

Sept. 1, 1981

Day 1: DAWNED clear & sunny after a starry night. My heart leapt for joy! I don't know if I could handle another solo hike in the rain... Greg & Match walked in with me a short way, then I was off on my own! My pack weighed in at about 55 lbs., which incl. 14 lbs. of food. I probably carry too much, but I guess I'll go slow enough to manage. At first the pack felt really awfully heavy, and I wondered what I'd got myself into. But with the first unexpected, gorgeous sight of glacier Peak things began to go smoother. My muscles warmed up, my mind cleared and I floated along the trail in a wonderful rhythm. Saw a great Blue Heron fly down the Whitechuck, picked huge handfuls of ripe, sweet, juicy blue huckleberries yum! The trail was lined almost its entire length with hundreds of bushes. The 5½ mile hike from Whitechuck to Kennedy Hot Springs is essentially flat - a very good way to break myself in. Arrived about noon & climbed directly into the tub. By mid-afternoon it was pouring rain, so I stayed in the tub until about 7PM! It's only about 97°F, so you never get hot, just pleasantly warm. At one point there were

12 of us in the tub incl. 2 neat children, and
a fascinating assortment of other folks.

Day 2: it poured all night and all day until
evening - over 24 hrs straight. Depressing! Spent the day
in the "tub", along with one other wet soul. Decided
if it didn't stop I'd hike out & try again in a week
or so. Uneventful day, but it passed quickly.
Went to bed optimistic and thankful the torrent
had finally ebbed.

Day 3: Didn't rain all night!! Packed up quickly,
stopped to chat around the ranger's wood stove in
her cozy little cabin. Headed out about 9. Hit
Pac. Crest Trail at 2 miles. It's not at all a
"highway" like I thought. Didn't see a soul until
2:30-ish. Lots of pika. got within 10 ft. of several. They're
cute, kind of mangy fur though, and they really
scream loud! Saw a deer (doe) in a meadow below
me, several camp robbers (gray jays?), a winter
wren, or swainson's thrush(?). Talked to a party

of 4 (3 young guys, 1 older woman) headed the other way.
quite a bit of uphill. I covered 9 miles and was
real tired when I finally saw Mica Lake. Arrived
about 3:30? Have a lovely camp ~~with~~ next to the lake
with views of surrounding ridges, valleys, moraines
and snowfields, & glacier too! Can hear the rush
of water pouring down into the lake. Below me & way
out of sight is a trail crew camp. A large pack
train of mules came through towards evening. A clove
had little or no human contact all day, and it's
nice. The landscape here is beautiful. Scattered outcroppings
of hardy alpine fir spp., lots of exposed whitish rock streaked
with whiter veins of quartz? Today I traversed lush
green alpine meadows between 546000' all day. Strong
sweet smells & many flowers in bloom, incl. paintbrush,
clover, fireweed, tiger lily, thistle, lupine, several asters,
and many I don't know. Blueberries up here not ripe
yet. The day was overcast with not a drop of rain. And
towards evening it cleared almost completely and the
sky turned lovely shades of pink. It's fairly cold.

Thank you for the great weather!!!

Day 4: What a fantastic day! I don't really know where to start. I awoke early as the sun! came beating in through the tent walls - I couldn't believe it! A warm, bright, sunny morning with not a cloud in sight. I layed things out to dry and had a lovely morning basking in the sun. Passed the trail crew headed the other way, and then had the world to myself. The trail descended several miles, and I was soon enveloped by lush forest, and its abundant critter life. A toad, small birds, chipmunks. My pack is chafing badly on my hips, and I spent the first mile bandaging & rigging "pads" quite comical! Soon enough I began an upward plod to Vista Ridge. 36 switchbacks @ 4000' elevation gain. It was ~~surprisingly~~ enjoyable. Knowing how many switchbacks I had left made it easier! Met one other hiker today - a single woman! We had a wonderful chat. The climb up is through forest, then lush meadow clinging precariously to the rocky hillside, then finally treeline meadows of rolling heather. Reminded me of Sound of Music. Vistas here are stunning - makes your eyes water & your heart want to burst. Uninterrupted panoramas for 360°! Saw all

kinds of new plants, some new animals: pearly everlasting, monkeyflower, imm. golden eagle! on Vista Ridge (check markings, white upper tail?), junco- or vireo-like birds, some in a large cloud-like flock. got within 5 feet of several curious picas - smaller ones than yesterday. My camp is great - in a protective grove of trees on the east flank of Vista Ridge. Look out at Eastern WA, and a great view of Glacier Peak. Some thick greyish clouds rolled in this afternoon. Still big patches of blue though. Made almost 10 miles today.

