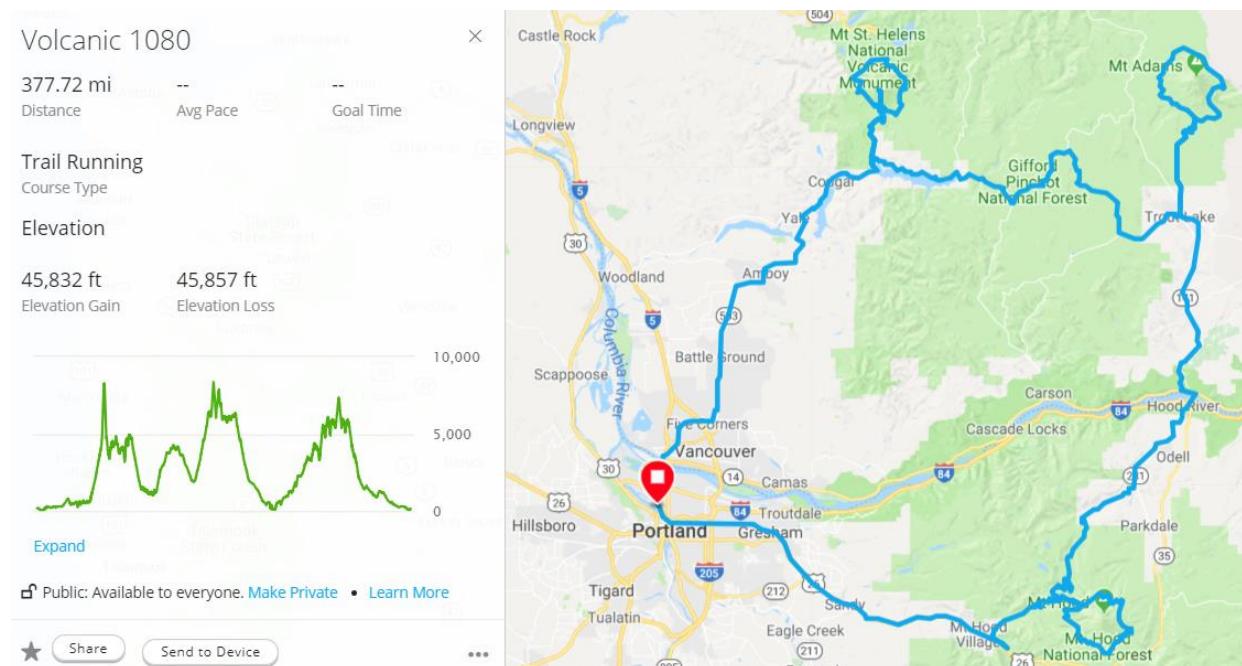


Props to Pete Carleson for naming this... the Volcanic 1080. I was thinking of calling it the Cascade Triathlons (biking, swimming, “running”) or the Tour de Cascades. But I like Pete’s name more, and I’ll be able to remember I did this in 2018 since the numbers 1 and 8 both appear in 1080 and 2018.

During my tour, I learned about a similar trip independently planned by Richard Kresser, (<http://www.runningfarther.com/blog/>) who does multi-day/week adventures including biking/climbing/running volcanoes. His brainchild is the RASH (Rainier, Adams, St Helens, Hood)- which he completed in 2016 where he summited and circumnavigated each mountain (driving between them). Since then he has done numerous other adventures including linking up summits with biking between them. While running the Loowit trail with my shoes full of skin-eating pumice dust and **ash** it occurred to me I should name my trip the **ASH** based on Kresser’s convention. But I like the 1080 more. So it stands.

The route: <https://connect.garmin.com/modern/course/19935661>



Day	Desc.	Biking miles	Running miles	Elevation gain
<b>Sunday PM</b>	Bike from PDX to Climbers Bivouac	70		6100
<b>Monday</b>	Summit Mount St Helens and circumnavigate		37	11720
<b>Tuesday</b>	Bike to Trout Lake	55		4737
<b>Wednesday</b>	Bike to Cold Springs	23		3861
<b>Thursday</b>	Circumnavigate Mt Adams		37	8000
<b>Friday</b>	Bike to Hood River	38		925
<b>Saturday</b>	Bike from Hood River to Lolo Pass/Top Spur	36		4335
<b>Sunday AM</b>	Circumnavigate Hood, bike home	20	42	11011
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>50689</b>
	<b>days</b>	<b>miles biking</b>	<b>miles running</b>	<b>feet ascent</b>

### My framework/goals/rules for the Volcanic 1080:

- #1 rule/goal: Do not get seriously injured a month before Cascade Crest 100
- As a corollary to rule/goal #1, Do not get myself into a situation where I need SPOT SOS for help.
- Circumnavigate Helens, Adams, Wy'East
- Summit Adams, Helens, and climb to Illumination saddle on Wy'East
- Bike to and bike between each mountain, carrying all necessary food and gear from the start
- All in unsupported/self supported fashion- with the exception of a car ride across the Hood River bridge (bikes not allowed)
- Go cheap- don't buy a bunch of expensive stuff for bike touring that I don't actually need.
- Completed within 1 week
- All while enjoying the trek... otherwise, what's the point? Try to aim for that type 1.5 fun. Take lots of pictures, meet people, learn stuff, get trained, enjoy the great outdoors.

### The bike:

My friend Marshall gave me this sweet Diamondback Edgewood hybrid bike. You can buy one new on Amazon for \$218, but the one he gave me was well-used so that's how I knew it would be a good one. The chain slipped under torque, had a broken spoke, and the rear tire was worn through, but that's all stuff I fixed relatively easily. I put longer crank arms on it to help with the climbs, replaced the front chain rings, rear cassette, chain, put a new burly rack on the rear and a wimpy rack on the front. I bought a bag that fits in the frame triangle. New brakes, new tubes, new rear tire, and a tune-up and this Edgewood worked as good as ever (or as good as can be expected from a \$218 bike NEW). Bree bought me rechargeable front torch and rear blinky for night riding and also bought me rear panniers. I borrowed (well I haven't actually given them back yet) two sweet front panniers from Rick Kneedler.



