

Hyalite Peak, September 2007

I recently made a trip to Bozeman for a workshop on writing National Science Foundation grants. I stayed with my PhD advisor for the night, talked math with him the next day, and had some time for a quick mountain jaunt.

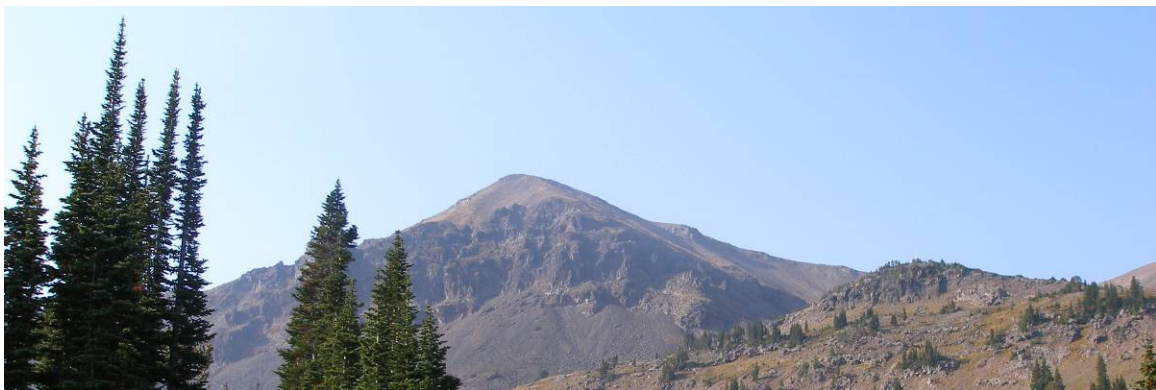
I opted to run/hike up Hyalite Peak since I hadn't done it before, which is a shame given that I lived in Bozeman for four years in my 20's. During that time, though, I was either obsessed with rock climbing or with work and so didn't ever bag this standard Bozeman peak, which can be seen from town.

Actually I ran most of the route because I only had four hours. This may not have been a great idea due to the fact that my hip has been bothering me because I've been over-using my body of late. I lapse easily into obsessiveness and need to take a break.

Bozeman is a wonderful town. I always enjoy going back. I could live there as easily as Missoula. It is smaller and more "clean cut", but is less culturally alive, and being from Butte, I enjoy the blue collar elements of Missoula. But, Bozeman is truly Big Sky country. The Gallatin Valley, where it sits, is huge and you can see mountain ranges 50-60 miles distant. In Missoula, we're hemmed in by the mountains.



Hyalite Lake



Hyalite Peak

I've written a poem on my trip as well. The mountains and wilderness are an inspiration to me right now.

Stealing Time

Gallatin Range

With only four hours to spare
I ran the fifteen mile round trip
with aching joints and tendons
from too many recent trips:

clear, crisp, fall, morning air,
buttresses jutting into the sun,
waterfalls all along the way,
trail not too steep, bear scat,

long views back to the north,
disappearing into a smoky haze,
smoke, and smoky fall light, Hyalite
Lake surrounded by a jagged ridge,

Hyalite Peak just south. At the top,
the Beartooth, Bridger, Gallatin, and
Madison ranges were hidden in smoke;
the summit view isn't always best.

The downward trip: smoke thicker,
fast progress, first hikers of the day –
a busy trail – deeply tired at the end,
sore hip lecturing me about mortality.

Why do it, you ask? In order to slow
the inevitable decline; in order to say,
“I'm still alive,” even after so many
compromises I swore I'd never make.



Looking north on the way up.



Looking back up-canyon from Hyalite reservoir toward Hyalite Peak.