Day 5: Wet. The mist closed in just as I zipped up my tent for the night, and I slept to the patter patter of a light drizzle. It must have continued all night, ~~cause~~ I awoke this morning to a thick white wall of wet drizzly fog. It was cold. I decided to lay around till noon, in the hopes it would dry up a bit, which would still give me plenty of time for my 8 miles dowhile! I read & slept, and got progressively stiffer and more uncomfortable, so about 11 I began to pack. Love this tent!! I have so much room! Did all my packing inside with the pack standing up (and me too, almost). It was beautiful in a foggy way. The world closed in around me, and it was just me & the soaking wet

brush. My boots were instantly soaked through, but the rest of me stayed dry (thankfully I wasn't going up, or the sweating would have been worse than the rain!)

The trail is incredibly overgrown. In spots I plowed my way thru shoulder-high brush, which was very wet. Many parts you can only see the part of the trail you're actually standing on. Descended all day, very easy hiking. Mostly fir forest, lush & open, some shrubby gullies. One special spot was mostly cedar-elderberry (bright red branches of berries now ripe).

Interesting combination. Didn't see a soul till 3 miles from camp. Talkative fellow. First person going my way. He tagged along chatting all the way to the river. He stopped to chat with others so I escaped to my own campsite on North side of river. Camped tonite on upper Aniattle River. Beautiful. 3 other parties, but a huge area so we're all quite far apart. Backed in the river!! (Finally washed that Hot Springs sulfur out of my hair!) I'm staying up late tonite - it's already 8:30!! (Rain stopped early afternoon. Breaking up in evening!)

Day 6: What a fantastic day! Woke up to a blue sky, with the sun just cresting the ridge behind me. It stayed gorgeous & sunny all day. Hiked 9 or 10 miles, from Suiattle River, 2800', to Suiattle Pass, 5900'. The first 5 miles is in very old fir-hemlock forest. Most of the trees are nearly dead, and draped with "old man's beard" lichen. Interesting that ~~at~~ young trees predominantly cedar, wild ginger, strawberry, ~~an~~ knick-knick, twinflower, etc. After traversing Middle Ridge I dropped a bit into Miller Creek drainage, crossed the creek & headed up again. Here the vegetation changed dramatically. Alpine fir ~~is~~ app. and an occasional pine (white?) replaced lower elev. app. Alpine meadows blanketed most of the slopes. Many beautiful flowers in bloom. The Miner's Creek drainage is one of the most beautiful places I've ever been. As I climbed higher glacier Peak rose splendidly across the valley. (Her top shrouded in puffy cloud.) Fortress & Chiawawa mts. formed part of a massive ring of jagged rock enclosing the upper end of the valley, with Suiattle & cloudy passes as major cuts. Plummer mt. rose to the North, and below me the creek began in greyish patches of icy snow & talus, trickled through bright green swamps dotted with little blue pools, and broke out into a shimmering ribbon of tumbling blue heading west. The higher I climbed, the more spectacular the panorama became. The ~~snow~~

the panorama became. I've camped on an exquisite meadow bench just below the pass. A delightful spot. My "view" is of fortress mt. from a rock promontory the view of glacier is stunning (all the clouds have gone). A local pica screamed ~~screamed~~ fairly early & enjoyed the sun & the quiet. Heard a roar like thunder down Fortress Mt. and saw a great rock slide plummeting down! Unfortunately my solitude didn't last. I fellows arrived just before dark, and it ~~looks~~ as if some horses are on the way. Today is Saturday of Labor Day weekend, and there's more people than usual. Passed an older couple about noon, then 4 guys & 3 strange folks on horses passed me at the same time as I was turning off to make camp. I like high elevation camps better than lowland ones I think, though both are special & have pros & cons. High ones usually have less bugs, less critters to eat your food, better views, and stay light longer & get light earlier. Low ones are warmer & less windy though!