*The 104-lb. touring behemoth*

Bike	\$0.00
Chain	\$11.85
Crank/chain ring	\$25.64
Rear cassette	\$19.01
Rear tire	\$16.99
3 tubes	\$18.00
Frame triangle bag	\$15.99
Rear rack	\$49.95
Replacement spokes	\$1.25
Brake shoe replacement	\$7.89
<b>total bike:</b>	<b>\$166.57</b>

The bike was quite heavy. Weighing myself and the bike loaded with all the gear, food, clothes, and 3 liters of water was 296.7 lbs. I weighed 193 lbs unencumbered. Thus, the loaded bike weighed 103.7 lbs

#### **The food:**

Mostly purchased from Trader Joes with a little bit from Fred Meyer. The main shopping trip cost \$104, and some stuff came from the pantry (Gu's, Cliff Bars, and Mountain House meals) which cost around \$30. The snacks/meals purchased on the road cost around \$60. I estimate the food weighed around 20 lbs.

Name	Calories/serving	servings	Cal total
Oatmeal/fruit mix	540	5	2700
Mountain house breakfast	600	1	600
Flour Tortillas	100	13	1300
Almond butter/honey/dried cherry mix	190	24	4560
Trek mix	150	3	450
Dried banana	160	8	1280
Dried apricot	110	11	1210
Dried mango	120	9	1080
Sriracha Chicken Jerky	100	8	800
Gu	100	12	1200
Cliff bars	250	8	2000

Tuna	190	1	190
Couscous mix	850	1	850
Rice	350	2	700
Lentils/beans	480	2	960
Flatbread	140	6	840
Mountain house lasagna	250	2.5	625
Mountain hous chicken n rice	270	3	810
Avocados	250	2	500
Pesto	140	1.5	210
Pasta	210	2	420
Olives	30	17	510
Gummy bears	400	7	2800
Liquorice	100	8	800
Sandwich from Trout Lake	600	1	600
Banana from Northwoods	100	1	100
Ice cream sandwich from Northwoods	400	1	400
Orange juice from Northwoods	200	1	200
Gatorade from Cougar	160	1	160
Orange soda from Cougar	190	1	190
3 Kate's energy bars from Trout Lake	130	3	390
Cheese	100	10	1000
Dairy Queen small fries	350	1	350
Dairy Queen Orange Julius	600	1	600
Dinner/drinks at Pfreim	1800	1	1800
Ginger Ale from Adam	140	1	140
Lemonade from Burke	100	1	100
Huckleberry Milkshake (Bear creek cafe)	500	1	500
Pretzels	110	4	440
		Total:	34365
		per day:	4909

Several food items were purchased along the way or unexpectedly gifted (noted in list above). Otherwise all food items were carried with me at the beginning of the trip.

**Energy use estimate** (the activity estimates are based on HR data and Strava bike power model with a 100 lb bike):

	BMR	Activity calorie estimate	Total
Sunday	1100	3600	4700
Monday	2200	5200	7400
Tuesday	2200	2107	4307
Wednesday	2200	1700	3900
Thursday	2200	5200	7400
Friday	2200	650	2850
Saturday	2200	1500	3700
Sunday	1100	6400	7500
		Total	41757
		avg per day	6280

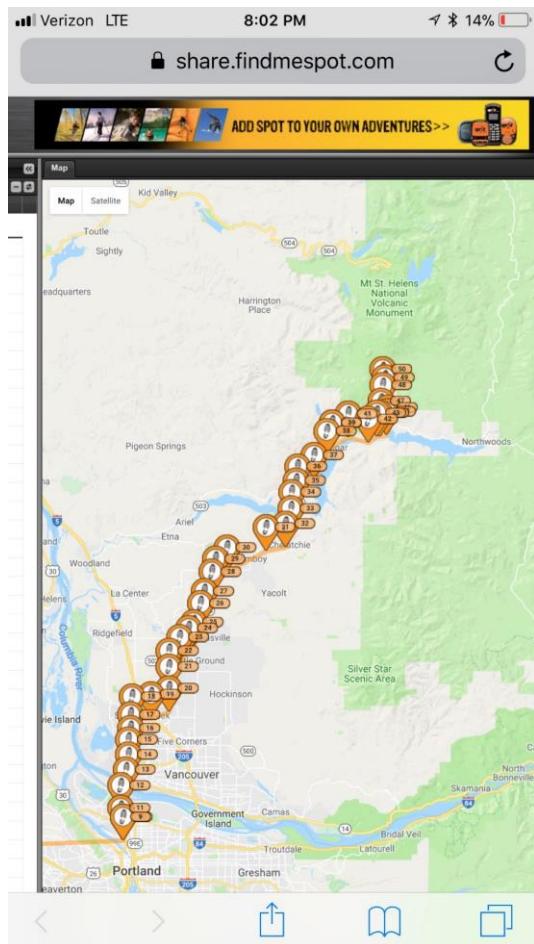
#### 7-day Energy balance estimate:

(Calories in – calories out) = (34365 – 41757) = **-7392 calories**

#### Sunday 7/22: Portland to Climbers Bivouac at Mt. St. Helens

Left Portland at 1:30 PM, the bike weighed in at 103.7 lbs. Hot day with the temperature reaching 94 degrees. Of course I picked the hottest week of the year for my endurance adventure: these are the measured temperatures in Portland for the week of my trip.

SUN 7/22	MON 7/23	TUE 7/24	WED 7/25	THU 7/26	FRI 7/27	SAT 7/28
Actual Temp	Actual Temp	Actual Temp	Actual Temp	Actual Temp	Actual Temp	Actual Temp
94° /55°	94° /59°	94° /59°	96° /59°	95° /60°	90° /59°	89° /59°
Hist. Avg.	Hist. Avg.	Hist. Avg.	Hist. Avg.	Hist. Avg.	Hist. Avg.	Hist. Avg.
80°/54°	80°/54°	80°/54°	80°/54°	80°/54°	80°/54°	80°/54°
SUN 7/29						
Actual Temp						
<b>98°</b> /62°						
Hist. Avg.						
80°/54°						



The route was pretty straightforward, across the Interstate bridge into Vancouver, up to Battle Ground where I would take the Lewis River Highway up to Amboy and eventually to Cougar. In hindsight I would have picked a different route since the 503 Lewisville Highway had no shoulder and was frequented by loud hillbilly trucks. A couple of these truck drivers stepped on the gas as they passed, leaving me in a loud plume of sooty uncombusted diesel fuel. Talk about obnoxious... I think this was the low point of my journey. I was glad to get past Amboy and Chelatchie which were the worst of hick country. It was hot and I was drinking some, but not enough considering the heat and exposure.

I stopped in Cougar for Gatorade and an orange soda, putting an end to my trip being fully unsupported. At least it's still considered self-supported. Leaving Cougar and ascending to Climbers Bivouac was a late-day treat; I noticed some cramping as I got on/off the bike, and there were big nasty flesh eating horse flies that were delighted to meet me. I would try to swat them or catch them, but out-biking them was impossible (you try riding a 104 lb bike up 6% grade in 90+ heat and see how fast you go).



They wouldn't bite often, but when they did, it was noticed. I named them "evil fucking asshole bastard flies," and I would see them somewhat regularly on the trip. Apparently, there is some [historical literature written on the subject of being chased by horse flies, so I am not alone in my suffering](#). By the time I got to the dirt road, they had all but beaten my spirit- I was 6 hours into my journey and already wanted to quit. The last few miles up the dirt road was slow- the rear tire would occasionally spin in the gravel, and it was kind of hard to find a good line in the gravel.

But these annoyances come and go, and the sun was starting to go down. A few views of MSH and the cascades here and there, and some old-growth trees were some treats along the way. Ran into a guy in a van looking for the visitor center. I told him there wasn't anything close that I knew of. He was hoping to find a place where he could sleep in his car, and I told him anywhere with a pullout would probably work ok- he was from Ohio with no map and no service. He was wondering what I was up to, and I told him, but I don't think running around stratovolcanoes registered with his brain. The conversation was short because he was worried about the flies getting into his van.

I arrived at Climbers Bivouac around 9 PM, and found the Foot-Thing campsite. Helgi, Bushwacker, Scott, Adam, and Samantha were all there. Met a few new people- Eric and John Robinson and Ginny Laforme



(all legends.. [Eric held the Nolans 14 FKT for years](#)) as well as Samantha King and Phil Ullrich. Helgi, Bushwacker, and Adam all gave me some water because I was dry and cramped by the time I biked up the hill. At 10 PM, the double-Loowit crew toed the start-line and Scott sent them off on their unsupported "race" twice around MSH. After sending off the double-Loowit crew, I made some food and settled into bed sometime around 11:30 pm with the alarm set for 3:30 AM. This trip was off to a pretty epic start!

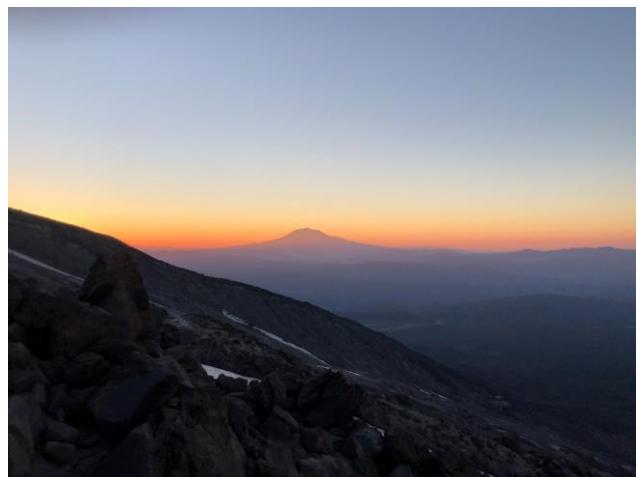
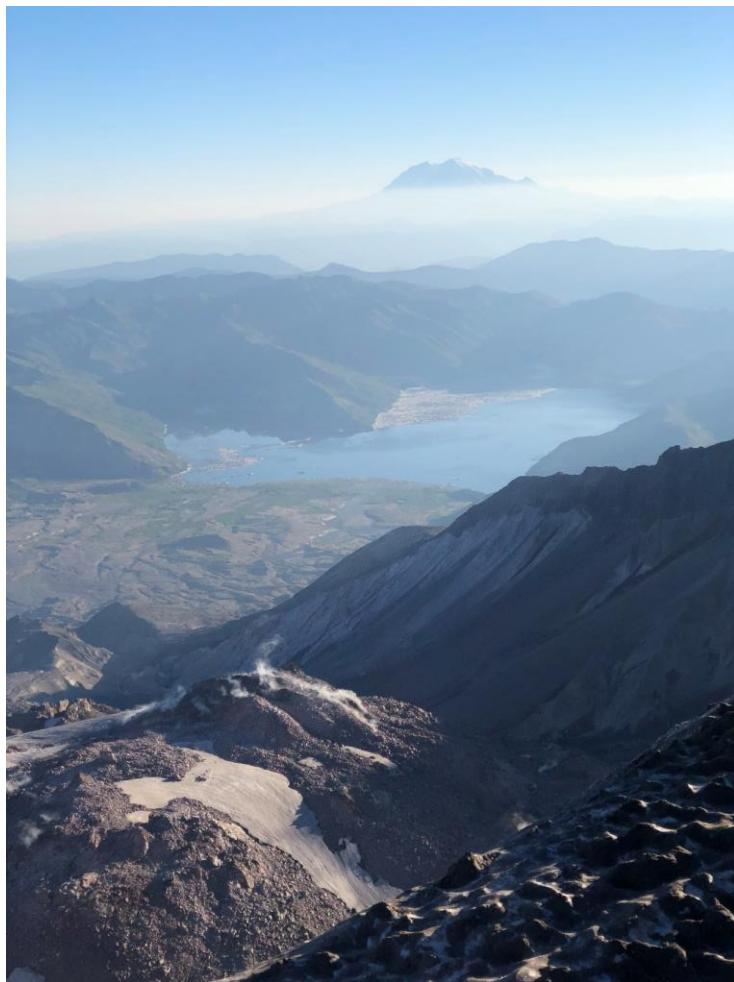


*The 10:00 PM Double-Loowit crew: Race Director Scott M., Samantha K., Phil U., Helgi O. (only finisher, 24+hours), Bushwacker.*

## Monday 7/23: The The Lawetlat'la Foot Thing (MSH Summit, circumnavigation, and 2<sup>nd</sup> summit)

1:00 AM I wake up with severe gracilis cramps. It's a muscle that runners don't know anything about, but beginning bikers learn about the hard way, I guess. I stretched them out best I could and ate some olives and their juice that I had packed with me (no pickle juice). Ate some more dried fruit and went to bed after the cramps died down.

3:30 AM the alarm goes off and I get ready to go. 30 minutes was not enough time to get fed and ready for the run, so I start 10 minutes late at 4:10. Eric, John, and Ginny have already left- some of them started even earlier than 4AM. Scott Martin sends me off, and I'm on my way! I've done the St. Helens summit at least a dozen times so I'm pretty much on autopilot. I catch up with Ginny half way up the hill- her knee is bothering her a bit. Back in the day she was a competitive weightlifter before she got into mountain running. On the rim approaching the summit, John passes me and I chat with him a bit. He's got poles, smart guy. Summit took about 2.5 hours, I was going really easy.



*Reinier, Adams, and me at the summit. Still smiling!*

About 10 miles into my day, I'm still crampy and starting to feel tired. I pass Helgi (heading the opposite direction), and he's breathing pretty hard and says he's going to get to the turn-around and catch up with me. Great. I'm feeling tired enough that I lie down under a tree and try to nap. I may have dozed off a few minutes, but the bugs were insistent that I keep moving. I pass Bushwacker (eating an Amy's burrito), and Phil U, and Samantha. They all looked pretty good, albeit a little tired after running around the mountain in the middle of the night. It crosses my mind that I could turn around and go back to camp since it's an awful way around the mountain on crampy tired legs.

By degrees, I start feeling better and life returns to my legs. I ingested a fair amount of salt that morning- luckily I had a bag of it stashed in my pack. I completely submerged in the spring just before the Plains of Abraham to cool down. Scott Martin shows up just as I'm getting out of the water and we chat (he took my picture here). He's making great time, he is running around the Loowit in the opposite direction, and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  done by that point. Damn. I'm about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way around. He mentions that the Toutle was crystal clear and "damn good water coming out of that Toutle today." We go our ways and I head off across the Plains of Abraham to the next spring in the blast zone. I keep my shirt wet and that helps cool things down quite a bit. By the second spring I'm feeling pretty good again and moving well too. Adam Cooper and I pass just past the spring, and we exchange our stories and keep trucking. The blast zone has some nice wildflowers (a bit past peak) and I remember being pretty happy about life.



*Cooling down at the first spring, where I ran into Scott.*



*To the Toutle!*

hole in this heat. I climb out of the Toutle (shitty water and shitty canyon walls and all) making all sorts of jokes about the Toutle and Scott and looking forward to seeing him in a few hours to tell him how crappy his crystal clear Toutle water got.

I head down to the Toutle, and it's getting damn hot out. I'm out of water and looking forward to this "crystal clear Toutle water" that Scott told me about. Best damn water this side of the Mississippi, I hear. Good thing, because I didn't bring my filter, and this will save me half a mile going down to the other Toutle tributary. I'm sweating by the time I get to the Toutle, so I hop in and totally submerge. Funny, it doesn't look crystal clear to me. I mean it's better than it normally looks, but it's pretty silty looking. Oh well, I

fill my bladder up with it anyways, since I didn't want to go down to the other water



*The fun climb out of the Toutle begins here!*

Somewhere climbing out of the Toutle I gave up for the day and decided to not do the second summit. It's a long climb out of the Toutle canyon and it was hot. This, compounded with the previous day's beating made me feel like I was putting the rest of the trip at risk by continuing. I had run out of solid food and the gels and gummy bears weren't fun anymore, so the opportunity to get some real food was too tempting to give up.

I sauntered back to the camp to find that Eric had given up as well for the day too. He finished about 10 minutes before I did which is funny because we started about 10 minutes apart as well.

Back at camp we wondered what happened to Helgi. We exchanged stories and went to bed, and Helgi made it back to camp some time during the night, taking over 24 hours to complete the double-Loowit 100k. Kudos to him for finishing!

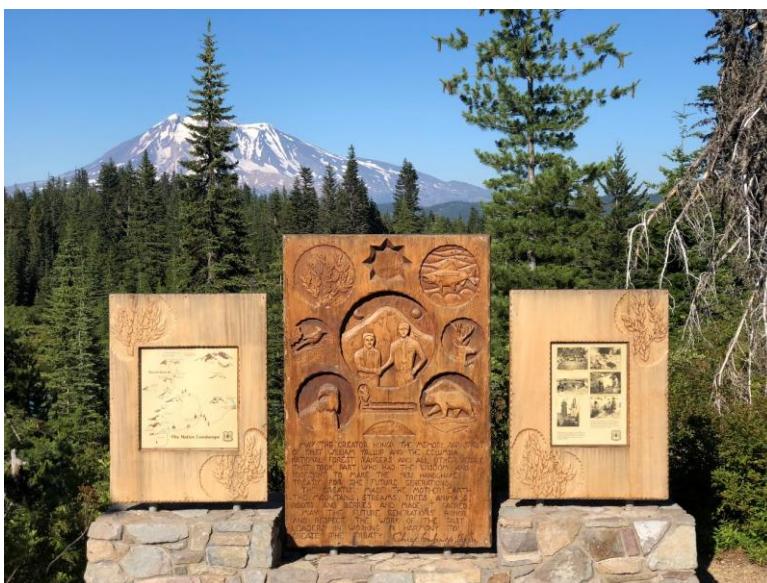


*Me after the summit and circumnavigation. Still smiling!*



*Some pictures from the day.*

## Tuesday 7/24: Mount St. Helens to Peterson Prairie.



I was not fast getting myself together in the morning. I had a very nice ride down the hill and along the Swift reservoir into Northwoods. At the Northwoods general store I treated myself to a well-deserved banana and ice-cream sandwich, and then I took a swim in the Lewis river at Eagle Cliffs (there is a fun place to jump off the rocks there if anyone ever goes there in the summer).

It was hot but I did a better job stopping at creeks to cool down. Somewhere near Indian Heaven I decided it would be fun to swim in a creek -jumping into the pool yielded me a stubbed toe that bled all over the place. Oops- it was a real messy one. At least the water was nice!

The route was surprisingly hilly with about 5000' of climbing for the day and some poor gravel roads. During a descent I hit a patch of rough washboard and one of Rick's front saddlebags flew off- luckily it didn't get caught on a pedal or wheel. Shortly after this I met a couple hikers, at the intersection with the PCT as it enters the East side of Indian Heaven. The hikers were from Washington doing a section hike of the PCT and we commiserated about the heat and bugs a little. Around this area there were plenty of signs saying that berry picking on the East side of the road was reserved for Indians per a handshake agreement going back to the 1940's or so. There were a few Indian sites in the area including a nice wood carved plaque.

I decided to call it quits for the day at Peterson Prairie Campground. I met a

nice couple who gave me a Coors Light and we shared stories until the mosquitoes came out. He did kind of this endurance Harley riding thing- I think he called it "Iron Saddle" where they would ride bike non-stop for 24 hours. He had ridden non-stop from Mexico to Canada before, and was planning a non-stop East-West traverse across the US. They stop for gas and bathroom, but they keep the stops to a minimum, like a race. Oddly enough, I think he understood what I was up to on my journey better than most people I've explained it to- he totally supported my endurance habit and was excited for me. He and his wife were picking huckleberries up there- they told me where the good picking was near camp.



