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The Enchantments Hiking Guide

A one-day through-hike in Washington's Alpine Lakes Wilderness

2027 season edition · updated October 2026

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Welcome

On August 4, 2020, I hiked the Enchantments in Washington in one day, alone: 21 miles from the Stuart Lake Trailhead, up to Colchuck Lake, over Aasgard Pass, through the high granite basin of lakes they call the Core, and down past the Snow Lakes and Nada Lake to the Snow Lakes Trailhead outside Leavenworth. It took me about 11 hours.

This was different for me. I usually do multi-day hikes, camping and sleeping in a tent. This was the first video where it was just a day hike. The Enchantments are beautiful, and it's really hard to get a backpacking permit, so I couldn't sleep up in the mountains. But if you can do 21 miles with that kind of climbing, you fill out a free self-issued permit at the trailhead and you go.

It's a short guide for a short trip: my GPS file, maps, my times on each part of the route, and gear for this route, plus what an 11-minute film couldn't cover: the permits, the lottery, the shuttle and the parking.

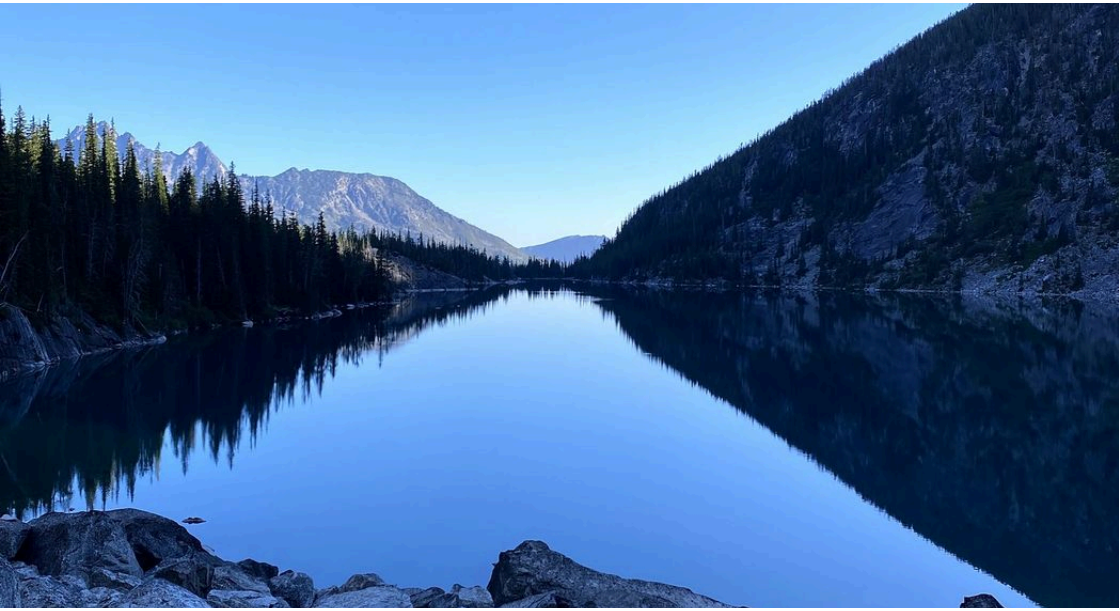
What's inside

- Straight answers, and the permits for a day hike or an overnight trip
- When to go, and getting to Leavenworth and the two trailheads
- My day: notes, the trail with my times, where to get off, maps and film links
- Other ways to do it, gear for this route, safety, the GPX file, a checklist and a trip sheet

How to use it offline

Save this PDF to your phone's Files or Books app before you leave home. Load the GPX file and download offline maps while you still have Wi-Fi. The film links need a connection; everything else works in airplane mode.

When I say "I," it's my own trip in 2020. Permit, parking, shuttle and road details below were checked on October 1, 2026 and are dated, and the checks are collected on one page: Before you go, check these.



Colchuck Lake, still and clear, from the boulders at its far end.

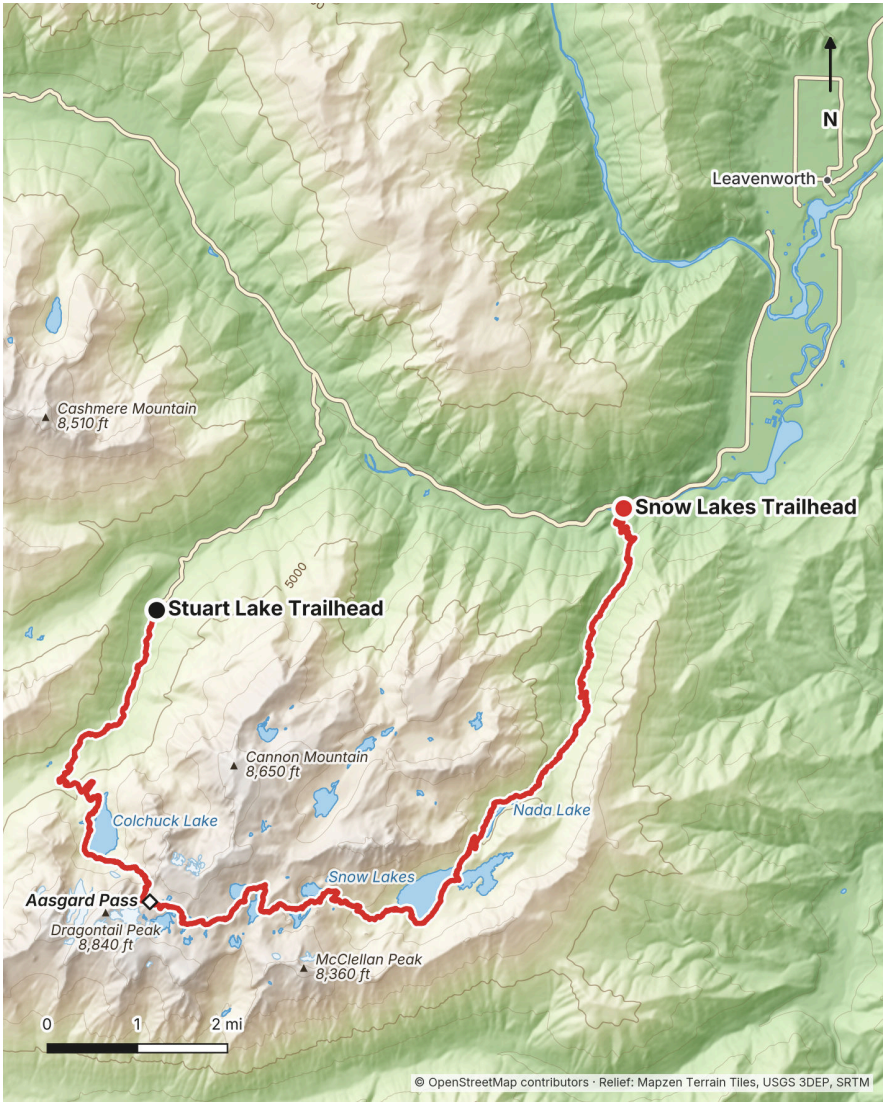
At a glance

QUICK FACTS

Distance	21.4 miles (34.4 km) by my GPS, one way
Climbing	about 4,630 ft (1,410 m) up and 6,740 ft (2,050 m) down
Days	1, as a day hike. Overnight trips need a permit from the lottery
Start	Stuart Lake Trailhead, 3,430 ft (1,045 m)
Finish	Snow Lakes Trailhead, 1,300 ft (395 m), 4.3 miles from Leavenworth
High point	Aasgard Pass, about 7,840 ft (2,390 m)
Time I took	About 11 hours, 6:17 a.m. to 5:20 p.m.
Permits	Day hike: free, self-issued at the trailhead. Overnight: May 15 to October 31, by lottery
Getting between trailheads	A shuttle van, a second car, or a ride
Nearest town	Leavenworth, about 2.5 hours from Seattle by car
Trip date	Tuesday, August 4, 2020, solo

PLACE	MI (KM)	HEIGHT	I GOT THERE
Stuart Lake Trailhead	0	3,430 ft (1,045 m)	6:17 a.m.
Colchuck Lake	4.2 (6.8)	5,600 ft (1,708 m)	7:58 a.m.
Top of Aasgard Pass	6.8 (11.0)	7,840 ft (2,390 m)	10:10 a.m.
Inspiration Lake	8.8 (14.2)	7,210 ft (2,197 m)	11:30 a.m.
Lake Viviane	10.7 (17.2)	6,810 ft (2,075 m)	12:33 p.m.
Snow Lakes	13.2 (21.2)	5,470 ft (1,668 m)	2:03 p.m.
Nada Lake	15.5 (24.9)	4,920 ft (1,500 m)	3:07 p.m.
Snow Lakes Trailhead	21.4 (34.4)	1,300 ft (395 m)	5:20 p.m.

The numbers come from my own GPS recording, smoothed the same way as in all my guides. I said "21 miles and 5,000 feet of climbing" in the film; my recording app's totals were 21.4 miles and 5,000 ft (1,523 m). The Washington Trails Association lists the through-hike as 18.0 miles with 4,500 ft of gain, measured from the trailhead to the trailhead on the standard line.



Stuart Lake Trailhead to Snow Lakes Trailhead, with Leavenworth and the roads to both trailheads. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.

Straight answers

Can you do the Enchantments in one day? Yes. Overnight permits are hard to get: the Forest Service says typically fewer than 10% of advanced lottery applicants win one. I did it as a day hike with a free day-use permit I filled out at the trailhead. It's long: 21 miles, about 11 hours for me, with a very steep climb in the middle and more than 6,000 ft of descent at the end. After 10 hours of hiking I was pretty tired, but I think it was doable for a day hike.

How hard is it? Hard. Aasgard Pass climbs about 2,200 ft (670 m) in 1.3 miles on loose rock and boulders; it took me 82 minutes. It's very steep, a lot of elevation gain, some loose rocks, but very fun. You will sweat. The way down to the Snow Lakes has steep granite slabs, and the last 5.9 miles from Nada Lake drop 3,620 ft (1,105 m). Try this at home first: 15 miles with 4,000 ft of climbing and a steep descent, and still feel fine the next day.

Which direction? I went from Stuart Lake to Snow Lakes, up Aasgard and down the long way. That's the usual direction: the Washington Trails Association says it saves 2,600 ft of climbing over the reverse. The Forest Service doesn't advise Aasgard Pass for anyone not prepared and equipped for steep snow travel, and says it's especially hazardous with snow on it.

Do I need a permit? For a day hike, a free day-use permit you fill out yourself at the trailhead, plus a parking pass. To camp anywhere in the Enchantment Permit Area between May 15 and October 31, you need an overnight permit from the lottery. See Permits: day hike or overnight.

How do I get between the trailheads? It's a point to point, not a loop. I was by myself with a rental car, so I needed help: I scheduled a shuttle van to pick me up at the Snow Lakes Trailhead and drive me about half an hour up to the Stuart Lake Trailhead. At the end of the day I walked down to my car. Two companies run this shuttle in 2026; see Getting there.