less windy though! Last night some clever "chipmunks" got into my food. I obviously didn't hang it well enough. Oh well, didn't eat much. (High camps have fewer places to hang food). Except for one thing, this is a true wilderness: airplanes. The air force bombers are the worst. Animals today: ravens, 2 golden eagles soaring high above camp, tanager-like bird (yellow, very pretty), at least 3 species of frogs, winter wrens, many goat tracks, swifts, 3 deer (doe, 2 fawns of different sizes. Littlest one hops like a rabbit). Deer come into camp & are very tame & bold. Hope they don't get my food!!

Day 7: Tonight I feel a little bit sad; tomorrow I go to Holden, which is as good as civilization. But I also feel lonely, and ready to "emerge from the wilderness". (I can't help chuckling over what is called "wilderness" & what "civilization".) Tonight I'm camp only about 3 miles from last night. I slept late, shared the breakfast fire with the fellows (very nice; the horses didn't stop here), then lounged in the sun and

I drank in the scenery for a long time. Had two curious fellows stop to chat with their dog. So I got started well after noon. Climbed the 2 miles & 800 ft. up to Cloudy Pass, then left my pack & hiked through alpine meadows to 7900 ft. Cloudy Peak. The view was superb: glacier from absolute top to bottom, Eastern WA on one side, with Lyman lakes & glacier just below, and a breathtaking panorama of jagged rocky peaks, ridges & spires stretching North as far as the eye could see. (I could kick myself for not bringing Pargetter's N.C. map) The sky was so blue today the lighting almost didn't seem real. And not one single cloud! Camp is between 2 streams and several clumps of alpine fir, in meadows between Cloudy Pass & Lyman lakes. I'm looking at more rocky monoliths (other side of yesterday's ridge) and tonight the moon is exactly half full. Last night the stars were unreal. A bit cold & dewey to sleep out though. Tonight I have built a wonderful warm little fire, cooked a delicious dinner, and am sitting here with a hot cup of tea listening to gurgling