*View from my tent at Peterson Prairie*

## **Wednesday 7/25: Peterson Prairie to Trout Lake to Cold Springs.**

Started the day off with really delicious Huckleberries. There were tons of them fully ripe just South of the campground. I enjoyed a fast bike to town, stopping to take a few pictures and at one point had a bear run out across the road ahead of me. A perfect morning. Caught up with Bree on the phone, and spoke to the ranger who seemed to think the RTM was not possible at Adams because the Yakima Nation had not yet re-opened the trails on the East side. I did not argue, the ranger is entitled to her opinion even if it is incorrect.



*Starting the day out right...  
Huckleberries!*



I had a lovely huckleberry milkshake at the Black Bear Café and fixed my toe with some butterfly closures before leaving Trout Lake for the uphill grind to Cold Springs Campground. I bought a bright green avocado at the general store thinking it would be a nice compliment to the food I already had with me (fun fact: that green avocado took almost three weeks to ripen). The bike to Cold Springs was more or less uneventful save for seeing some grouse and deer.



I was pretty dry by the time I made it to Cold Springs. I set out down the trail to find water. The trail was practically non-existent. There was blowdown and the trail hadn't been maintained. I walked into a drainage where I expected the spring, and found nothing but some old dried-out watering troughs. Shit.



There was a guy hiking near where I thought the spring should be. I queried him whether he knew where the spring was, or if it was dried out. He had some friends that had used it a couple years ago, but didn't know if it was still running. He suggested that I look uphill from the troughs and maybe I'd find where it used to come out. Well, I looked uphill around the site some and didn't see anything. So I needed a plan B, because I was thirsty and plan A was not doing so well. I decided to ask around the trailhead to see if anyone had extra water.



*John Dalle and his rig*

quarter mile from the parking lot. There were a lot of deer that visited me throughout the day and night, and it was a really beautiful spot. I went out hiking again in search of the spring after thinking about what the guy said about looking upstream of the empty troughs. Sure enough, I found the spring after more searching. It was kind of tucked into the hill, and the water disappeared back into the ground almost as soon as it came out. I got a chuckle out of that- next time I will do a more thorough search. True to its name, the spring was cold and refreshing.

I met a nice guy from Hood River- Paul Hoffman. He had a sweet VW van, and was curious about my travels. He and his crew were leaving for town after having done the summit, so they gave me the better part of a gallon of water to get me going. I met another guy from Seattle named John Dalle who was making a FKT attempt on the summit in the morning. He also shared some water, and he and I sketched out a plan to summit Mt. Olympus in early October this year. He also had a sweet rig, a 4WD truck with a tent on the top and gear in the back. Plan B worked out well- I was flush with well over a gallon of water and met a few cool people as well.

I camped in the burned area about a



*(Hidden) Cold Spring*



## Thursday 7/26: Adams Round the Mountain Trail.

I decided to start early for the contingency that I get delayed during the day due to the unfamiliar terrain. The 'Round the Mountain' trail is a bit of a misnomer because it doesn't actually go around the mountain, it terminates on the South East side of Adams shortly after entering the Yakima Indian Reservation. So there's some creative ways to get around, mostly divided into a 'low route' and a 'high route'. The high route ascends to Sunrise Camp via a climbers route that is more or less followable for the first half, then turns into moraine scrambling, boulder hopping, and glacier crossing. It's then followed by more moraine climbing and scrambling ridges including some dinner plate rocks and bushwacking down to Avalanche meadow where there is tough crossing of Rusk Creek and several springs and an old camp under Goat Butte. Here you can pick up the Highline "trail" which is mostly hard to follow- save for the occasional cairn.

The low route involves a scramble/bushwack down a steep slope into Hellroaring Meadow. I avoided this route wishing to steer clear of the lower elevation bugs and I also thought the high route would afford more views and alpine scenery. Across the Hellroaring Meadow is a very steep climb up to the

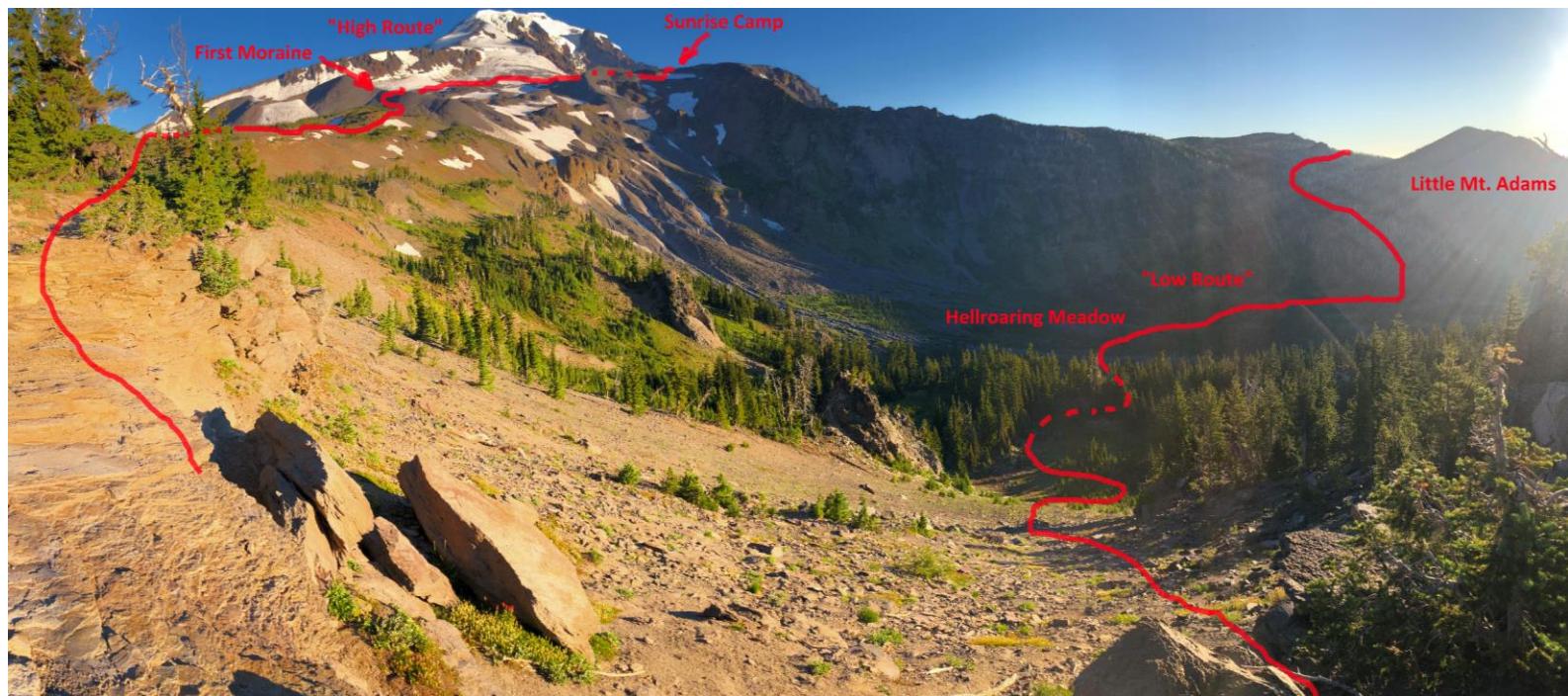
Little Mt. Adams saddle, followed by a descent to cross the Muddy river (the high route traverses the Klickitat glacier instead) before reaching Avalanche Meadow/Goat Butte. The river is a challenging crossing, and many trip reports mention needing to hike all the way up to the mouth of the glacier to cross the river. This was another factor in my decision to cross the glacier- the whole week had been near record-breaking heat and the rivers were swollen.



