

Stilliquamish 5720', via Perry Creek

April 24, 2010

Franklin and Sharon

Snow at 2900

With what looked like a partial sunny day at home I was hoping the good of the weather would spread east. No matter. I'll go til I don't like the weather...

At the trailhead (c2100', 9:40a) the light rain turned to snowing. Heading up (Sharon, Mike and I) we hit snow at c2800' and started breaking trail at c3000'. A quick break at the waterfall (c3236, 10:35a, 1.8m, 55min) and on up. Mike started off, but the trail totally disappeared. I had an idea of where it was and broke trail. The trail up was covered (gone) with snow and snowshoes needed.

At about 3 miles (the big switchback, c4100', 11:50a, 2.6m, 2hr10min, 1800vert) we headed up and then left to the open area. Traversing at c5030' (12:40, 3m, 3hr40min) below the ridge. Passing a ravine and up a few steep spots. Second to the last dip Mike called it a day. The sun had popped out for a moment, and then back to deeper snow and a fierce wind. Snow depth was ~6", deeper in drifts and bare to the snice where the wind had scored it. Last big dip (c5300', 3.8m, 4hr) Sharon camped out in some trees and waited. Up a steep stretch and across the open to a ridge then a saddle to the summit block (c5477, 2:10, 4m, 4hr 30min).

It didn't look fun crossing to the summit block, then I saw a small ledge (catwalk) covered in snow to get over to a windblown snice pitch to the summit. I'd brought a rope since last time was told the group ahead turned around not feeling safe with the snow on the catwalk. Didn't use it, there were good holds and footing. After the catwalk it was up the pitch using ice axe and crampons. Hung a little to the right and finished with a little mixed climb, cleaning handholds and crampons finding good grip. Definitely needed crampons for this last pitch. Summited, a few quick pictures then down (5720', 4.1m, 5hr, 4038vert).

I'd used snowshoes to the saddle and going down used crampons tracing my way back the way I came. The snow is getting deep and the path up was gone from wind and snow. In places the snow was now 9-11", with drifts knee deep. The creek crossing was shallow and just walked across (nice having semi-plastic boots :-). Back at the level of the waterfall the snowflakes were massive (c3244', 6.4m, 5:30p, 7hr50min). The trail was covered in a foot of snow til creek two. Then a thin film and barely snow coming down. As usual the mosses were beautiful and worth this as a short trip even without a peak. Soon back at the car (c2125', 8.2m, 6:15p,) there was a bare amount of snow on the car. Nice to strip down and crank the heat for the drive in the heavy rain. Some Teriyaki in Granite Falls...

Beautiful scenery, a good workout.

Used: rain poncho, snowshoes, crampons, ice axe, trek poles, good humor.

Took and didn't use: rope and nuts...

Stats: 8.2m 5720 max, 8.5hrs,
vert 4038 in, 197 out, 4225 total

Happy Trails!

-fwb2