

**Land Before Time:**  
*\*Attempted\* Alpine Rock Climbing in Pangea Valley, British  
Columbia*

**AKA: The Aesthetics of Being Stupid**  
*A bushwacking and creek sloshing trip*

This is our post trip report of everything and anything that went down on this glorious trip!

Savian Czerny, Wiley Holbrooke, and Anna Feldman

## **Food and Rationing:**

Our trip went surprisingly smoothly with our rationing and many of our meals were incredibly delicious and also lightweight. We relied heavily on couscous in the evenings, as well as a supplement in our dehydrated meals. We were very grateful for these meals and the variety of flavors and textures that kept things just interesting enough! The Chana masala mix, gifted fresh salmon, huckleberries, Tahini, and nutella were all huge highlights of our food, and the only thing we brought too much of was one jar of coconut oil! Another great addition was our emergency rations of rice and coconut oil at the jetboat drop off that minimized our stress over having enough food. We ate well and only had a day or two worth of food left on our hike out!

## **Equipment: (what did you end up not using, what did you wish you had brought, etc.)**

Wiley and I learned a lot from our Ritt expedition to the Bugaboos, but some of us more than others! Haha. Largely due to our unfamiliarity with the environment, our tent was a little overkill and overly tough and heavy, but we were grateful to have a tough and roomy tent for the long days of constant rain. Wiley brought too many clothes, too warm of a sleeping bag, a leaking sleeping pad, and a big backpack that was far from comfortable. All these said, they never held Wiley back, and it was nice to have nice clean clothes even at the trip! More generally, our water filter was broken, but we had plenty of Aquamira, and we really only needed one solar panel, and we could have left one back at the drop as a backup if one broke.

If we were to do this trip again, we would definitely bring little hand saws for each of us, as well as a water filter that worked. But beyond that, we felt very prepared with the gear we had. Our 'greens and yellows' (wildland firefighting gear) that Anna brought for us were crucial for the bushwacking, and the Kitchen tarp that Anna brought for cooking in the rain was also totally game changing. Although we cannot say how effective the scent proof bags were for our food, we had no issues with bears or other critters getting into our food the entire trip, so we have to give them some credit at the least!

And of course, more due to unforeseen alterations to our trip, we ended up not needing most of the climbing gear we brought, though the rope was key for a minor river rescue (discussed in the safety and risk management section).

## **What worked, what didn't, and why**

What worked:

To begin, the food budgeting and rationing went perfectly. We had the perfect amount of meals that were well-timed and budgeted. We had a perfect amount of snacks and supplemented from

the environment (huckleberries and salmon). Our group dynamics were easy and we each filled a niche. Every critical aspect of the trip - fuel, food, first aid supplies, shelter - was redundant. We kept backups for each of these in our resupply and we had multiple exit strategies should we need them. Our avenues for entertainment were endless. Journals, books, art supplies, each other and the view managed to make no moment boring. Anna's extensive knowledge of local flora was critical to better understanding the environment and what was edible/inedible. Staying in a tight-knit group was important should we have come across a bear. Traveling in the mornings was better for the river because the snow melt was more intense in the afternoons/evenings. Traveling downstream was far more efficient and easier and we learned to plan accordingly.

What didn't work:

We were unable to accomplish our objective. The following is a list of assumptions that we made. 1) We thought the jet boat could have taken us higher on the river. We encountered shallow water and rapids two miles below the planned initial drop-off. It was difficult to see on the satellite imagery given the shadows. 2) We were under the impression that there would be an ancient trail through the forest. Not only were we unable to find this trail, but if we had then it would not have been helpful because 3) the old growth forest only accounted for less than half of the shoreline. Slide alders, a second-growth tree, lined much of our route and they were practically impassable. The bushwhacking through these sections was tenuous and extremely slow. 4) We thought that the river would get smaller as we went upstream and passed confluences. To our surprise, the river would get much larger and more intense as we made our way up it. No one has been able to explain this to us yet but *I swear to God* it got bigger. This made walking in the river not possible once we got to the original intended jet boat drop-off. It was at this point that we decided that with resupplies and all, we would not be able to make it into pangea valley.

## **Travel logistics**

Traveling planning was very straightforward and went smoothly. We flew into Vancouver, and from there to Terrace where we stayed the night in a motel. We stayed in Terrace to shop and prepare for leaving the following day from Kitimat. We ended up staying in the frontcountry for an extra day, but this was not in the original plan. In the future, I would give two days to prep in Terrace and Kitimat because grocery shopping and packing takes a LOT of time. Preparing and packing everything in one day is actually very stressful and rushed for no reason. Definitely shop in Terrace, but stay at the Kitimat Lodge in Kitimat. They are so incredibly generous and helpful there!