Can I bring my dog? No. Dogs and all pets are prohibited in the Enchantment Permit Area, except service animals, for day hikes too.

Will it be crowded? It was for me, on a Tuesday in August. There were a lot of people on this hike: day hikers like me, trail runners, and people backpacking. I saw a couple of tents set up along the way.

Is there water? Yes, lakes and streams all along the route. I carried one 1-liter BeFree filter bottle and refilled it. Filter or treat what you drink. There's no drinking water at either trailhead.

Phone signal? My record doesn't show whether I had any. Plan as if you won't, and carry a way to call for help if you can.

Where do I stay? I stayed in Leavenworth the night after the hike. See After the hike: Leavenworth.

Permits: day hike or overnight

All of this is from the Forest Service and Recreation.gov, checked October 1, 2026.

The day hike (what I did)

- **Day-use permit:** free, self-issued at any of the three trailheads (Stuart Lake, Snow Lakes and Eightmile). Fill it out and carry your copy.
- **Parking:** a Northwest Forest Pass or an America the Beautiful pass on your dashboard. A day pass is $5 per vehicle, an annual Northwest Forest Pass $30 (2026). You can also pay with the Scan & Pay option listed on the trailhead pages.
- **Group size:** 8 at most.
- **No dogs**, no campfires and no drones (it's wilderness: no bikes or motors either).

Camping overnight

Overnight permits are needed from May 15 to October 31 anywhere in the Enchantment Permit Area. It's split into five zones: Core, Colchuck, Stuart, Eightmile/Caroline and Snow. A Core permit lets you camp in any zone; the others are for that zone only.

- **Advanced lottery:** apply on Recreation.gov from February 15 through March 1 each year. Results come out around March 15. Winners must confirm and pay by March 31 (2026).
- **Leftover and cancelled permits:** unclaimed dates go back on Recreation.gov on April 1 (around 7 a.m. Pacific in 2026), first come, first served. Cancelled permits reappear there at any time in the season.
- **Daily lottery:** for May 15 to October 31 dates. You apply the day before your start date, between 7:00 and 10:00 a.m. Pacific, on your phone (Recreation.gov or its app), and you must be within 1 mile of the Wenatchee River Ranger District office in Leavenworth when you apply.

Results come by email around 11:00 a.m.; accept and pay on Recreation.gov by 11:59 p.m. that day, then print or download the permit.

- **Fees (2026):** a $6 fee to apply (the Forest Service calls it the application or reservation fee), not refundable, plus $5 per person per day for the permit.
- **Rules:** 8 people at most, all starting on the permit's date and zone and camped together, at established campsites only. 14 nights at most. One permit per person per season. Permits can't be transferred; the leader carries photo ID with the permit.
- **Refunds:** advanced lottery permits, none within 21 days of the start date. Daily lottery permits, none at all.
- **Fires:** none above 5,000 ft or within half a mile of any lake. Liquid-fuel stoves are fine; wood and solid-fuel stoves aren't allowed above 5,000 ft.
- **Parking:** the permit comes with a free overnight parking pass for your dashboard. Overnight parking spaces are for permit holders.

I didn't try for an overnight permit. The day hike is the one I can tell you about.

When to go

The season. Overnight permits run May 15 to October 31, and the Forest Service opens Eightmile Road, the road to the Stuart Lake Trailhead, by May 15 each year. Aasgard Pass "typically melts out by late June", the Forest Service says, but snow often stays there all year. The road to the Stuart Lake Trailhead is closed in winter.

What I got. I went on August 4. It was sunny, and there was still snow in the Core, around the lakes and on the slopes above them. Colchuck Lake was still in shade when I got there just before 8 a.m., so it wasn't the best to shoot.



Snow and the first lakes of the Core at the top of Aasgard Pass, August 4.

Daylight. An early start matters. I started at 6:17 a.m. and finished at 5:20 p.m. In autumn the days are much shorter.

Getting there

What I did

I was in Leavenworth the day before, prepping for the hike, with a rental car. On the morning of August 4, I left my car at the Snow Lakes Trailhead, and a shuttle van took me about half an hour up to the Stuart Lake Trailhead. The driver was actually super chill; we chatted the entire way up. My record doesn't show what I paid. At the end I walked down to my car and drove back to town.



The river in Leavenworth the day before the hike.

