



AAC Publications

Lillooet Range, Traverse of the Season

Canada, British Columbia, Coast Mountains

Our hopes of taking my 4WD up Kwoiek Creek Forest Service Road were squashed by an impassable slide only a couple of hundred meters up the road. Seb Gulka and I were heading to the long alpine ridgeline that leads westward over four peaks (informally named Winter, Autumn, Summer, and Spring) to the summit of Skihist Mountain (2,968m). I didn't quite realize what I was getting into, as Seb had fueled this idea and done much more research. Notably, the traverse was attempted by Robert Nugent, Margaret Saul, and Don Serl in July 1995; they bivouacked between Summer and Spring and bailed in a storm the next day (see *Canadian Alpine Journal* 1997).

We walked ten kilometers up the Kwoiek Creek Road, then turned onto the poorly maintained North Kwoiek Road (where we'd hoped to park). We soon found ourselves storming through alder thickets. When we finally broke free from the alders and steep fall-line bushwhacking, we found ourselves in a beautiful green alpine bowl. After gaining the ridge, we rambled over small summits with easy scrambling. Eventually we found a sheltered nook behind some stubby trees and a small patch of snow for meltwater and stopped for there, about three kilometers east of Winter Peak (2,446m), for a starlit bivy.

In the morning, we continued to the straightforward 3rd-class scramble up Winter's east ridge, then down the southwest ridge. Autumn's northeast buttress was much steeper and more formidable. We found a stunningly white quartz ramp that led us to some low 5th-class steps, then followed the northeast buttress up solid and sustained 4th class. The rock was solid and the scrambling excellent.

Beyond Autumn Peak (2,784m), the rock quickly deteriorated as we downclimbed the south ridge. We continued over loose 3rd class to the summit of Summer Peak (2,713m), then descended once again, eyeing up the northeast ridge of Spring Peak (2,822m), which was steep straight out of the col. As this is where the previous party had bailed, from here on we had no beta.

After we traversed the right side of the ridge along loose 4th-class blocks, Seb belayed me up to the crest by a short 5.7 chimney that protected nicely with our small rack of cams. After a bit more 4th class, we reached the top of Spring. Continuing toward Skihist, we romped along and around large orange blocks that jutted above the ridgeline—mostly low 5th class save for one memorable gaston move. From the summit, we hopped down orange talus and bivvied in the bowl between Skihist and Antimony Mountain (2,668m).

In the morning, we headed up the north ridge of Antimony, then down green slopes on the south face, dropping back toward the overgrown Kwoiek Creek Road. Pushing through the forest, we almost walked right past the road, as it was nearly as overgrown as the surrounding woods. We followed the "road" to a rushing blue river and no bridge. Remote and committed, we waded across with hopes that the decommissioned road on the far side would offer easy travel. However, our dreams were quickly extinguished as we returned to alder thrashing, pushing through until we were rudely interrupted by a nest of angry yellowjackets. Shortly after sprinting away, we were once again blocked by Kwoiek River—here it was larger and faster. Seb boldly took the lead, wading hip-deep through fast-moving water and using a precariously balanced log for support.

Climbing out of the river, we finally gained a section of the Kwoiek Creek Forest Service Road that was still in good shape. We had nothing but 20 km of Forest Service Road left. I plugged into my iPod

shuffle to distract me from my tired legs and battered feet.

All in all, it was an amazing adventure following about 10km of beautiful alpine ridgeline ending at the tallest peak in southwest BC. Despite being a few hours from Vancouver this area is spectacularly remote and rarely traveled.

— **Alessandro Lanius-Pascuzzi, Canada**

Images



The northeast ridge of Autumn Peak. This had the best climbing and rock on the traverse.



The Traverse of the Seasons from the southeast. The traverse went from right to left over Winter, Autumn, Summer, and Spring peaks to reach Skihist Mountain (2,968m), the highest summit left of center.



A striking glacier and orange rock on the east side of Skihist.



Seb Gulka topping out Autumn Peak after climbing the northeast ridge.



Alessandro Lanius-Pascuzzi making a precarious creek crossing on the way out from the Traverse of the Seasons.

Article Details

Author	Alessandro Lanius-Pascuzzi
Publication	AAJ
Volume	65
Issue	98
Page	166
Copyright Date	2024
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions