

Chemeketans Trip Report - Goat Rocks Adventure
Old Snowy Mountain, Ives Peak, and connecting traverse
July 19-20, 2025

None of This Was in the Prospectus

This trip was a last-minute pivot from an intended climb of Glacier Peak that was scheduled to take place from July 19-22, 2025. In the days leading up to the climb, the leaders, Michael Gurley and Mason Smith, were checking the forecast frequently. The first two days of the climb had decent weather forecasted, but it wasn't looking good for summit day or the hike out, and as the climb got nearer, it was seeming more like a potential sufferfest (rain, snow, and possible thunder). Still, the night before, nearly the full team was planning to go. Upon waking up at 4:30 AM the morning of the climb and seeing that the forecast had further deteriorated, the leaders agreed that Glacier would need to be saved for another occasion, and they started exploring alternatives. Weather looked agreeable in the Goat Rocks Wilderness, and a plan was quickly formed - we would hike in and camp, summit Old Snowy the next morning, and possibly tackle the traverse and summit Ives Peak as well.

Around 5:30 AM, we had a new plan, and we gave ourselves some time to re-pack (and drop weight for the shorter trip - food and extra gear for the anticipated bad weather on Glacier). We planned to meet at the Snowgrass Trailhead to begin the hike at 1:00 PM. Fortunately, all but two of our original Glacier Peak team were able to make the pivot and head out together on our Goat Rocks Adventure. The team made good time to the trailhead, even with detours for food, and we hit the trail a few minutes before 1:00 PM.

Snowgrass Trail #96 is nestled in a beautiful forest and has a gentle grade, and there was even a nice breeze to help keep the bugs away. A few miles in, we started to head into heavier mosquito territory - various wipes and sprays were used, and we mostly just tried to keep moving. We crossed a couple of trail junctions but continued straight on Trail #96 until we finally met up with the PCT, at around the 5.5 mile mark. As we left the forest, the team was welcomed by beautiful wildflower-filled meadows and views of the rest of the Goat Rocks Wilderness.



After a quick and mosquito-filled discussion about possible camp options, and some excellent recon work by Neal, the team decided to head north on the PCT (in the direction of Old Snowy) to try our luck for enough campsites for our team of seven plus water access, and hopefully fewer bugs. Within about another mile, Gurley scampered up a hill to check out an area, and returned to give the team a thumbs up.



It was a great spot - plenty of sites for our tents, and two different areas where snowmelt provided running water. It was breezy, which thankfully kept the mosquitos away for our afternoon and evening at camp. We had great views too - Mt. Adams and Mt. St. Helens were our distant neighbors, and we could see Old Snowy, Ives, and the traverse connecting them. We made it to camp around 4:30 PM, so there was plenty of time and daylight left for setting up camp and the usual chores - filtering water, making dinner, prep for the

next day, etc. We made a plan to leave camp the following morning at 6:00 AM, and we were all cozy in our tents by 8:30 or 9:00 PM.

It was a windy night that led to a calm morning, with some cotton candy clouds in the sky. We hit the trail at 6:10 AM and headed north on the PCT towards Old Snowy. Within a mile or so we reached a snowfield and crossed slowly and carefully - nobody opted to don crampons for the short stretch. By the end of the snowfield we had caught up to a group of hikers ahead of us and we briefly chatted with them - we told them of our plans to climb Old Snowy and possibly tackle the traverse, and they shared some beta they had heard from others in the area - stay to the right, or right on the ridge whenever possible. We continued up the trail to Old Snowy, followed by the short scrambly section, and before we knew it, we were on the summit just after 7:30 AM. For anyone who hasn't climbed Old Snowy yet and is interested, it is a friendly scramble - there is a decent trail almost the whole way, and the short scramble section at the end feels pretty solid and not too exposed.

Once on the summit, we took obligatory group photos and wandered just beyond the summit into an area with a few bivy sites, and settled in for some summit snacks and a quick break. Eager to get eyes on the traverse, Mason continued past the bivy sites and went to check out the first section. After a few minutes, we could see him in the distance, and he radio'd back to tell us that the section was good. The team stowed the snacks and, one by one, carefully headed over to the area where Mason was waiting.