Your options for 2027

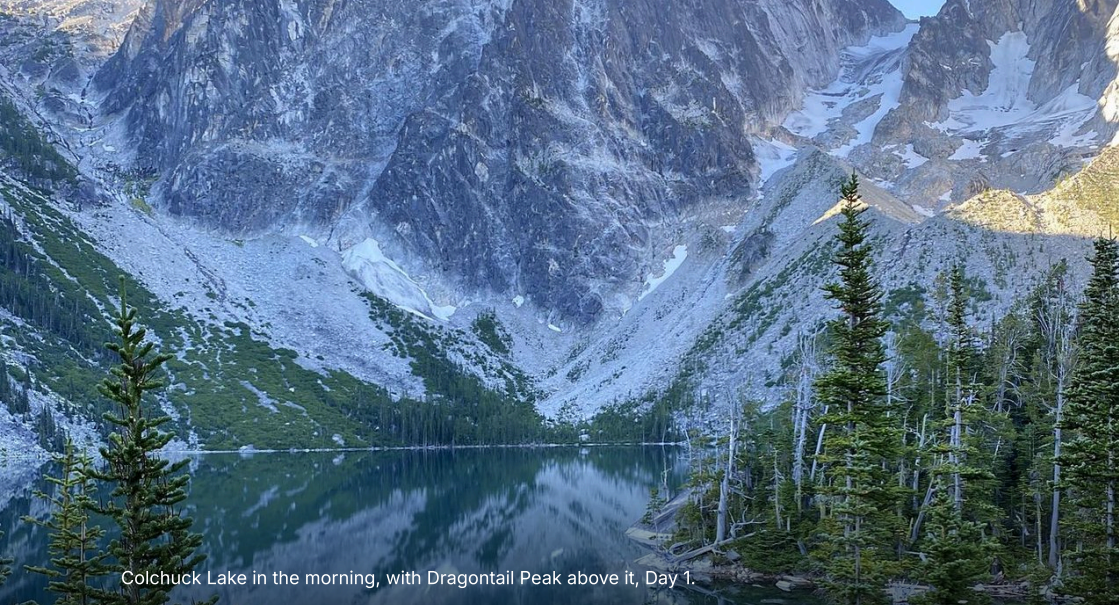
To Leavenworth. Leavenworth is about 117 miles (188 km) from Seattle on US 2 over Stevens Pass, about 2.5 hours with traffic. Amtrak's Empire Builder stops there once a day each way.

The two trailheads.

- **Snow Lakes Trailhead** (the finish): 4.3 miles from Leavenworth on Icicle Road. Vault toilets, no water. Parking is very limited (left side of the road only); you may have to park miles away.
- **Stuart Lake Trailhead** (the start): about 8.5 miles up Icicle Road, left on Eightmile Road, then right on Forest Road 7601 for about 4 miles. Vault toilet, no water. The road is steep and gets washboarded; the Forest Service recommends high clearance and 4×4 if you have it. Park only on the right side going up, or risk a fine or a tow.

The shuttle (2026). Both run early in the morning from the Snow Lakes Trailhead up to the Stuart Lake Trailhead, so your car waits where you finish (with two cars you don't need one):

- **Loop Connector Shuttle:** $27 per passenger; no refunds within 72 hours. 509-393-2067, loopconnectorshuttle.com.
- **Leavenworth Shuttle & Taxi:** four to five runs from 5:00 to 8:15 a.m.; $60 for one or $30 each for two or more; book 24 hours ahead; no refunds. 509-548-7433, leavenworthshuttle.com.



Colchuck Lake in the morning, with Dragontail Peak above it, Day 1.

DAY 1

Contents

Stuart Lake Trailhead to Snow Lakes Trailhead

DISTANCE	CLIMBING	DESCENT	TIME I TOOK
21.4 mi (34.4 km)	**4,630 ft** (1,410 m)	**6,740 ft** (2,050 m)	**11 hours** (6:17 a.m. to 5:20 p.m., 10 hours 16 minutes moving)

HIGH POINT

Aasgard Pass, about 7,840 ft (2,390 m), at 6.8 miles

PERMIT

Free day-use permit, self-issued at the Stuart Lake Trailhead. Northwest Forest Pass for the car

WATER

Lakes and streams all day. None at the trailheads

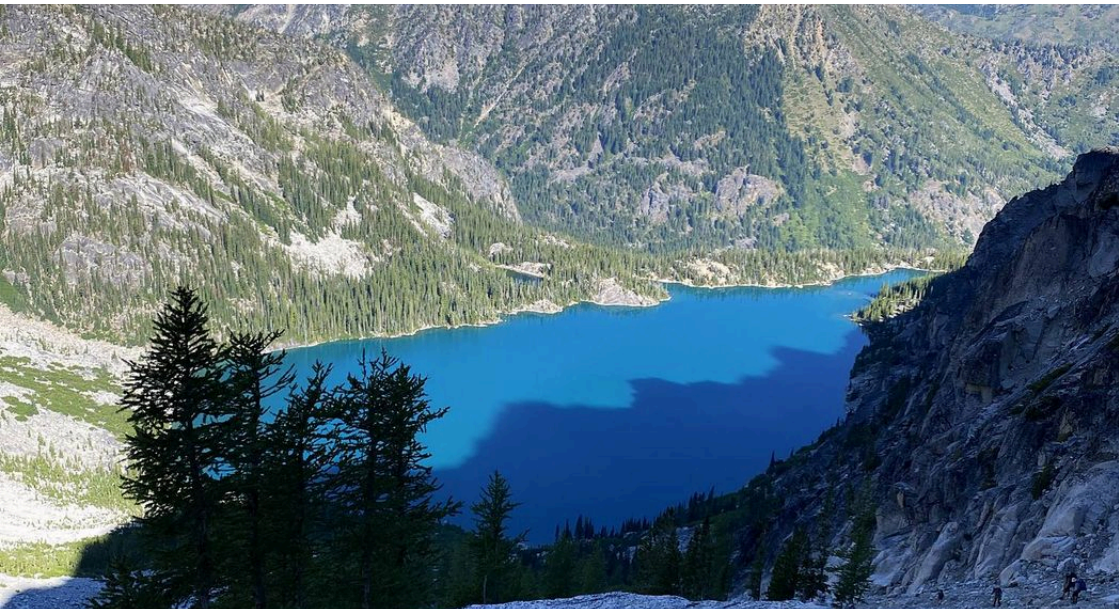
TERRAIN

Good trail to Colchuck Lake; loose rock and boulders on Aasgard Pass; granite slabs and snow in the Core and on the way down to the Snow Lakes; a long, rocky descent to the end

My day

I started my hike early in the morning, at 6:17, and went up to Colchuck Lake. It was still in shade when I arrived, so it wasn't the best to shoot.