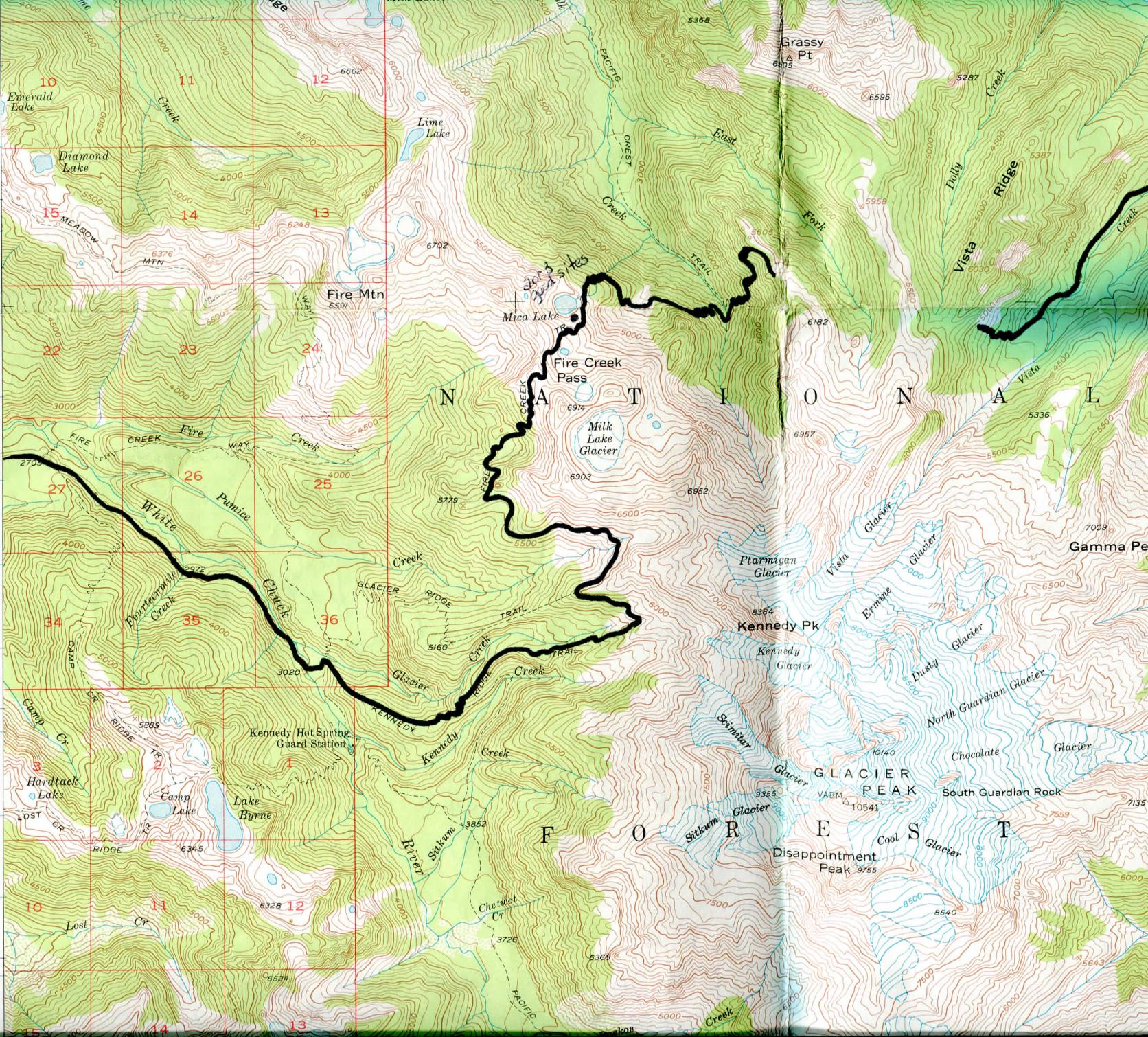
streams. Across the valley, above Symon lakes, I hear the incessant rumble of rockslides.

Day 8: Awoke to a beautiful blue day & said goodbye to the high country. It was anticlimactic to beginning descending soon the mountains & high peaks were towering over me & I was drawn inside a valley with no view but the dense brush around me & an occasional glimpse of rock or snow towering above me, or a high waterfall. But I love lowland valleys, too, and eastern WA is special, I guess because I see it so rarely. It was hot and dry, and the brush gave off wonderful heady smells. A brush, Ceanothus sp. in particular gave a scent much like pear blossom, and quite intoxicating. This latter, and ~~Mountain~~^{Mt. ash} predominated on much of the trail. ~~Oaks~~, willow, cottonwood, other deciduous spp., and pines, with a few alpine fir thrown in, comprised the forest. I was still at about 3000'. Lots of juncos, and up above I saw a nice bird: very woodpecker-like flight, but jay-like appearance. Dark wings, light body, esp. under tail & lower belly were bright white. On the 11 miles of trail between Symon lakes & Holden I saw, and I swear no exaggeration, an average of 1 toad every 15-20 ft. Most looked alike, with

light dorsal stripe & orangish near eyes. Arrived in Holden early afternoon. Campground was deserted so I walked into town. Holden is an old mining camp, now a Lutheran Retreat Center. It's much like any camp, but especially

peaceful & quiet, nestled in the heart of a lovely valley. They cater also to non-residents, and I had a fantastic dinner of homemade clam chowder, green salad, thick dark bread. Wow. Browsed the incredible bookstore (lots of "counterculture" stuff). Met a couple from Stehekin who have taken me under their wing, and we spent the evening chatting by a fire & camped out in a meadow under the stars.

