

WTA mt.
Baker

Volunteer 1
Vacation

Sat. Aug 24, 2013

My 1st WTA (Washington Trails Assoc.) Volunteer Vacation. Cost \$160 + \$40 membership fee. Bell Pass at Mazama Park. South slope Mt. Baker. We drove 2.5 hours, first to Sedro Woolley & then 1 hour on side roads. Hiked 3 miles up on the Park Butte lookout trail to Cathedral Ridge. Pretty steep. Then 1/2 mile

2

down to Mazama Park. There's a nice log shelter for cooking. My pack is 30 pounds incl. 1 liter of water but no food or cooking gear. There are 6 of us. 2 people canceled just this morning. Jane is the leader. Kyle is the assistant. Charlene, Mary Beth & Day are the other volunteers. We made a water hole, dug sumps for dishwater, set up water filters & hand washing bag. Dinner was

3

chicken sausage, baked beans, vegies, & cookies. It was cloudy with sun breaks. Very pleasant hiking weather. we could see the base of a gnarled glacier. Lots of bugs - glad for head net. Tent pads are very small. Pit toilet with box seat & million \$ view. To bed at 8.

4

Sunday Aug. 25

Up around 6. Slept OK, not great, on new pad. It's a bit narrow & I was a bit cold. Egg & bacon sandwiches on english muffins for breakfast. Pack lunch of turkey & swiss sandwich, grapes, chips, granola bar. Hike up to Cathedral Pass, with tools. Work on clearing out ditches & drains. Beautiful sunny day, warm not hot, blue sky & all the peaks visible - mt. Baker, The Sisters - gorgeous!

Lots of hikers going up to Park Butte lookout - a steady stream all day. Work ended at 2:30 & we hiked up to the lookout - 1 mile & about 900 feet. Breathtaking 360° views. Back to camp about 5. Pita chips & hummus snack. Began to rain. Cooking salmon, risotto, garlic bread for dinner. Grateful for shelter. Hope my tent doesn't leak.

Fantasmagorical sunset with incredible alpenglow that lasted for half an hour! Not too many bugs today or this evening. Warmer than yesterday.

Monday Aug 26

Rained off & on all night. My tent stayed dry! I slept better last night. First one up this morning. Warmer than yesterday, & dry. Huckleberry Walnut pancakes for breakfast with sausage patties. Spent the day finishing up the 400

feet of trail below Cathedral Pass. I built a check step - found a big rectangular rock & rolled it down the mountain then dug a hole to bury it halfway & stabilize it. Saw two chubby marmots up close - they posed for a long time. Back to camp about 3. Hummus & veggies for snack. Sit in the sun & chat. Two spells of light rain today. Then it poured all evening & into the night. Sound of

rock fall in the night.

Tuesday Aug 27

Dry morning & not too cold. Breakfast burn'tos. - Day 1: a man brought us hot bacon from his camp - he was the "bacon angel" - he loved that we called him that. Day 2: three women hiking out gave us the rest of their box of wine - they were the "wine angels" or "merlot angels". I don't drink, but

everyone else was happy! They got very silly & talkative in camp last night. Today we're repairing the trail on the switchbacks above camp: widening, flattening, tossing rocks. Stoop labor with a grub hoe. Now I know how women in Africa feel hoeing fields bent over all day.

Lots of fireweed, lupine, phlox still in bloom, & asters.

Lots of marmot & pika up close - so cute! Chicken curry for dinner. Rained for a while after work & before dinner, with sun breaks. The curry was delicious - Charlene is a great cook. Ages of volunteers: Kyle 21, Day late 20s, Mary Beth mid-40s, Charlene 48, me 54, Jane 58.

We're in a meadow filled with ripe blueberries! Heavy rain all night.

Wednesday Aug. 28

Still raining but my back was tired of lying down. With rain gear on it's warm & dry outside. My tent stayed dry! Blueberries, yogurt, granola for breakfast. Rain is stopping. Today is our day off. Day & Kyle are sick. Jane, Charlene, Mary Beth & I hiked to Bell Pass & down to the Elbow Lake Junction. 10 miles round trip. (MB &

Charlene continued another mile to Elbow Lake.) The trail is in poor shape - very narrow, eroded, & overgrown. Glad to have on full rain gear because the brush was very wet. Rain stopped soon after we started, & very pleasant hiking temp. Lots of old growth trees & big mushrooms. Left at 9:30 & returned ~ 2:45. Took only trail mix so wanted to eat everything when I got back, but just had

a few healthy snacks. Helped Jane rearrange all the fresh food & put one of the bins in the creek. Leftover curry & coleslaw for dinner, and Charlene made an amazing pesto spaghetti with sauteed veggies & chicken meatballs. She cooked a whole head of unpeeled garlic in the pasta water & added the cloves to the meal - delicious!

We're all getting along well, although I do have to

be careful not to bang heads with MB, who also (like me) likes to organize & take charge. We have so much food it's obscene. We all hate to waste food, but we just can't eat it all. It's partly that we're short three people, but also that they just provide tons of food.

Began to rain after we went to bed & rained all night.

Thursday Aug. 29

Raining heavily all day so far. I was restless & wanted to warm up so I worked on trenching the trails near camp, which were running rivers. My rain gear soaked through so I came in around noon. Kyle is sleeping (he's still not feeling well) so us five women are in the shelter snacking,

drinking hot beverages & chatting, & hot leftovers for lunch. Rain stopped about 2:30. All but Char & I went out to work. My boots & rain gear are too wet, plus I worked this morning, so I'm hanging out, taking photos of the muddy trail & people, reading my Kindle. Played cribbage doubles after dinner - I finally learned the game. Charlene made a wonderful vegetable soup. The rain finally

stopped. Windy night with intermittent rain spatters.

Friday Aug. 30

Mostly blue skies & 40° this morning! Granola & yogurt for breakfast. Three people are sick or injured, so we'll hike out this afternoon. Also, many people have no dry clothes left. Jane, Mary Beth, & I worked on ditches & drains until noon while the others packed up all the dishes & food - the horses will

pack it out tomorrow.

We packed up our gear & were on the trail by 1:30. Otis, the Forest Service Land Manager, came to check on us before we left. The hike back was pretty easy in perfect weather. Beautiful flowers, amanitas, views of Baker. The river was raging. Charlene twisted her ankle just before she got back to the car. Home about 7 pm. Shower felt great!