Then you make your way up over Aasgard Pass. It's very steep, a lot of elevation gain, some loose rocks, but very fun. You will sweat. I topped out at 10:10. Once you reach the top you are treated to an amazing couple of miles of rolling alpine hills and turquoise lakes.



Looking back down at Colchuck Lake from the climb up Aasgard Pass.



A lake in the Core, snow on the peaks above.

There were a lot of people on this hike: day hikers like myself, trail runners, and people backpacking. I saw a couple of tents set up along the way. Pretty magical up there, with lots of people. To the couple of subscribers who said hi on the trail: it meant the world to me.



Small lakes spread across the granite basin of the Core, Day 1.

On the way down I came across a giant water valve with water just blasting out. Someone told me it had something to do with salmon. If you stood facing the sun there was a rainbow. It was very jarring to come across that kind of water pressure on the side of the mountain. (It's the water release from Upper Snow Lake. The Bureau of Reclamation blasted a 2,500-ft tunnel through the granite, and the valve at its end, near Nada Lake, is open from July to October. The water goes to Icicle Creek and the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery, which raises spring Chinook and coho salmon.)

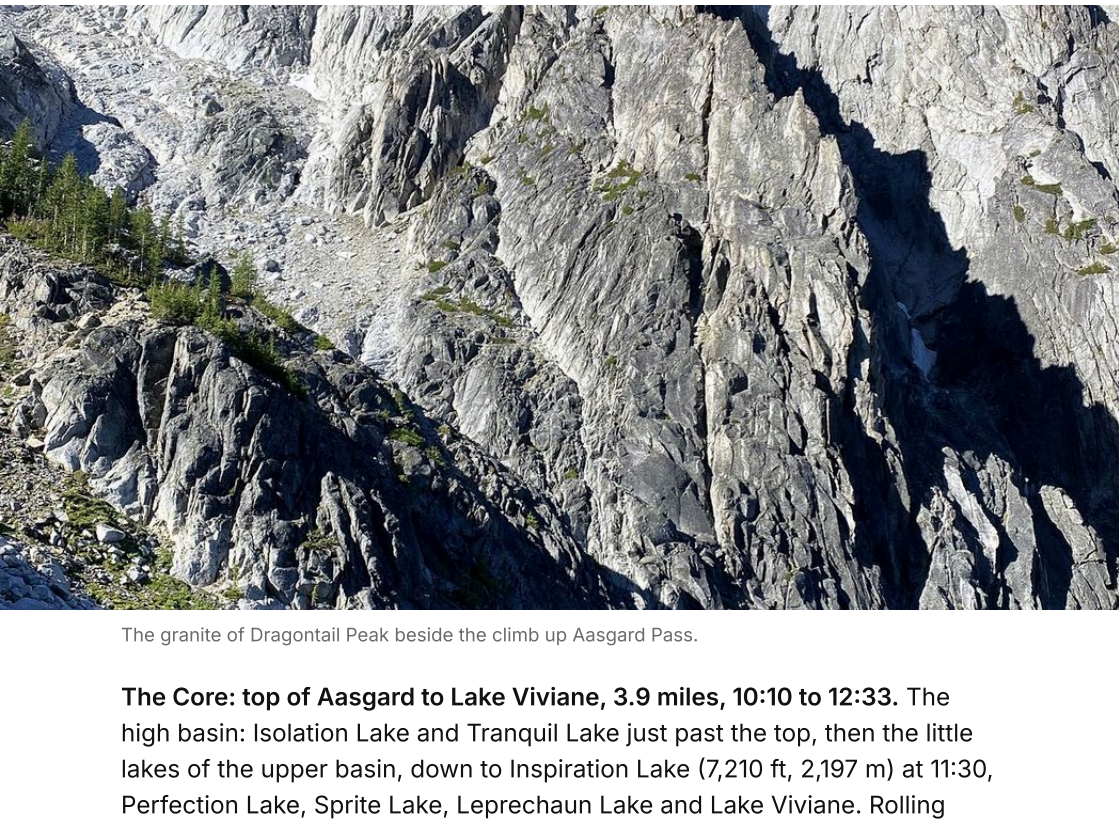
After 10 hours of hiking I was pretty tired, but I think it was doable for a day hike. I made it down to the parking lot at 5:20, got in my car and drove back to town.

The trail

My times and heights are from my GPS.

Stuart Lake Trailhead to Colchuck Lake: 4.2 miles, 6:17 to 7:58. The Stuart Lake Trail through forest, then, about 2.5 miles in, the Colchuck Lake Trail at the junction (the Stuart Lake Trail goes on to Stuart Lake). It climbs to the lake at 5,600 ft (1,708 m). There are backcountry toilets along the way and at the lake.

Colchuck Lake to the top of Aasgard Pass: 2.6 miles, 7:58 to 10:10. Around the west shore of the lake on boulders and slabs to its south end, then straight up the gully. From the south end of the lake at 5,640 ft (1,719 m) to the top at about 7,840 ft (2,390 m) is about 2,200 ft (670 m) of climbing in 1.3 miles, and it took me 82 minutes. It's a steep, rocky climb with loose rock and scree; the Washington Trails Association calls it a hands-and-feet scramble. Snow can lie in the gully all summer.



The granite of Dragontail Peak beside the climb up Aasgard Pass.

