

# Cascade Trifecta

**We set the alarm for 1:30 in the morning, then laid down to sleep in the rental car.**

Just like the final night when we ran the John Muir Trail, both of us were already awake, ready to go before the alarm went off.

Our plan was to first climb Mount Rainier, the highest peak in the Northwest, continue directly to Mt Adams, the 2nd highest in Washington State, then finish by climbing Mt Hood, the highest in Oregon. Three huge volcanoes, classic peaks, all lined up in a row.

It was a great plan.

It was also cold and dark, and then it began to snow hard, the strong wind sticking it to our hooded faces, as we slogged upward thru the deepening snow.

This was a stupid plan. Whose idea was this anyway?

June 9-10, 2005

Buzz Burrell

Peter Bakwin

Fortunately, the weather in the Pacific Northwest is unusual (to our Colorado sensibilities at least), and by the time we reached Camp Muir at 10,000' we were above the cloudbank, with clearing skies ahead. In good conditions with good weather, Rainier is terrific, one of the most fun and spectacular mountains in the United States.

Then I fell into a crevasse.

It was the first crevasse one could possibly fall into. We were casually walking on completely flat snow, and then in a blink of an eye I was down inside a crevasse. I looked around: my right crampon was fortuitously stuck into the front wall, my pack jammed against the wall behind me, and between my legs was deep blue ice, yawning open to about 10' wide and 100' deep. It was good to stop right there. The view, I thought, was much better from up here than 100' down. Peter and were roped up and he had me on belay, so I scrambled out and we continued on.



This was not a great day to go fast, so we gave up that idea. It was a great day however; the mountain was incredible, and it was fun to work out the problems, stay safe, and enjoy the experience.

We summited after a sluggish 6 hrs 20 min. We couldn't make up time going down, as plunging into a crevasse would not be smart. No matter. The weather was holding; we were on our way.



We had a fabulous support person in Tom Borschel, who not only is one of the best mountain runners in the US, but a solid companion. I intended to sleep as he drove us to Mt Adams, but the road was too twisty. Not a problem; arriving at the trail head, we packed up our gear, going lighter as it was now mid-afternoon, and started up.

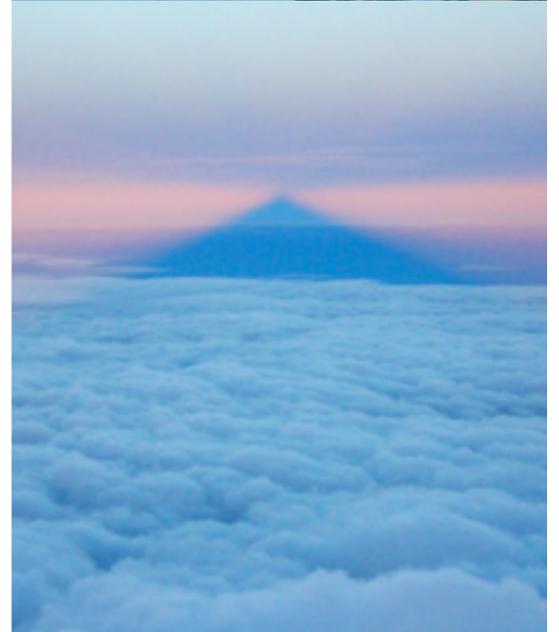
Mt Adams is completely non-technical, a classic snow slog, but 7,000' of elevation gain still takes it out of you. We were getting tired near the top. And it was cold and windy. We hurriedly threw on all our clothes, stuffed food in our mouths, and ran down, taking less time on the summit than Rainier. But when the sun cast long red shadows across the snow, and a beautiful sunset started with Mt St Helens in the background, we simply had to stop, admire the view, and take pictures. For many reasons, this was not the day to go fast!

When we arrived at Timberline Lodge at the base of Mt Hood, it was Midnight, it was cold, it was dark, and we didn't know which way to go. We were not brimming over with enthusiasm.

But we had fabulous support again ... a crew was there to film us and they knew far more about the mountain than we did ... so they pointed us in the right direction, and up we went into the darkness. Members of this film crew were a huge help to us throughout the trip ... they all were solid mountaineers, and very good spirited.



Hood turned out to be tricky. We reached the bergschrund where a spectacular accident occurred three years previous. A roped party slipped on the steep section above the 'schrund, and while falling, clothslined a second party below them, who then crashed into more people below, until a total of nine people went catapulting into the bergschrund. Three were killed and six others were left injured. To add insult to injury, a rescue helicopter tried landing on the lip of the 'schrund ... not my idea of a smart move ... and it too crashed, cartwheeling down the slope 1,000' and injuring another six.



We skipped all that. We moved carefully, appreciating the spectacular surroundings, especially appreciating that we were wearing nylon running shoes instead of plastic boots, and were using lightweight Kahtoola crampons instead of rigid steel, and were really enjoying ourselves.

The east glowed with light. Dawn broke on the summit of Mt Hood. What could be better?

The shadow of this special mountain was an apparition in the west, even as the sun sprinkled fairy dust over the tops of the clouds to the east.

Although we were supposedly doing a speed climb, we were reluctant to depart, and spent a good hour futzing around on top. Finally we had to go down. To leave a good mountain is hard. We completed the Cascade Trifecta, not in 24 hours as intended, not in the fastest time possible, but having the best time.

T.O.D.	Chron.	
02:42	00:00	start Rainier
05:11	--:--	Camp Muir
09:02	--:--	summit
12:12	09:30	car
15:13	--:--	Adams T.H.
15:42	13:00	start Adams
19:36	--:--	summit
21:26	18:44	car
00:35	21:53	start Hood
04:37	--:--	summit
06:43	28:01	finish

Rainier	9:30
R to A	3:30
Adams	5:44
A to H	3:08
Hood	6:09
TOTAL	28:01



Thanks to!

- Tom Borschel
- Dan Patitucci
- Uncage the Soul Productions