From Cold Spring I joined the round the mountain trail at first light. I headed off to Yakima Nation,

and the scenery became stunningly beautiful quickly. Meadows with babbling brooks and prolific wildflowers- paintbrush and lupine littered the ground. The trail meanders up to the Hellroaring





*The First trail marker*



*The Second trail marker*

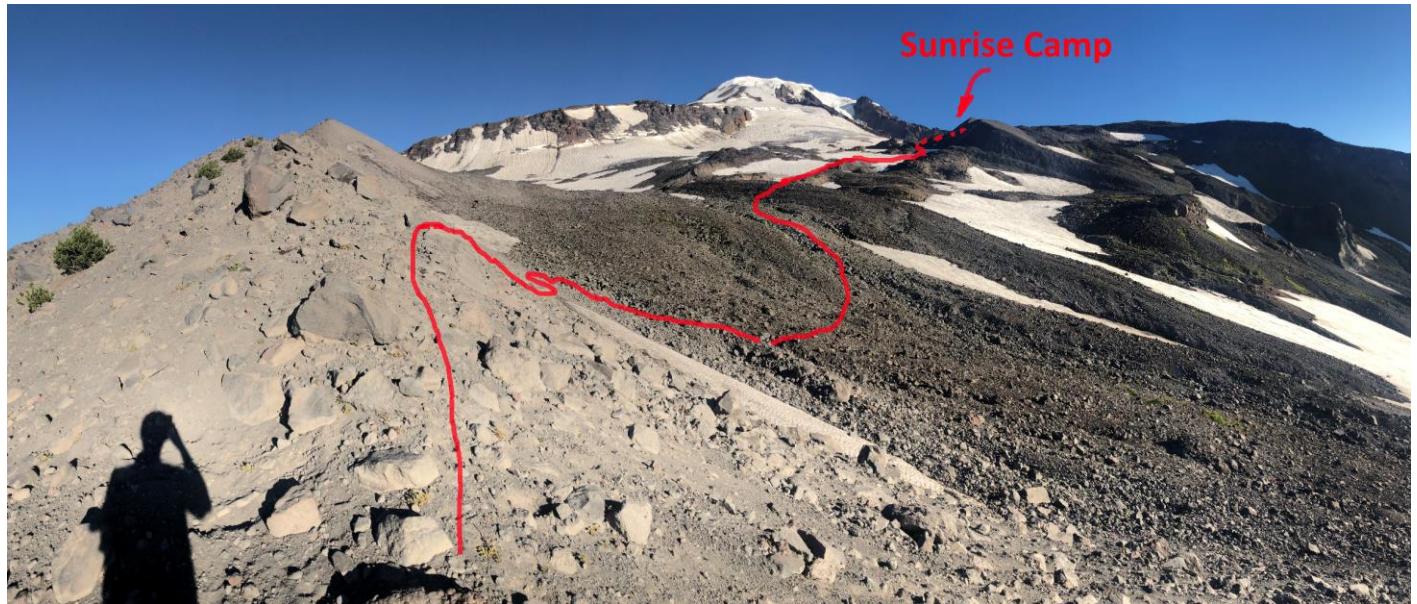


*The Third trail marker*

meadow overlook where the RTM routes diverge. I started up the route to Sunrise camp here, picking my way through a variety of terrain including sand, volcanic rock piles, and snowmelt mush. I found a trail marking pile that some hiker was kind enough to leave- looked like they had eaten a lot of fiber. Soon a large moraine loomed ahead, and my drawn map and GPS both indicated I needed to climb it. It did not disappoint, it was pitched at the angle of repose so every

step caused a landslide (some larger than others). Half way up the moraine wall I found a second trail marking, so I knew I was going the right way.

I walked along the moraine ridge a bit looking for a good line down, and trying to figure out the best route on the other side. The other side was also a treat- I had neglected to bring gaiters and my shoes filled completely with ash and gravel. After wandering through the snow and boulders I came upon a third trail marker, so I was sure I was going the right way again. Phew. The rest ascent after the moraine to Sunrise camp was relatively easy and could be done many different ways. I sketched out my route below.



Sunrise camp was empty, and there were an assortment of windbreaks assembled to shelter tents. I rested here and had one of my favorite trail foods- whole wheat tortillas filled with a mixture of almond butter, honey, and dried cherries. Yum- it tastes better than other trail-food marketed nut butters and is around a quarter of the cost per calorie (provided you get the almond butter cheap). I do love me some Trail Butter and Justin's nut butters, but not nearly as much as I love the thought of retiring early. From the Sunrise camp I descended to the Klickitat glacier where I was able to run a bit on the snowy traverse. At the far end of the glacier is a difficult/sketchy section of frozen glacial till with melt ponds and deep cracks in places. I carefully picked my way way across the piles of frozen shit before reaching the second moraine wall. I thought the second moraine was more difficult than the first- it was a long section, and everything seemed to slide underfoot. I reached the ridge eventually looking forward to my descent into Avalanche meadow, but the terrain never really relented. It was just slow going and dinner plate rocks sliding everywhere.