The Core: top of Aasgard to Lake Viviane, 3.9 miles, 10:10 to 12:33. The high basin: Isolation Lake and Tranquil Lake just past the top, then the little lakes of the upper basin, down to Inspiration Lake (7,210 ft, 2,197 m) at 11:30, Perfection Lake, Sprite Lake, Leprechaun Lake and Lake Viviane. Rolling

granite and snow patches. My only long stop of the day was 14 minutes, a little past Tranquil Lake. Mountain goats live up here (see Weather and safety).



The trail through the larches in the Core.



Colchuck Lake, Aasgard Pass and the Core Enchantments to Lake Viviane. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.

Lake Viviane to the Snow Lakes: 2.5 miles, 12:33 to 2:03. Down from the Core past Lake Viviane's outlet on steep granite slabs, with scramble sections, to the Snow Lakes at 5,470 ft (1,668 m). It took me an hour and a half for 1,340 ft (410 m) of descent.



The long view down toward the Snow Lakes.

Snow Lakes to Nada Lake: 2.3 miles, 2:03 to 3:07. Along the Snow Lakes and past the water release, down to Nada Lake at 4,920 ft (1,500 m).



The stone dam and driftwood between the Snow Lakes.

Nada Lake to the Snow Lakes Trailhead: 5.9 miles, 3:07 to 5:20. The long way down: 3,620 ft (1,105 m) of descent on a rocky trail, switchbacks through forest and open slopes down to Icicle Creek and the trailhead at 1,300 ft (395 m).



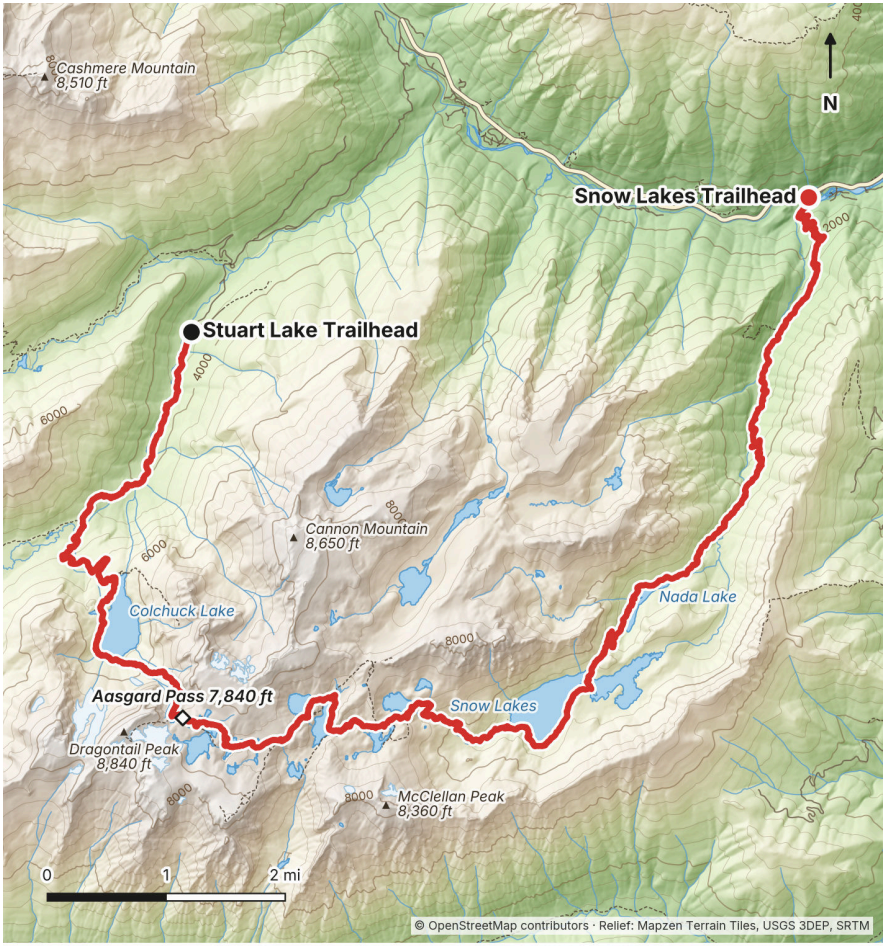
Burned forest on the last, hot miles down to the Snow Lakes Trailhead.

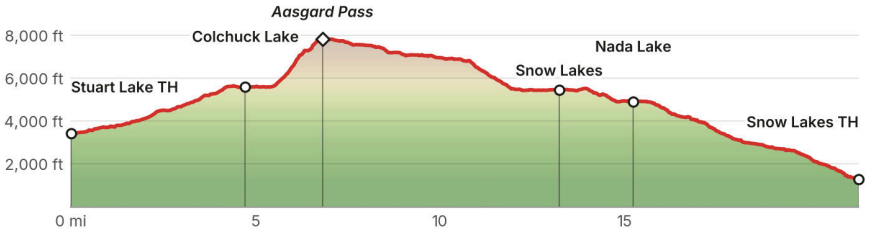
If you need to get off

Before Aasgard Pass, turn around: Colchuck Lake is 4.2 miles back down to the Stuart Lake Trailhead. Once you're over the pass, there's no easy way out. From the top, going back down Aasgard is shorter (6.8 miles to the Stuart Lake Trailhead, against 14.6 miles on to the Snow Lakes Trailhead), but it means descending steep, loose rock, which the Forest Service doesn't advise for anyone not prepared and equipped for steep snow travel. The two ways even out at Lake Viviane (10.7 miles each); past it, going on is shorter. Weather, snow or an injury in the Core is why you start early and carry enough layers and light for a slow finish.