The Traverse from Old Snowy was easy to navigate with the fresh beta we received earlier. We dropped down from the summit on a faint trail. We scrambled low around the first rock

outcropping. Sticking close to the feature provided solid footing. Once around we scrambled up to the proper ridge. The scree was a mix of medium-sized dinner plates but there was solid footing mixed in.

We regrouped, snapped a few pictures of the arch, and discussed the next section of the traverse. The faint trail was seen and led to a saddle that would serve as a good bail point if we didn't like what we encountered after. We dropped down from the arch, staying on the climber's right. This section was quick and we made it to the saddle in about 15 minutes.

The next section we actually went to the climber's left traversing to behind another high point on the ridge. This section had some loose sections but we completed it quickly and regained the ridge proper. We saw several options to drop to camp and decided to push on towards Ives.



We proceeded up the ridge until we reached another band of rock that we would either need to drop low and go around or over. Ian went high up and determined the first gulley over the top was the best option. The rock was mostly solid and provided for easy scrambling. We joined up with the ridge trail on the top and followed down the other side to the final saddle before heading to the summit of Ives Peak.

Several members of the team dropped packs here and we decided this would be our descent route back to camp. This final push was led to a false summit where we could see the last couple hundred feet to the true summit. We headed around the back, slightly to the climber's right. The summit block was a choose your own adventure with multiple trails and solid scrambling. Some chose to stay near the ridge which had a little more exposure to the climber's left, and some chose a more centered line to the summit proper.



We reached the summit around 10 AM. The traverse was completed in roughly 2 hours. We snapped a few summit shots, returned to our packs, and descended from the saddle below Ives Peak. The descent back to camp was a mix of scree and talus.

We made it back to camp around 11:10ish AM, and decided to take a quick break to rest, eat, pack, etc. with a plan to hike out of camp in about an hour. Unfortunately, the helpful breeze that kept the bugs away the evening before was gone, so

we were all eager to get moving once we were packed up, fed, and watered. Just after 12:00 PM, we made our way back to the PCT to hike back to the cars. Some team members took the opportunity to snap a few more wildflower photos as we passed the vibrant meadows.



The hike out was largely uneventful. Gurley spotted something shiny off the trail that turned out to be some food wrappers - something that an animal seemed to have dragged off from an unsuspecting camper. He was a good steward and picked up the litter and carried it out with him. We passed a number of backpackers heading in, which was a little surprising given that it was Sunday, and also that the forecast indicated that rain was supposed to start later that afternoon. There was more mosquito dodging, and we made it back to the cars by 2:20ish PM.

The team decided to head to Packwood for a celebratory meal. We met at Packwood Brewing, where we were quickly informed that food wouldn't be available for about an hour. One staff member went so far as to rip a menu out of Ian's hand, even though he knew he would have to wait to order and was just looking. Many of us had ice cream from the airstream in Packwood Brewing's backyard, and then we walked down the road to Cliff Droppers for burgers and fries. We found what we were looking for, and enjoyed the post-hike food together. We were thankful to not have quite such a long drive as we would have if we had been on Glacier Peak - those of us who went straight back to Salem made it just before 8:00 PM. All in all it was a successful pivot trip with a great team. Here's hoping we can make it to Glacier Peak one of these times (we were weathered out last year too!), so that Gurley and Mason can finish their 18 peaks! :-)

First Old Snowy Mountain summit: Michael Gurley, Mason Smith, Ping Lim, Gregory Adelman, Ian FitzGerald

First Ives Peak summit: Michael Gurley, Mason Smith, Ping Lim, Gregory Adelman, Ian FitzGerald, Neal O'Sullivan, Kaitlin Sommerfeld

Full Climb Team: Michael Gurley, Mason Smith, Ping Lim, Gregory Adelman, Ian FitzGerald, Neal O'Sullivan, Kaitlin Sommerfeld

Leaders: Michael Gurley and Mason Smith

Assistants: Gregory Adelman and Kaitlin Sommerfeld

Report prepared by Kaitlin Sommerfeld and Mason Smith.

Link to team photo album: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/CLRaGLf6CcpPU3c86>