

BOOT 'N BLISTER REUNION TRIP, October 6-8, 2000
NOBLE LAKE (NORTHERN SIERRA NEVADA) OVERNIGHT BACKPACK

September 19, 2000

Dear Boot 'n Blister alumni and alumnae,

Notes on 1999 Trip

Well, many people didn't want to get smoked in the Trinities last summer for the Boot 'n Blister hike to Granite Lake. The Big Bar Complex fires were blazing to the west and the predicted southwest winds were supposed to make us quite miserable. Well, the winds shifted and were coming out of the north. There was a fair amount of smoke settled in the still mornings but it was basically kind of clear.

The gang last summer consisted of Dancine Disilverie and Marvin Goss (trailhead), Sandra Healy, Jean McGurk, Jerry Nusbaum, Rick Robinson, Jay Stuart, Roger Willmarth, and me. You can see photos of the trip on a Web site for Boot 'n Blister: <http://www.diggles.com/bnb/>

Jerry stayed up there more days but when he got back, he wrote this wonderful report that gives a much better flavor of the trip than anything I've ever written:

It was a beautiful, indeed spectacular campsite, with the cirque reflecting the first morning light and the magnificent, bare bones of Granite Peak rising gloriously to the sky. I shared my beach with a family of garter snakes, who came out when I was almost finished with my morning coffee and preparing for my day's hike, and were soaking up the last of the sun in the afternoon when I would return and take my daily bath.

Sunday, after everyone had left, I set off up the trail towards the pass, carrying two liters of water, an apple, and some trail mix. And, of course, one of my dozen Cliff Bars. I had no real goal. Each knob, shoulder, or tree in the near distance was its own goal, and with the attainment of each, another would beckon. I finally stopped where I believe Jay must have

stopped on Saturday, in a stand of Pines just below another shoulder that might or might not be the ridge. I ate and drank and rested, then made a last dash to the top. It was only a few hundred feet along the trail and there I was at the top, Deer Creek spread below. I checked my maps (thanks, Mike), planned the next day and headed down.

Monday, up to the ridge and then along the trail on the west side of Seven Up Peak. Lunch in the swale that leads down to Long's Cabin, the Alps in the near distance. Then retrace my steps. The northwest shoulder of Seven Up affords a glorious view of Shasta. Home early to my bath and my snakes. Tuesday, I skirted the lake to opposite the camp, then climbed as high as I could before hitting heavy brush or steep granite. Not too high. I sat for a half hour and watched trout in the shallows of a granite flake that was just below the surface. When they swam past the edge, it was as though they were over the abyss and I would wait for the drumming of the bass strings and a torpedo shape out of the depths. It never came.

In the middle of the night, the stars were obscured, and when I awoke Wednesday, the air was yellow, the lake was under a pall of smoke and Granite Peak was nowhere to be seen. I packed while I brewed and drank my coffee and was off before nine. Saturday's walk had had the feel of a death march, with my too heavy pack and my poor physical condition. The last music I had played as I drove up to the trail was a tape of Puccini Heroines, and an amalgam of these, Liu's lament, the death of Butterfly, formed a dirge as I struggled, rising in minor thirds and fifths to an agonizing crescendo of inevitable doom. But Wednesday, I replaced this with an air from La Nozze de Figaro, one voice joining another in happy glory. Music for marching, not for struggle.

I hadn't really seen the trail on the way in and I saw no vistas on the way out. Sometimes the haze would be purely smoke, warm, and dry. The sun was a dull orange ball blazing through the pall, lighting the autumn russets to their finest colors. There was fire in the air. Sometimes I would drop into the vapors of the valley, trapped below a layer of smoke, and the air would be cool. Down and down. At my truck by noon. Home by four.

A glorious adventure! --Jerry

Chaos is the law of nature, order is the dream of man.-Henry James

The last trip was before Columbus Day because, as the argument goes, by Equinox there is not much daylight left that far north. Well, this year it is less of an issue (if it ever was) because we are going in the northern Sierra (or is that "central"?) down around Markleeville south of Tahoe. I am inclined to stick with Columbus Day even in 2001 and hit the Trinities again. More on that later.

2000 trip, Noble Lake, Ebbitts Pass area

For this year's trip, which Rick Robinson <r_robinson@2xtreme.net> proposed and that's all it takes to become reality in this group, we are going to all descend on Jim Dunn and Paula Pennington <merganser@gbis.com> for Friday-evening festivities at her house in Markleeville. She is a ranger at Grover Hot Springs State Park and has reserved space in the campground there for us all Friday night, October 6. On Saturday morning, October 7, we will get up, pack up, and drive for about 45 minutes up towards Ebbitts Pass to the trailhead to Noble Lake. Here are the details that Rick wrote:

Base Camp Friday Night

Drive to Markleeville via whatever pass gets you there from your house (Carson from the northwest, Luther from the north, Ebbitts from the west, Monitor from the southeast...). Within the town is a marked road that leads west to Grover Hot Springs State Park. The town is small so you'll find the road with no problem (he

says...). Go about six miles up the road to the Ranger entrance station. You would go right into the campground and opposite that entrance is the ranger's (Paula's) house. We'll gather there Friday for fellowship and retire to the campground when we've outstayed our welcome (or an hour or two after that <grin>).

