrift making the pitch feel like a big mountain experience and much time lost being off route. Dicey was in good spirits, though both of us bummed that Yana was on the way down in the others pack. A quick photo and probing that the summit was too deep in snow to find a reg. There had been great views on the way up. Now on the summit our heads were in the clouds and visibility only 100'. Time to get back down for warmth and views.

The down was slow without a rope. The pitch was steep and the wind pushing and spindrift packing inside the glasses... tracks up covered... What happened to the warm spring we hiked up in? It'd return soon off the summit block. Leaving crampons on, we descended to our tracks back the upper basin. Glissade the narrow gulley, changed in the lower basin to snowshoes and followed our track (mostly) out. Seeing TwoDogDad's ski tracks, was re-assuring he had made it off the slope and was heading out. The snow was still firm and good time was made to the TH were TwoDogDad, Likes2thruhike, Boon and Doc waited.

It proved to be a good day for a trip with good companions and the weather holding clear skies. Back to Winthrop, some BBQ and back to Klipscheck CG meeting the Ski Mob and bonfire. With the nasty weather forecast it was nice to lay in the sleeping bag and relax seeing stars above.

Happy trails!

-franklin

Stats:

11.22m

5280 ascent

11hr45min

Avy gear (Transceiver, probe, shovel –each person), snowshoes, crampons, ice axe. Didn't use rope or picket though carried.