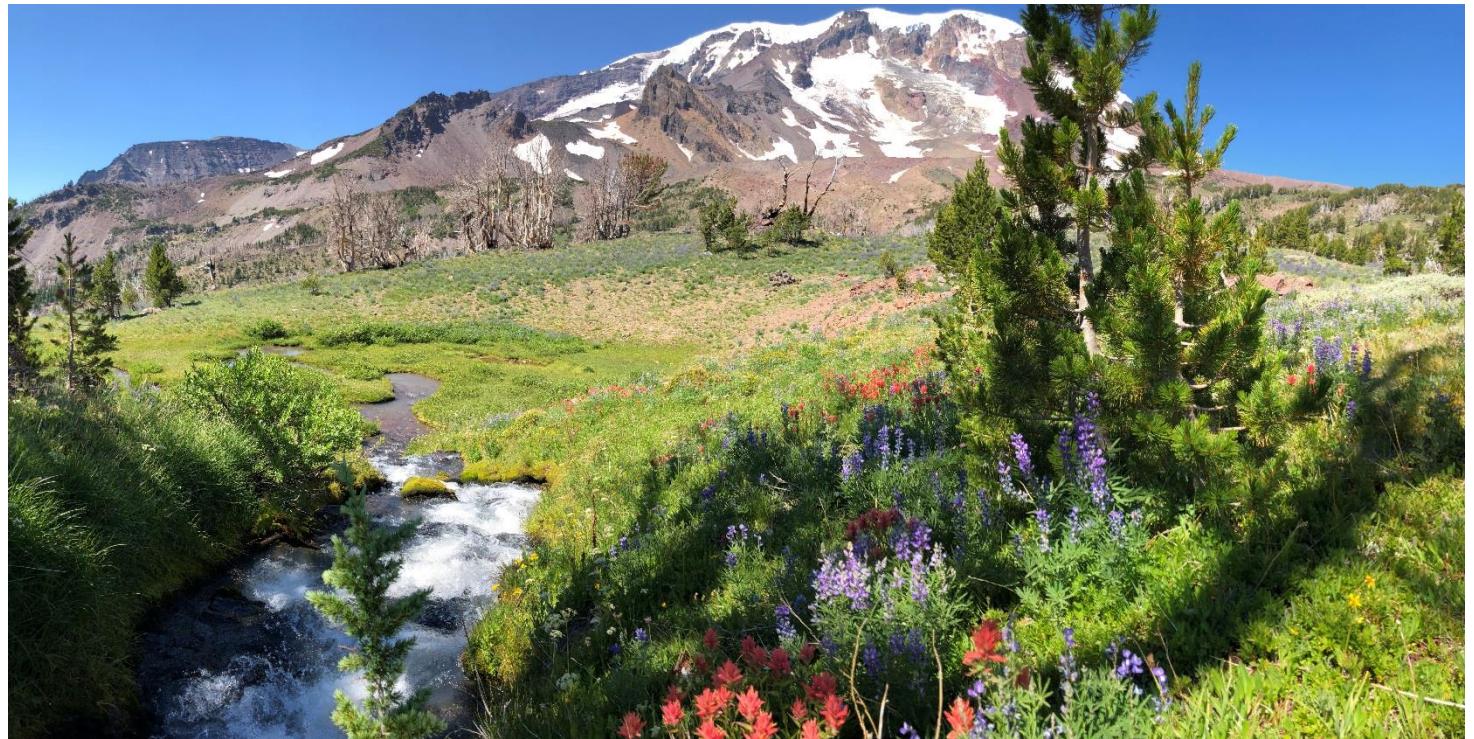
The Rusk Creek crossing was challenging due to the high water levels from the heat. I went upstream a little (maybe 100 yards) from the confluence to find an appropriate crossing.



*Rusk Creek Downstream of crossing* place. I found a fire ring in the area on the map indicated as a camp location in the valley. There are also some pretty large springs here too, and would be an awesome place to backpack into.

After successfully navigating Rusk Creek, I stopped at one of the many springs in the valley to get water. I put my foot on a mossy rock and fell into the stream getting completely drenched. Oh well- so much for carefully navigating the river crossings!

Crossing Avalanche valley is surprisingly slow. The creek crossings and the little hills take some time, but it's a very beautiful



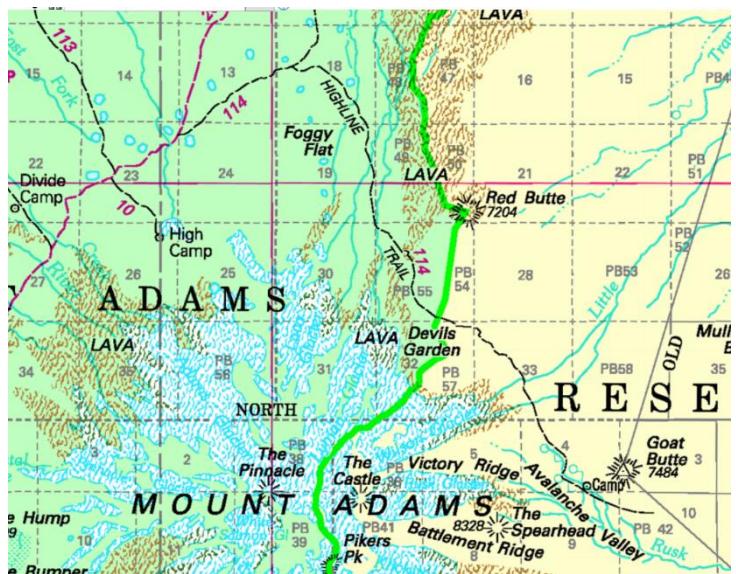
*The camp at Avalanche Valley*

Pressing onward, there were occasional hints of the Highline trail- a slightly worn path through the grass here, a cairn there, but the trail was easy to lose. I relied heavily on using my phone GPS that had the USGS map loaded with a GPS overlay. Caltopo also has the Highline trail plotted on it- the USGS 7.5', the FS Topo, and the NFS Visitor layers all have the Highline trail marked on them. The trail is reasonably accurate for routefinding and kept me on an efficient route over the terrain, even if there wasn't an obvious path. There were several high stream crossings as well as some snow to traverse at the higher elevations.



*Looking back at a stream crossing. Hindsight 20/20, I would not have walked across that narrow snow bridge again!*

Eventually the route leads to the boundary of the Yakima Nation on the NorthEast side of the mountain:



*The NFS Map of Highline 'Trail' from Avalanche Valley to PCT*



*Yakima Nation boundary at Devil's Garden. Note the trail.*

At the boundary I met a guy and two ladies and two dogs. They were backpacking around the mountain, and gave me some hints on the upcoming stream crossings. They were the only people I saw on the North/East side of the mountain. There are fantastic views of the Gifford Pinchot, Goat Rocks, and Rainier. The trail is very rugged, crossing several lava boulder fields. Eventually the trail improves after the lava fields, and can be traversed reasonably quickly. There is ample water-I found a couple cold springs close to the trail.



