
Shuksan: Fisher Chimneys

4 Day Trip

DAY 1: Sedro-Woolley to Lake Ann Trailhead

Day Overview

- ❑ **8:00 AM** at Sedro Wooly, Northwest Mountain Shop, for orientation and gear check
- ❑ Leave to Shuksan
- ❑ Hike/ climb from Lake Ann Trailhead (4,700') to Camp 1 at the White Salmon Glacier (6,900')

8am We will meet at The Northwest Mountainshop, 829 Metcalf Street, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284, for orientation and gear check. A big part of developing the necessary skills starts with having the proper equipment and food to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience in the wilderness. The guides will discuss each piece of equipment and ensure everything is in good condition and fit properly. Finally, the guides will evaluate conditions, discuss the weather with the group, and make last-minute adjustments before departing. This is an invaluable part of the course and will often help eliminate many of the questions students have regarding both equipment and the flow of the course.

From the shop, we will drive to Lake Ann Trailhead, use the facilities one final time, and begin our approach to Camp 1 at the top of *The Chimneys* or just by *The Upper-Curtis Glacier*. The first half of the day will be spent on a spectacular trail with spectacular views and ample opportunities to filter water to save weight. The second half features 800' of 4th-class terrain ascending *The Chimneys*. Once topping out this feature, we can either strike camp here or push up *Winnie's Slide* and have a campsite atop the sky.

An integral part of mountaineering and expeditionary climbing is setting up a safe and secure camp in an extreme environment. As a group, we'll practice these skills. Guides discuss the importance of personal maintenance, hygiene, and sleeping in cold environments, Leave No Trace principles, and address student concerns. Finally, instructions on proper hydration, including efficient snow-melting protocols, nutrition, and backcountry-cooking techniques, will be addressed.

DAY 2 - SNOW SCHOOL

Day Overview

- Snow school for snow travel and self-arrest
- Lunch
- How to follow a trad route/ how to lead belay
- Rappelling
- Early bedtime

We'll learn the basics of traveling on snowy and icy surfaces. We start by working on various walking techniques for moving safely and efficiently over various snowy slopes, with and without crampons. Good footwork, balance, and rest techniques are invaluable skills that we use throughout the course. Guides then introduce the use of the ice axe, and students conclude by practicing various self-arrest positions.

After lunch, we'll dive into the technical aspects required for the summit day. Skills include rappelling, what to do at a belay station, how to "clean" trad gear (cams, nuts, etc.), moderately steep snow/ ice climbing techniques, moving in short-rope configuration, etc.

Most of the skills covered on Day 2 will be implemented on Day 3 (Summit Day). The remaining time will be spent resting at camp, preparing for the lengthy summit day.

DAY 3 - Summit Day

Day Overview

- ❑ Pre-dawn alpine start
- ❑ Navigate The Curtis Glacier/ Hell's Highway
- ❑ Ascend the South Gully or the SE-Ridge
- ❑ Descend Summit Pyramid
- ❑ Descend Hell's Highway/ Curtis Glacier
- ❑ Arrive at Camp

Summit day! We begin with a pre-dawn wake-up time, an essential aspect of any alpine climb. Moving with a sense of urgency at camp is imperative, and it begins the prior night by packing/ prepping your gear & bag.

Rope teams assembled and gear equipped, we begin ascending a snowy/icy ramp on the *Upper-Curtis Glacier*, navigate its crevasses, and begin the traverse along *Hell's Highway*. Exposed to overhead rockfall and underfoot crevasses, we will work toward another moderately steep snow/ice slope, implementing skills learned the night before. Once topping out here, we meet with the *Sulphide Glacier* and reach the summit pyramid. Ascension options include the 4th-class South Gully or the low-fifth-class SE-Ridge. The team will execute the plan made the night prior.

Scrambling and climbing our way up, summit views are vast as the eye can see. We will take time to get group photos, sign the summit register, then begin our way down. The team will perform a series of rappels (down the *South Gully*) and maybe some down-climbing on moderately angled snow until touching back onto the walkable slopes below. During the descent,, climbers must remain diligent for rockfall from other climbers, a hazard not uncommon on popular routes. Descending to *Hell's Highway* and *The Upper-Curtis Glacier* may/ may not include further rappels, belayed downclimbing, etc. All tangible mountain skills covered on Day 2, offering a preview of application for further climbing adventures.

It is a physically and mentally demanding day, providing excellent training for more advanced objectives students may encounter later in their climbing careers.

DAY 4 - Return to Lake Ann Trailhead

Day Overview

- Early wake time
- Breakfast
- Break camp
- Descend to Lake Ann/ final photo opportunities
- Arrive back at Lake Ann Trailhead

The final morning will be best spent waking up around dawn. Packing up camp and descending *The Chimneys* is an arduous and lengthy process, best conducted before ascending parties begin their climb. Descending includes down-climbing, rappelling, short-roping, etc. Once finished with the scrambling, we will regain Lake Ann for one final break and recap of our experience, all within view of the lake. After returning to the cars, the team can decide where to conclude the trip over lunch in Glacier, WA, or Bellingham, WA.

Pre-Course Home Study and Prerequisite Skills Requirements

We strongly encourage students to be proficient in tying and hitching the most commonly used and useful knots. Home study materials and videos can be found [here](#).

Students are expected to be self-sufficient backcountry campers able to keep a tidy, Leave No Trace camp.