



AAC Publications

Gilt Peak from the South, The Cedar Room

Canada, British Columbia, Coast Mountains, Foch-Gilttoeyes Provincial Park

The view up the southeast side of Gilt Peak from Frodo's Knob. Team Photo

Gilt Peak (1,893m/6,211', 53.942523, -129.222608) is deep in the Coast Mountains, within Foch-Gilttoeyes Provincial Park. It's one of the most visible mountains in the park, and one of the few that have been named. In late July 2024, Savian Czerny, Wiley Holbrooke, and I rode a chartered jet boat up the lower reaches of Gilttoeyes Creek in hopes of reaching the Pangea valley on foot. (This area was previously accessed by climbers via helicopter in 2019 and 2021; see AAJ 2022.) Our goal was to establish a new route up the north face of Gilt Peak.

After several days (and very few miles) of brutal bushwhacking and difficult river crossings, it became clear we wouldn't reach Pangea. We established a base camp at the confluence of Gilttoeyes and a smaller creek flowing in from the west and set our sights on a more attainable objective: summiting Gilt from the south.

We spent over a week bushwhacking and river-walking up the unnamed tributary of the Gilttoeyes, entering an area we dubbed Middle Earth. We made an intermediate camp several miles up the valley and a high camp at 1,200 feet in a gully on the south side of Gilt. On August 7, about 12 days after the start of this adventure, we began our climb.

Our objective for the first day was to ascend slabs to a prominent feature we had named Frodo's Knob (ca 4,000'), south-southeast of Gilt's summit. This ended up being a mix of simul-climbing on quality crack systems and featured slabs along with vertical bushwhacking. The latter required hours of grunt work, crawling upward through branches with packs full of camping and climbing gear.

With 800 feet still left to gain the top of Frodo's Knob, we found a miraculous water hole. After guzzling a few liters of muddy water, we continued up more bushes and eventually lower-angle heather meadows to reach the top of the knob around 8 p.m. We were greeted by stunning views of the surrounding peaks, horrifying quantities of biting gnats, and a wonderfully flat bivy spot at approximately 4,000 feet.

After a subpar night of sleep due to bugs and heat, we started our summit push. We simul-climbed about 300 feet on nice rock, weaving between cascading waterfalls and trying to ignore the swarming bugs. We then climbed nearly 2,000 feet up the low-angle glacier that drapes Gilt's southeast face—the fastest mileage and elevation gain of the whole trip. A final south-facing 4th-class section brought us to the summit.

The views from the top were dizzying—rows of glaciated peaks spread in every direction, with the sheer north face of Gilt plummeting thousands of feet below us into the Pangea valley. We spent two hours on top taking it all in before beginning our descent, doing some excellent glissading and finishing with three rappels to our bivy on the knob.

After another terrible night of "sleep," somehow hotter and buggier than the previous one, we descended the steeper wall east of the slabs in seven clean rappels. Back down at our intermediate camp, we finally got some good sleep. We spent the remaining days in the area appreciating the spawning salmon, aurora borealis, and abundant huckleberries before making our way back to

Gilttoyees Creek, where our jet boat captain picked us up. We named our route The Cedar Room (5,000', 5.9).

—Anna Feldman, USA

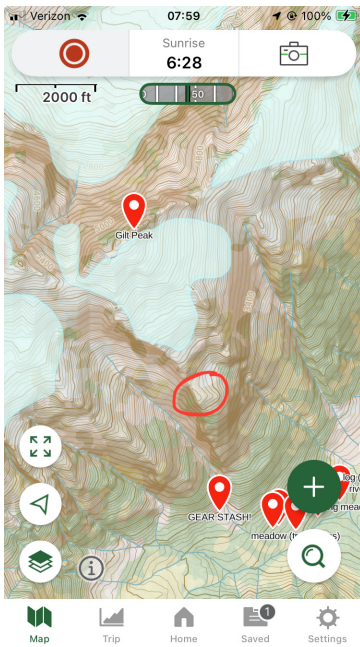
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Gilt Peak as seen from the team's base camp at the confluence of Gilttoyees Creek and a smaller tributary.



A deep river crossing, with Gilt Peak visible in the distance on the right.



Map showing the team's final approach to Gilt Peak and the location of Frodo's Knob (circled) on the south-southeast side.



Approaching the slabs to the base of the route's difficulties (at approximately 1,900ft) on the south/southeast side of Frodo's Knob.



The bivy on top of Frodo's Knob, partway up the south side of Gilt Peak.



Anna Feldman and Wiley Holbrooke at the bivy on Frodo's Knob, attempting to thwart the bugs with backward sun hoodies.



The view up the southeast side of Gilt Peak from Frodo's Knob.



Wiley Holbrooke takes in the view from the glacier high on Gilt Peak.



Savian Czerny rappelling back down to the bivy with the upper reaches of Middle Earth in the background.



The view from the south side of Gilt Peak into the upper reaches of “Middle Earth.” It’s likely that none of the walls in the upper valley have been climbed.



Savian Czerny, Wiley Holbrooke, and Anna Feldman (left to right), just before getting on the jet boat to leave. Gilt Peak is the prominent glaciated peak in the background.



Anna Feldman and Wiley Holbrooke look down into Pangea Valley from the summit of Gilt Peak.

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