Watch this day

The hike · Leavenworth · Behind the scenes





Day 1 map and elevation profile. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.

After the hike: Leavenworth

Leavenworth is a Bavarian-themed town. Why not. It's actually a lovely town, and there's lots to do.

I stayed at a hotel in the middle of town the night after the hike. To be clear about it: I wrote to the hotel from Leavenworth the day before my hike and asked if they'd host me in exchange for featuring the stay in the film, and they gave me a free room for that night. I had a balcony facing out over the town, it's central, and everyone there was super friendly. I emailed them that evening: "Hike done and all checked into the hotel room. The place is great." Because the room was free, this guide doesn't recommend a hotel; there are plenty of places to stay in town.



Leavenworth the morning after the hike.

Other ways to do it

I only did the day hike. These are the other common ways, stated from the Forest Service's rules, not from my own trip.

Camp in the Core. With a Core Zone permit from the lottery you can spread the same route over two or more days, and camp in any zone. Group size 8, no fires, no dogs.

Camp in another zone. Colchuck, Stuart, Snow and Eightmile/Caroline permits are for camping in that zone only. From a Colchuck or Snow zone camp you can day hike into the Core.

The reverse direction. Snow Lakes to Stuart Lake means about 2,600 ft more climbing (Washington Trails Association) and a descent of Aasgard Pass, which the Forest Service doesn't advise without snow gear and skills.

Just Colchuck Lake. An out and back from the Stuart Lake Trailhead: 4.2 miles each way by my GPS, about 2,200 ft (670 m) of climbing. Still needs the day-use permit and a parking pass.

Gear for this route

For a day hike, add

A warm layer and a rain shell, a headlamp, sun protection, a first-aid kit, more food than you think, and shoes with good grip on granite. Microspikes if there's snow on Aasgard, and the skills to use them.

Paid links: I earn a commission if you buy through these links, at no extra cost to you. As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.

This was a day hike in 2020, so I didn't need to bring that much. Here's what I carried, what I'd take now, and what I filmed with.

What I carried in 2020

From my film.

- **Pack:** my Hyperlite pack. It flattens pretty easily, so I used it as a day pack. I was thinking about getting a proper trail-running vest, like a Salomon, because I wanted to do more day hikes like this, and it's better to have a smaller, tighter pack.
- **Water:** Katadyn BeFree AC · 1L (Amazon). My 1-liter filter bottle. Lakes and streams all along the route, so I refilled it.
- **Food:** jerky, cashews, nut butter and a Clif bar

What I'd take now

For a day hike here, from my current kit.

- **Day pack:** Hyperlite Mountain Gear Waypoint 35 (Hyperlite)
- **Warm layer:** PATH Projects Lomond Hoodie (PATH Projects)
- **Rain shell:** Arc'teryx Beta AR Jacket (Arc'teryx)
- **Headlamp:** Nitecore NU20 Classic (Amazon). It's a long day.
- **Sun hoodie:** PATH Projects Pyrenees T19 Hoodie (PATH Projects). Sun protection on the open granite.
- **Sunglasses:** Goodr OG Sunglasses (Amazon)

- **Shoes:** Oboz Katabatic LT Low GTX (Amazon). You want good grip on granite. I wore them on Alta Via 1: lightweight and stable, and no blisters.
- **Microspikes:** Yatta Life Ice Spikes (Amazon). If there's snow on Aasgard, and the skills to use them.
- **Poles:** Black Diamond Alpine Carbon Z Poles (Amazon). For Aasgard Pass and the long way down.
- **Navigation:** AllTrails+ (AllTrails, 30% off). Load my GPX file and download offline maps before you leave Leavenworth. Offline maps need the paid plan.

Filming kit

What I filmed this trip with in 2020. My setup is much smaller now (below). No drones here: it's wilderness (see Permits: day hike or overnight).

- **Camera:** Sony a6600 (Amazon). I shot the whole video on it.
- **Lens:** Sony E 10-18mm f/4 OSS (Amazon)
- **Mic:** Rode VideoMic NTG (Amazon)
- **Tripod:** a tripod. It's always funny when people on the trail see me setting up my tripod, walking past the camera and coming back to it.

What I film with now

Since September 2026 I film with a smaller setup: the Pocket 4 and the Mic 3 on the trail.

- **Camera:** DJI Osmo Pocket 4 (Amazon)
- **Mic:** DJI Mic 3 · 1 TX + 1 RX (Amazon). It pairs with the Pocket 4.
- **Tripod:** SmallRig Carbon Fiber Tripod (Amazon)

Weather and safety

Emergencies. Call 911.

Aasgard Pass. The Forest Service: Aasgard Pass "is not advised for hikers not prepared and equipped for steep snow travel." It typically melts out by late June, but snow often stays all year. Loose rock is the other danger: don't climb right below other people, and don't knock rocks down on anyone below you.

Mountain goats. They want the salt in urine. The Forest Service asks you not to urinate on vegetation or soil, because it draws goats in and makes them aggressive. Give them the trail and keep your distance.



Mountain goats crossing the granite slabs near the trail, Day 1.

Toilets and waste. There are toilets in the permit area. Otherwise dig a cat hole 6 to 8 inches deep, at least 200 ft from water, and pack out your toilet paper.

Route finding. In the Core and on the way down to the Snow Lakes the tread is faint in places, and the Washington Trails Association says to look for cairns. Keep the GPX file and your location on your phone.

The long descent. More than 6,000 ft down in the second half of the day is hard on knees and feet. Trekking poles help.