Trailhead - To reach the Noble Canyon trailhead drive southeast from Markleeville on Highway 89, 5 miles to the junction with Highway 4. Take Highway 4 and continue towards Ebbitts Pass. About 7.4 miles past the junction of Highways 89 and 4 you will pass Silver Creek Campground. Continue past the campground on Highway 4 to the trailhead. The trail head is located on the corner of the third major switchback above the campground on the south side of Highway 4 at Alpine County mile marker 24°. There is not much parking available at the trailhead. But there is sufficient parking is available about 300 yards north down Highway 4 on a spur road on the east side.

Hike - From the trail head (elevation 7,200') you have a view to the south up Noble Canyon. The trail gently climbs along Noble Creek 5.0 miles to Noble Lake (elevation 8,875'). The first part of the trail passes across generally open slopes dotted with some trees. Soon it comes to the north edge of a snag-filled swamp, created by beavers. About 3/4 mile from the trail head, the trail crosses Noble creek, and continues up the east side of the canyon. About half way up the canyon the trail is pushed close to Noble Creek by cliffs of andesitic lava. This flow, like many in the area, is one that began to break up as it was solidifying - an autobrecciated lava flow. Differential weathering has created interesting shapes near the top of the cliff. The volcanic rocks are also interesting, comprised of "a three dimensional, brownish-purple, noncrystalline network that surrounds a green, crystalline mush." It was in such hydrothermally altered rocks in Silver Creek near where we started hiking that gold was found in 1860 and caused a short mining boom in the area. At about 3.5 miles from the trailhead, the Noble Canyon trail

joins the Pacific Crest Trail. Continue south on the combined trails (if you turn to the west onto the Pacific Crest Trail at the junction and come to a crossing of Noble Creek, you have gone the wrong direction). About 1/4 mile above the trail junction the trail steepens through a short section of switch backs. About 1/4 mile above the switchbacks, the trail reaches Noble Lake which is located near the top end of the canyon just above line. The best camp sites are at the small lake just above Noble Lake near the whitebark pine on the north shore of this lake.

Firewood is scarce, so stoves are in order. The local game warden reports that fishing is supposed to be good at the lake which supports a Brown Trout population. In 1968-75 several unsuccessful attempts were made to introduce Golden trout into the lake.

There are several peak bagging opportunities above Noble Lake including Highland Peak 10,935' and Tryon Peak 9,970'.

Maps

Topo map: This entire hike fits on the Ebbitts Pass 1:24,000 quadrangle. So next time you have one of those hikes that falls on the corner of four quads, remember back to good old Noble Lake when it all fit on one large-scale sheet for a change.

AAA Map, Bay and Mountain Area

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Let me know if you might attend so that I can get an idea of how many to expect; I also love to hear from you folks.

Roster: Rather than including a datadump of my address file for the Club, I am going to save time (I'm running late as it is, huh?), trees, and postage and offer the list to any of you who request it. Just contact me and let me know if you want it as a paper output, on a floppy, or emailed as an attachment. Also, in the interest of getting this thing in the mail, I'm leaving out the

“lost members” list. Basically, if you discover somebody you think is a long-lost-Boot ‘n Blister person, just capture them and let me know.

Next Year, Stuart Fork

Bring ideas of where to have the trip next year. My desire for many years has been to take this group up Stuart Fork of the Trinity River past Morris Meadows to Sapphire and Emerald Lakes. It is a bit longer than our average hike but the last couple have been a bit shorter than average. And I'm not going to be in better shape some other year, so let's go there in 2001. Morris Meadow is a decent stopping place if you need a bail-out point (and you can go cross-country from there over to Canyon Creek and get

somebody to fetch you Sunday like Will Miller and I did one year). Let me know other ideas.

