

Glacier Lake



Our small group of hikers met at Tim Hortons on Friday June 6th and we were off on time at 8:00 am. Steve's Avalanche pumped out some rockin' tunes as we headed to Saskatchewan Crossing and the trail head to Glacier Lake only a few hundred metres further down the highway. The day was sunny and the temperature comfortable as we headed off down the trail. The pace was comfortable and our group stayed together very aware of the possibility of bears in the area. There was a brief, exciting few moments when some believed there were growls coming from the forest but there were no actual sightings. We covered the 9 kms in good time which included several breaks along the way - a few with great views. The first views of Glacier Lake were both welcome and spectacular. It's a long, fairly narrow lake with high mountains soaring up from both sides and great glaciers at the far end. I thought it reminded me of Lake Louise without all the tour buses and crowds.



Our first job was to set up camp and round up firewood. All the wood close to the campsite was gone so we had to look further into the forest. Deadfall was abundant and it wasn't long before we had a substantial amount gathered. Steve suggested we take a little hike to explore potential excursions that could be done on future trips. We set out on a trail close to our site that followed the Glacier River. We hiked until it joined with the Howse River. Seeing a bald eagle there was special. The total excursion here was about 4km. By the time we got back to camp it was dinner time and everyone got busy preparing their own meals with a fair discussion on recipes and food topic conversations. Nirmal ("Saw" the fireman) demonstrated his considerable skill and enthusiasm for fire building, maintaining it as well as fooling around with it. We indeed, had a very enjoyable fire with marshmallows thanks to Sandy. The wind was up and the temperature dropping as we headed for the tents and warm sleeping bags.

Saturday morning dawned so beautifully! I wish you all could have seen it. Cloudless blue skies - bright sunshine reflecting off the snow and glaciers - perfectly calm air without even a tiny ripple on the water's surface and the only sound, the chirping from some nearby birds. It made the effort of yesterday's hike all worthwhile. After breakfast we took only the necessities and struck out on a trail on the east side of Glacier Lake with the intention of getting to the end to see what was there. As well as to go further down the valley, perhaps to the giant glacier. We stayed on the trail for most of the first part but when it seemed easier with fewer blockages we would head down to the flood plain and continue there. Our group worked together numerous times to get across small streams and built "bridges" to get across larger ones. 3:00 was set as a turnaround time and we did the same thing coming back - some hiking on the trail, some near the water. The total distance covered today was close to 20km.



I wanted to say how fantastic Steve and Sandy were at helping those of us with less experience to come away from the weekend with substantial more knowledge about the finer points of hiking and backcountry camping. They were able to offer a great array of tips and helpful advice on things like the proper way to put on a pack and how to adjust the straps so your hips carried the weight and not the shoulders. They talked about the most effective foot plant on walking stride for uphill as well as downhill. Advice on equipment and intelligent ways to put on a pair of gators was given. Tips on nutrition and meal possibilities and cooking instructions were appreciated. The list could go on and on but the point I wanted to make is how great it was to have expert information in a comfortable, respectful manner that you could understand and benefit from.

Sunday morning was our last day out and after everything was packed up we set off back to Saskatchewan Crossing and civilization. I felt the 9 kms was easier on the return. Our group really worked well together and I know it was fun for us all.

