

T150 South Sister Trip Report

August 22-24, 2008

Trip Roster

Scouts:




1. Evan Anderson
2. Malcolm Daigle
3. Nick Jamison
4. Noah Rischitelli

Adults:

1. Trip Leader: Gary Rischitelli
2. Co-Leader & Quartermaster: Dave Anderson

Difficulty: South Sister is Oregon's third-tallest mountain (10,358 ft). This is a strenuous hike (4900 ft elevation gain over 5.5 miles) but no technical climbing skills are needed.

Weather: Perfect!

22	23	24
		
Actual: 81 39	Actual: 87 41	Actual: 89 48
Precip: 0.00	Precip: 0.00	Precip: 0.00
Average: 85 46	Average: 84 46	Average: 84 46
Precip: 0.02	Precip: 0.02	Precip: 0.01



Map(s): Green Trails #621 (Three Sisters), USFS Three Sisters Wilderness Area

Description:

This was a perfect weekend backpacking trip in the Three Sisters Wilderness area that gave the Scouts a taste of alpine hiking. The group departed Portland around noon drove to the Devil's Lake Campground just past the Mt. Bachelor ski area on the Cascade Lake Highway. We parked at the Devil's Lake/South Sister Trailhead. (A Northwest Forest Pass permit is required to park at the trailhead. The permits cost \$5 per car for a day pass. Annual passes are available for \$30 and are good for all national forests in Oregon and Washington.)



Permits, which are free, are required to enter the wilderness. These can be filled out at the trailhead.

Moraine Lake



We left the parking lot at approximately 4 p.m. and hiked to Moraine Lake via the South Sister Climber's Trail (#36). The trail climbs rapidly up on a series of switchbacks through the forest. The trail was busy with a large number of returning climbers. As we left the forest we reached the intersection with the Moraine Lake trail but continued upward and took the second trail to a series of campsites on the ridge above the

Lake. We arrived and set up camp at about 6 pm. Part of the group hiked down to the lake to collect and filter water before we prepared a Philmont-style "one pot dinner" then retired for the night. We were treated to a breathtaking sky full of stars with a reflection of the Milky Way on the surface of the Lake.

On Saturday morning we left camp at 9:30 a.m. with daypacks and began the hike to the summit of South Sister. We encountered a number of other groups during the ascent including another Scout troop that had camped at Moraine Lake in the lower campsites and left shortly before we did.

We made several rest stops during the hike for water and snacks. One of the small cinder cones on the mountain's shoulder became known as "Skittle Hill" since we rewarded the boys with skittles once they had passed it.



"Skittle Hill"

Summit Crater

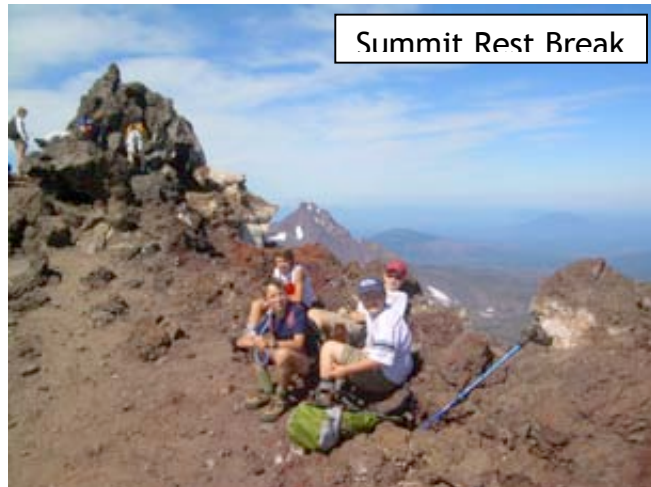


We ate lunch with a large number of other climbers at a small glacial lake just below the final push up a steep scree-covered ridge to the summit rim. We met a number of visitors including a student from Switzerland.

We climbed the last steep section, arriving at the rim about 3 p.m. Once we reached the summit rim we crossed a snowfield in the summit crater where another small glacial melt lake existed. We climbed up a short steep rock ledge

and rejoined the rim trail to the true summit where we had a spectacular view to the north where we could see Middle & North Sister, Brokentang, Mt. Washington, Mt. Jefferson, Three-Fingered Jack, Black Butte, Mt. Hood and Mt. Adams.

After enjoying the views and a snack, we returned to the South Rim where the views were beginning to be obscured by smoke from a wildfire near Crane Prairie Reservoir. We could still enjoy spectacular views of Mt. Bachelor, Diamond Peak and Mt. Thielsen. We started our descent and it was challenging due to our fatigue and the loose rock and cinder. We arrived back at camp tired and satisfied around 5:30 pm and made dinner after another trip to the lake for water.



Sunday we ate breakfast, packed up our gear and hiked down to the lake to fill our water bottles with filtered water. We hiked out along the Moraine Lake trail until we reached the intersection with the climber's trail and then returned to Devil's Lake along the same trail. We arrived back to the trailhead about 11:30 am, took a few photos then

departed back along the same route to Portland.

This was a great trip with perfect weather. We were lucky since the following week it snowed and some hikers had to be rescued from the area. I would strongly recommend including this outing in our high adventure plans a regular basis.

Troop Equipment Used: Backpacking tents, cooking gear, water filtration pumps, collapsible bucket, bear bags.



Resources:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/recreation/trails/1036-southsister.shtml>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Sisters_\(Oregon\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Sisters_(Oregon))

http://www.oregon.com/hiking/south_sister.cfm

<http://www.summitpost.org/mountain/rock/150455/south-sister.html>