*Rainier, from Devil's Garden*



*Crossing the lava/rock fields*

The PCT is straightforward. With an exception for the stream crossings. I witnessed a hiker fall in and get dragged under the 'bridge' which became a strainer he couldn't get out of. I was wringing the water out of my socks and shoes when he started crossing the sketchy log bridge. I figured I'd take a couple pictures of him crossing thinking it might make a good shot. He went over, and was waist deep in the water. I took another picture, thinking he would walk out, but the strong flow pulled him further under the log bridge. Seeing the situation become serious, I threw on my shoes and jumped in after him. I grabbed him by his shoulder straps, but could not pull him out. We got his legs situated a little better under him and worked together on the next heave, and he budged out from under the strainer. At the other shore, he was visibly shaken. Shit got real...fast. I hadn't really appreciated how you could get trapped under a stream crossing log with a pack on like that. Damn!



*Hiker crossing the sketchy log bridge*



*Hiker getting sucked under the sketchy log bridge (couldn't get out)*



*No bikes on the Hood River bridge!*

## Friday 7/27: Cold Springs to Hood River

I was glad to have an easy ride to Hood River- it was downhill the whole way and only took a couple hours to go 35 miles. Bree met me at the bridge to drive me across- no bikes or pedestrian travel is allowed on the Hood River bridge. We went swimming at the beach on the Columbia, and followed that with beer and food at pFriem. We then camped along Hood River just outside of town. It was a great day- it was really nice to just chill out for a day! I am convinced the aged beers at pFriem have restorative/recovery properties and encourage others to quaff them as the opportunity presents. The German-style bratwurst plate is also a great food compliment to the beer.



## Saturday 7/28: Hood River to Lolo Pass

I wasn't psyched about leaving the campground and getting on the bike again. Hanging out with Bree seemed like a much better alternative. But I had a plan and I was going to stick with it. Leaving Hood River, I wound my way up to the mountain through orchard after orchard of pears and other delicious fruits. The road to Lolo Pass is decent to bike- there isn't a lot of traffic and the dirt road sections are

decent to bike on, I thought. Closer to the pass, I stopped several times for berries- they were way too good to pass up on. There were thimble berries as well as the PNW blackberries (the smaller ones that live closer to the ground). I camped down the road a little from Top Spur trailhead, it was a few miles and a climb past Lolo Pass, but it put me closer to the Timberline Trail/PCT for the morning.



*Blackberries, thimbleberries, and pears, oh my!*



*Giant metal electro-monsters approaching Lolo pass*

## **Sunday 7/29: RTM Mt. Hood, and attempt to bike home**

I woke at 12:15 on Sunday after about four hours of sleep. I decided to run around Hood in the darkness for two reasons- it would be good training for running at night during the upcoming Cascade Crest 100 race in a month, and there were record temperatures forecasted for the day as well. It did not sound fun to be out on the exposed side of Mt. Hood on a 100 degree day, so I started running at 1 AM after packing up my tent and gear and stashing the bike in the woods by the trailhead. Starting at Top Spur



*First light on the mountain*

trailhead, I headed counter-clockwise after joining the Timberline Trail. I decided to take the high route and cross the muddy fork higher up before the bifurcations, where I thought the flow would be lower. Before Ramona falls, there was a small rabbit sitting in the trail. I ran right up to it, and it just sat there. Weird. I squatted down and looked at it, and it just sat there, kind of stunned by my headlamp. I pulled out my phone to take a picture and then it decided to hop away. It was a full moon, and a warm night. Daylight

started making an appearance near Timberline Lodge. I passed dozens of tents- the Timberline trail is a popular hike on the weekend! I had smooth sailing until my old nemesis: the Eliot crossing. Four years ago I made the mistake of attempting the washed out section and had quite a scare climbing out the canyon wall. I misjudged the steepness/difficulty and got myself into a compromised position that I was lucky to get out of unscathed. This trip I took the new low route- it was at least a mile out of the way with really dusty climbing, and no great place to cross either.



*My old nemesis: the Eliot crossing*

I didn't take any more pictures after the Eliot. I was focused on finishing the run and getting home. It was hot, and I was taking shortcuts- not cooling down in the streams, not drinking enough or eating enough, and I knew it. I was a couple hours from the bike, and I knew I could make it, so I just powered through. I got on the bike and flew down the hill on the dirt road towards Highway 26. I couldn't stop thinking about Dairy Queen. The big DQ, oh man a blizzard would hit the spot. I had a broken spoke from the day before, and suddenly my back rim was rubbing badly against the rear brake pad. Three broken spokes now, and I had to disconnect the rear brake to bike at all. Not good. But still moving. I called Bree as soon as I got service. I knew I wasn't going to make it- the tire was warped so bad it shook the bike, and it was hot and I was out of gas. So I threw in the towel. Somehow ending DQ was fitting: it's like a DisQualification. But I didn't care, I set out to do what I wanted, and some stuff got in my way I couldn't control so I decided not to beat myself up about not finishing the bike ride on Highway 26 back to Portland in the 100-degree heat.

The air conditioning was out in the Dairy Queen. It was sultry inside. I had just biked up the road several miles and I was woozy hot. There was a big line all the way to the door- I stood in it and waited my chance to order some delicious relief. The line was crawling so slowly, the DQ was under siege by a line of cars waiting for the drive through too. There were some young punk snowboarder teenagers ahead of me that had just gotten done boarding at Timberline on the glacier. About a dozen of them I remember watching one of them drinking some water- wishing I had some water to help cool me off- I wasn't sweating any more. My vision started darkening- tunnel vision. It felt like I stood up too fast from being in a squatted position for too long. I leaned against the condiment counter to wait for the spell to pass.

I woke up on the floor with a woman handing me a plastic bottle of water and telling everyone "It's OK, I'm a medical doctor, he just fainted and he'll be fine." The snowboarder kids looked at me like I had ebola or something. Whatever, I could still kick their asses if I wanted to. I got up, and the kind Dr. ushered me to a table and brought me some ice water. I got to talking to her and her husband- they



*Assed-out in the car after my DQ*

were up visiting from San Diego, as they have relatives in the area. Really nice people- the best kind of people, I wish I could remember their names. I told them about my adventure, and I'm pretty sure they thought I'm a total idiot which is a scientific insight considering all the evidence I presented them with.

So that's more or less how it ended. Bree picked me up, I got my DQ and we went swimming at her mom's house and drank lots of water and beer all afternoon. I learned a lesson about messing around with the heat and doing too much. It was a super fun, beautiful, engaging, and challenging journey and I'd do it again if there weren't so many other awesome adventures I'd love to do in the future...



*Always remember to live your most epic life.*