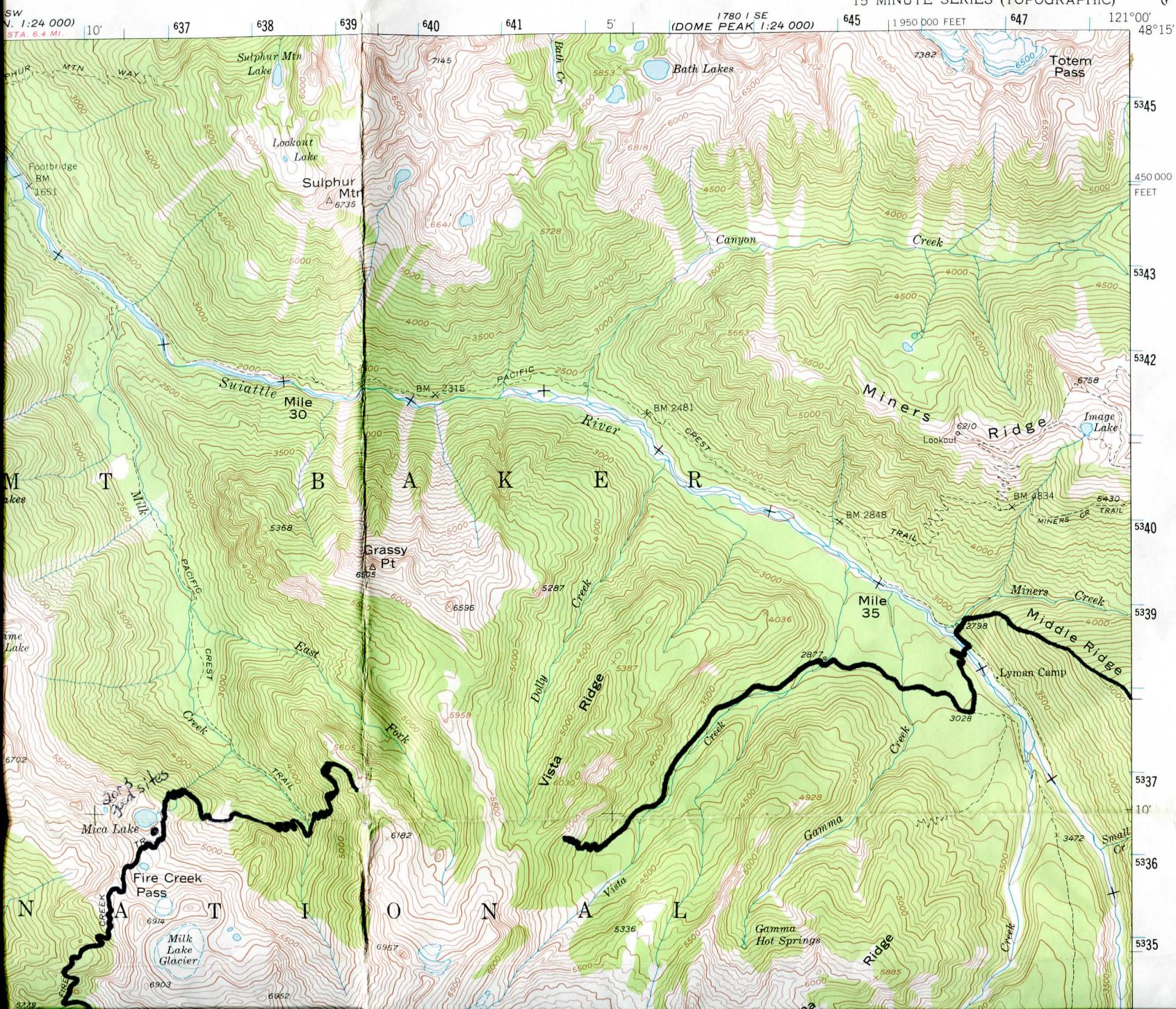
Days 9 & 10: Caitlin & Burt introduced to me Stehekin. I was spoiled rotten by a bunch of the nicest, craziest funnest & most interesting folks you could ever gather together in one place. Stayed at "The Castle", Park Service cabin & met all sorts of folks: climbers, birders, geologists, rangers, sprout growers & bread bakers, Evergreeners past, present & future. Spent the night on a rock promontory overlooking the lake & a spectacular sky full of stars. Went swimming in the lake. Had a wonderful time. Left Wednesday afternoon on the boat to Chelan.



