

Alpine Scrambles Trip Report

Everett Mountaineers

Destination: Malachite (Mal-a-kite) Date of Trip: 9-15-91
 Map(s): GT Skykomish Scramble Rating: R-3
 Guidebook: Beckey, Columbia R. to Stevens, P. 189 Summit Height: 6261'
 Trailhead: West Fork Foss River Elevation Gain: 4700'
 Carpool at: PUD 6:00 AM Miles Round Trip: 12

Ascent Route: West Fork Foss River trail to Malachite Lake, then essentially follow Beckey's "South ROUTE" description. See Trip narrative for details.

Descent Route: More or less the reverse of above

Party Members

1) Andy Boos Phone _____ (Leader)

From:	To:	Elapsed Times	Student	Potential Leader	Reached Destination	Adequately Prepared	Comments Noted Below
<u>Carpool 6:10</u>	<u>Trailhead 7:40</u>	<u>1 1/2 hrs</u>					
<u>Trailhead 8:00</u>	<u>Lake Malachite 10:45</u>	<u>2 3/4 hrs</u>					
<u>Lake 11:00</u>	<u>Summit 2:20</u>	<u>3 1/3 hrs</u>					
<u>Summit 3:00</u>	<u>Trailhead 8:00</u>	<u>5 hrs</u>					

12 hour round trip

Overall Pace of Party: Leisurely Moderate Intense
 Steepness/Difficulty: Can't fall Could fall Don't fall
 Terrain Encountered: Rock Snow Brush
 Equipment Recommended: Hardhat Crampons Rope
 Weather Conditions: HEAVEN ON EARTH - Cloudless, 70° Ice AXE, plenty of Food & Water

Was a handline used? Yes No (If Yes, describe circumstances)
Brought it along - didn't use it - but certainly recommend having one handy

Accident Involved? Yes No (If Yes, submit an accident report)

Trip Narrative/Comments (about skills and conditioning of students):
This is a very strenuous, difficult scramble which requires a full day.
There are navigation problems, bushwhacking, and exposed rock scrambling sections.
Only a strong, well equipped party should attempt this route, and if the weather is anything but good, forget it. For one thing, finding the route in fog would be next to impossible if no one in the party had done this before. Another thing is that wet weather would make the bushwhack miserable, and would render the class 3 rock sections too dangerous.

(Continue on back)

Having said all that, I should point out that this is a spectacular peak with wonderful views of the Alpine Lakes area, and is an exciting, challenging, and satisfying scramble.

There are two areas along the route which are particularly troublesome as far as route-finding is concerned. One is the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile stretch from the Lake Malachite outlet (4089') going NORTH to an open basin with meadow-talus at about 4500'. It is essentially a sidehill bushwack. I don't have any definite advice on the best way through this. It's rugged, steep, and brushy, but fortunately fairly short. Our party decided to mainly try to follow at about the 4200'-4400' elevation, since the map suggested that this was the least steep portion of the hillside. Other than that I really can't offer any good advice. Just make sure you end up in the open talus area under the SSW slope of the peak. You'll know when you're there, assuming it's not foggy.

The other tricky part is the summit area, the top 300'. An important thing to bear in mind is that the peak which appears to be the summit as you are looking at the mountain on the approach is a FALSE SUMMIT. The actual top is about 200 yards further NORTH. Beckey's description is fairly easy to follow until he gets to the part about "Go behind to rock horn." There are so many things you could interpret as the rock horn that it's best you ignore that instruction. Instead try this: From the step-saddle S of summit rock step, traverse out onto the southwest slope a short distance until you spot the first feasible gully that heads up slope. Take the gully up and exit RIGHT and go through a 10' section of snags. Work your way upward to the apparent highest point. (There is some class 3 getting to that point). The rest of the route should then be evident. Beckey's description then makes sense again. Good Luck.

We never set foot on snow, yet ice axes should be carried. They were handy for the bushwack section.

In my opinion, the ideal time to do this trip might be June or early July. It definitely looked like there could be most problems near the top though.

Get an early start, and be sure to have a handline available.