Weather. Check the National Weather Service forecast for the Enchantments before you go, and turn back at Colchuck Lake if storms or snow are coming. There's no shelter in the Core.

Fire season. Late summer brings fires and smoke to this part of Washington. Check the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest alerts page before you go for closures and fire restrictions.

Using the GPX files

My own GPS recording from August 4, 2020, with all timestamps removed.

FILE	WHAT IT IS
enchantments-through-hike.gpx	My track from the Stuart Lake Trailhead to the Snow Lakes Trailhead, with waypoints for both trailheads, Colchuck Lake, Aasgard Pass, the main Core lakes, the Snow Lakes, the water release and Nada Lake

The track shows where I actually went. It is a record of my day, not an official trail line.

AllTrails. On a computer, sign in at alltrails.com, create a new map and use Import. It then shows up in the app on your phone. Offline use needs a paid plan.

Gaia GPS. Open the file from Files, email or AirDrop and choose Gaia GPS, or use Import on gaiagps.com. Download the map area offline.

Garmin. In Garmin Connect on the web, go to Training, Courses, Import. Save it as a course and send it to your watch.

Organic Maps (free). Download the offline map for Washington, then open the GPX file and choose Organic Maps. It works fully offline.

Before you leave, download offline maps for the area, turn on airplane mode, and check that the track and your location show up.

Before you go, check these

These change every year. Everything else in this guide stays the same.

Permits

- Overnight: the advanced lottery (February 15 to March 1), the daily lottery rules, and the fees on Recreation.gov
- Day hike: the self-issue day-use permit at the trailhead, and a Northwest Forest Pass or interagency pass ($5 a day, $30 a year in 2026)
- Questions: the Wenatchee River Ranger District in Leavenworth, 509-548-2550 (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3:30 p.m., 2026)

Getting there

- Shuttle prices, times and booking rules (Loop Connector, Leavenworth Shuttle & Taxi)
- Road and trailhead alerts on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest alerts page: Icicle Road had daytime repair closures from April to June 2025, and Eightmile Road opens by May 15
- Fire closures: on October 1, 2026 none covered the Enchantments, the Icicle Road or the two trailheads. The 2026 Little Giant Fire closure (September 3 to October 31, 2026) was in the Chiwawa and Entiat valleys north of Leavenworth
- Parking at both trailheads: arrive early, and have a plan if the lot is full

Trail and weather

- Snow on Aasgard Pass (typically melted out by late June; often some all year) and whether you need microspikes
- Fire closures and smoke, and the forecast the night before
- Offline map and the GPX file on your phone

One-page trip sheet

	MI (KM)	HEIGHT	MY TIME
Stuart Lake Trailhead	0	3,430 ft (1,045 m)	6:17 a.m.
Colchuck Lake	4.2 (6.8)	5,600 ft (1,708 m)	7:58
Aasgard Pass (top)	6.8 (11.0)	7,840 ft (2,390 m)	10:10
Inspiration Lake	8.8 (14.2)	7,210 ft (2,197 m)	11:30
Lake Viviane	10.7 (17.2)	6,810 ft (2,075 m)	12:33 p.m.
Snow Lakes	13.2 (21.2)	5,470 ft (1,668 m)	2:03
Nada Lake	15.5 (24.9)	4,920 ft (1,500 m)	3:07
Snow Lakes Trailhead	21.4 (34.4)	1,300 ft (395 m)	5:20
Total	**21.4 (34.4)**	**4,630 ft up, 6,740 ft down**	**11 hours**

Permits: day hike, free self-issue permit at the trailhead plus a Northwest Forest Pass ($5 a day, 2026). Overnight May 15 to October 31, lottery on Recreation.gov (apply February 15 to March 1; daily lottery 7 to 10 a.m. the day before, within 1 mile of the ranger station in Leavenworth).

Rules: 8 people at most. No dogs. No fires above 5,000 ft or within half a mile of a lake.

Trailheads: Snow Lakes, Icicle Road, 4.3 mi from Leavenworth. Stuart Lake, Icicle Road about 8.5 mi, Eightmile Road, FS Road 7601 about 4 mi.

Shuttle (2026): Loop Connector 509-393-2067, $27 per passenger. Leavenworth Shuttle & Taxi 509-548-7433, $60 for one or $30 each for two or more.

Emergency: 911.

About this guide

The Enchantments Hiking Guide: a one-day through-hike in Washington's Alpine Lakes Wilderness, by Kraig Adams. 2027 season edition, updated October 2026.

I hiked the Enchantments alone on August 4, 2020, and made a film about it: Hiking the Enchantments in Washington. Everything in first person comes from that trip: my GPS recording, the film and my emails from that week. Permit, parking, shuttle, road and safety facts were checked on October 1, 2026, and anything that changes yearly is dated.

Not sponsored. Nobody paid for a mention in this guide. A hotel in Leavenworth gave me a free room the night after the hike in exchange for featuring it in the film; that's said where it comes up, and the hotel isn't named here.

Updates and contact. If something has changed, or you spot a mistake, email me at kraig@kraigadams.com.

Paid links. The gear links in this guide are paid links: I earn a commission if you buy through them, at no extra cost to you.

Safety. Hiking in the Enchantments has real risks: a steep, loose pass, snow, rockfall, long distances, heat, fire and storms. This guide describes my trip in 2020, not current conditions. Trails, rules, prices and timetables change. Check the weather and the alerts, follow the Forest Service rules, and turn back when conditions aren't right. You're responsible for your own safety.

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