Mike Diggles

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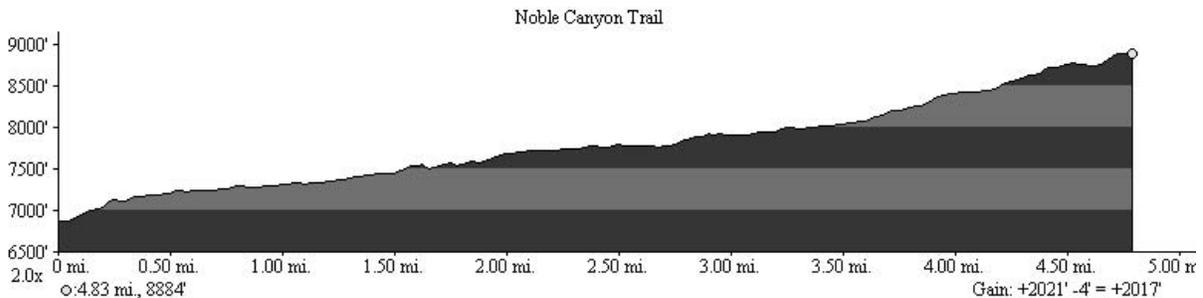
Work: U.S. Geological Survey, MS-951, 345 Middlefield Rd., Menlo Park, CA 94025.

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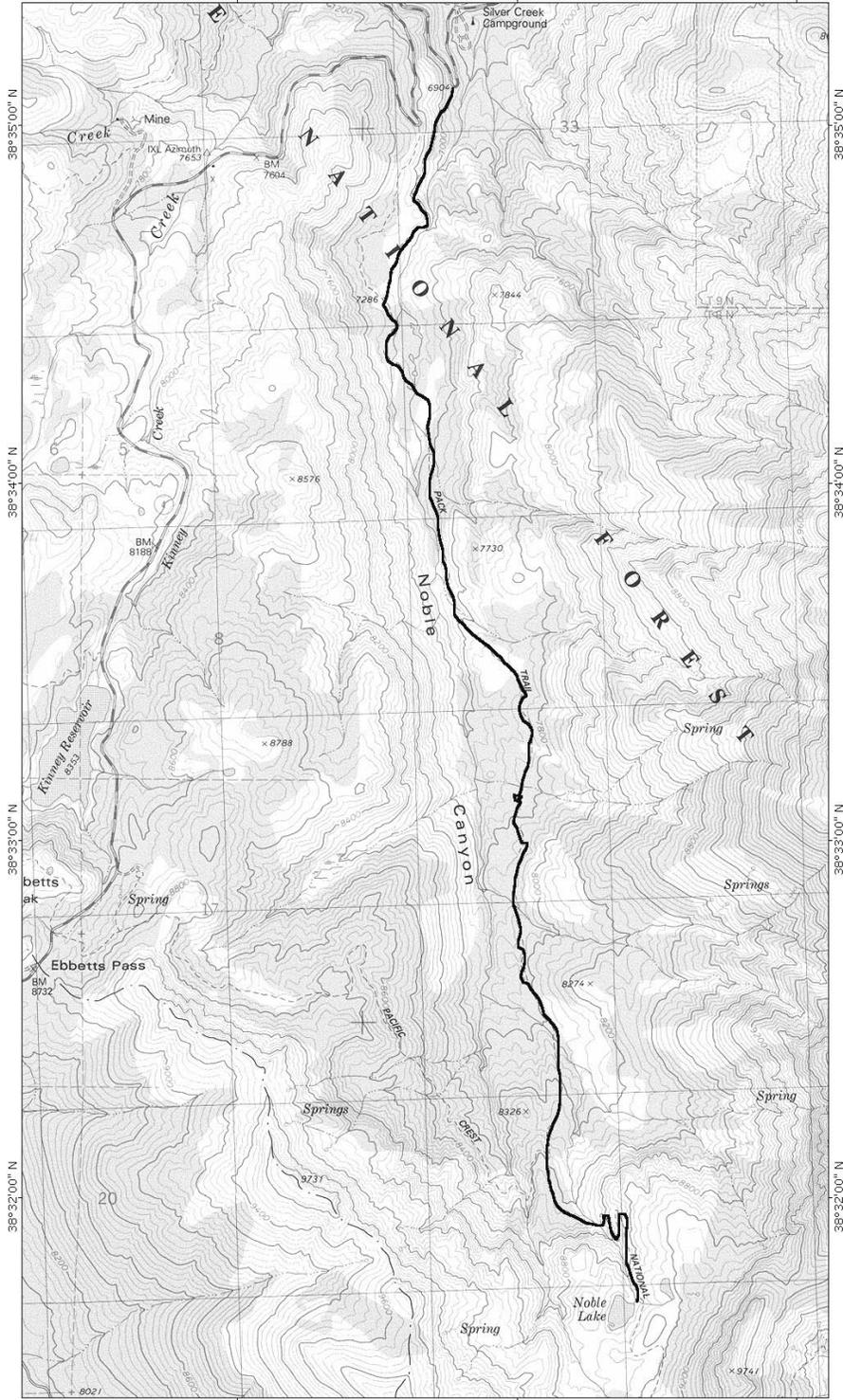
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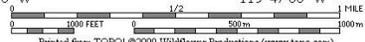
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