GLACIER PEAK QUADRANGLE

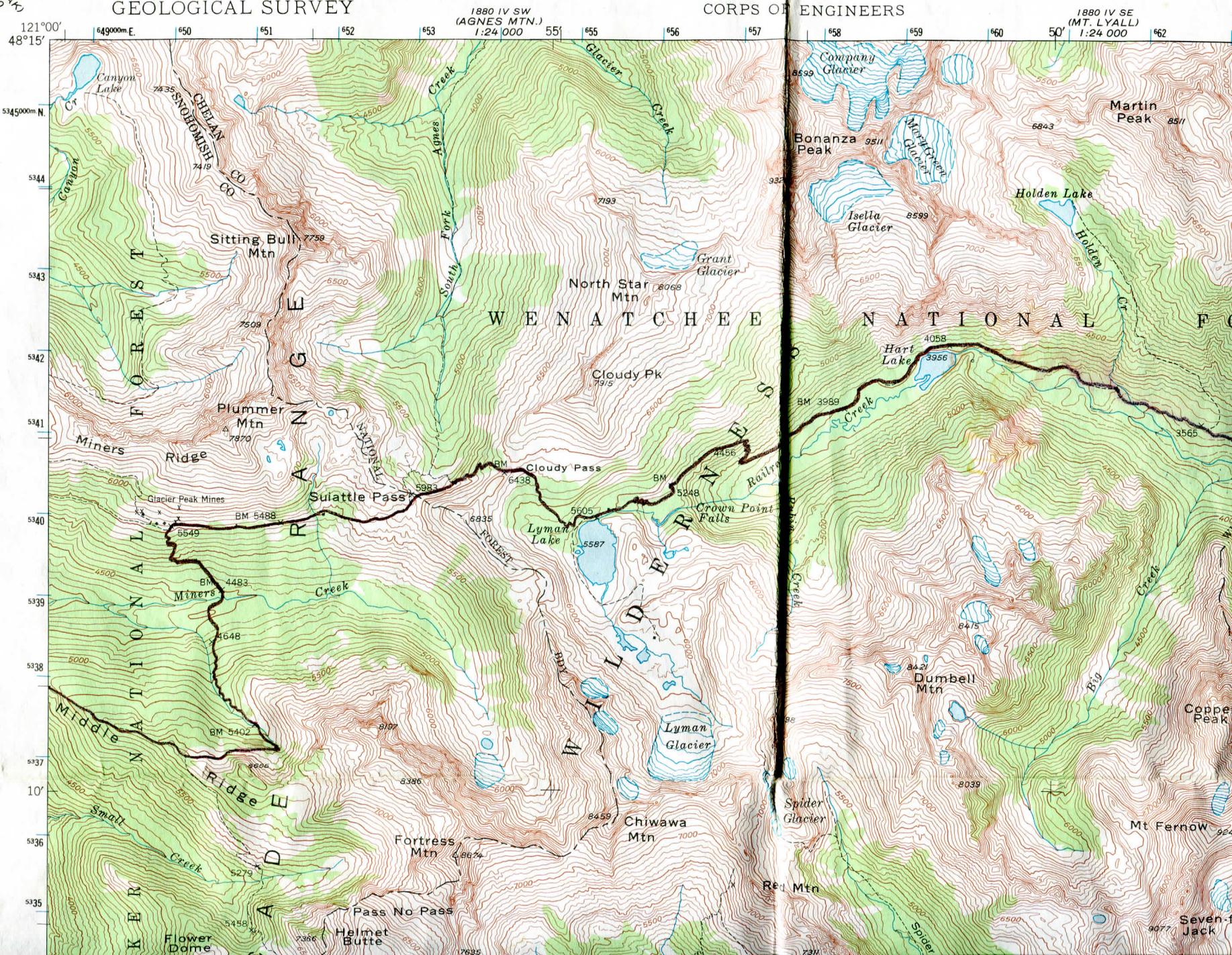
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