## **Permitting/government relations**

At the time of this report, we needed no permits to enter the Foch-Giltoyess Provincial Park, and no special visas for COVID or anything similar to enter Canada. Know that finding people to shuttle you into the park via jet-boat this time of year is in high demand due to the world class

fishing tourism industry here. Expect to pay way more than you think you should for a jet boat ride. If you can find any connection to give you a ride, this could potentially save you \$1000s of dollars in cost. We were able to talk down the Jet Boat driver from originally \$5000 CAN to \$3000 CAN, but it took a lot of prying phone calls to get there. Find a friend to give you a ride!! The locals are extremely friendly and helpful.

## **Leadership and group dynamics**

Our group dynamics and leadership went astonishingly well. Partly this was due to the fact that we were all at a similar level in many of the tasks we were doing. We were genuinely very well balanced. If one of us had deficits in a certain area, the others would compensate nicely. For example, Wiley is not a good planner, but Savian made up for that with superb preparation. Wiley has a bit more technical knowledge, and so he could fill in the few gaps that Savian had. Anna had a wealth of knowledge about temperate rainforest environments, bushwacking, and bear safety. The best example of our fluidity on this trip was when we decided to not continue on up the valley on the second day of walking. Savian had charted our route across the river onto a sandbar. When the river was too high to cross, we together made the plan to cross without backpacks and assist the backpacks with ropes. When this proved impossible, Wiley proposed the idea of switching gears and setting up camp for the day. Anna led the discussion on moving forward with the plan or staying put. We all listened to each other openly and debriefed each night and planned for the next day.

## **Safety and risk management concerns**

For this trip we were very good at the decision-making processes. We worked as a team well to assess risk and mitigate it when possible. That being said, the compounding objective hazards were quite significant. The river crossings became more manageable and understandable as time went on, but in the beginning, we felt that crossing the river was our largest risk. Our first river crossing was arguably the most risky moment of the trip. We went in a little too deep and the river caught our packs like a sail. Wiley went first and started to get swept away. Quickly, Wiley released the backpack and jumped up on a rock, quickly followed by Anna. While Wiley and Anna were standing on this rock, Savian was safely on the shore and managed to cross without his backpack but brought his rope. He then tossed Wiley and Anna the rope and we used it to pull ourselves across with packs. Even though we had ditched our packs off our backs, we managed to hold onto them with our hands. We successfully crossed this river without incident with assistance from the handline that Savian provided. We then went back across the river to retrieve Savian's pack. From this point on, we never crossed the river deeper than thigh-length and we always used a river crossing formation. In retrospect, we should have walked further upstream and crossed angling downstream.

The other major risk that we encountered was bushwacking. The bushwacking was physically demanding, but we had to continuously shout to warn bears of our presence. We mitigated this risk as best we could -- shouting, bear bells, bear spray. Ultimately, however, we were in an extremely dense environment with little knowledge of our grizzly-friends whereabouts. It was unnerving and otherwise unmitigatable.

The remoteness of the situation compounded these risks and we held ourselves to a higher level of safety than we ever had before. Other important risks included: exposure to the elements; possibility for medical or traumatic incidents; wolves/moose; food safety; countless other unlikely yet possible risks.

## **Specific route descriptions & concerns**

In the end we did not get to attempt any of the described routes we hoped to climb, but we did leave having completed many beautiful day hikes, and scoped out rock faces for our future trip into the area! On the Mountain Project description for Pangea Valley, it states a rough estimate of how long it would 'theoretically' take to hike into the valley, and we can confidently say it would not be possible without either significantly more time or significantly more people.

## **Daily course log:**

### **July 24th**

Anna and Wiley departed from Anna's mom's house in Seattle. Savian left his house in Colorado Springs. Savian had a long layover in Vancouver and used his extra time to visit the headquarters of G7 gear manufacturers. G7 lent us a wonderful bright green pack for us to use on our trip. We all met in the Vancouver airport and took our final flight to Terrace. We spent a night in a motel in Terrace after hitching a ride from a very nice man Glen, that Wiley sat next to on the plane. Shoutout Glen!

### **July 25th**

We wake up and we shop. We shop for all our food and tie every loose end in Terrace. Everyone in Canada is so nice! In the afternoon we take a bus with all our gear. We each have a ~100 liter backpack, a heavy duffel, and we have a full standard size plastic trash can filled to the brim with our food. A fellow bus passenger offered us a ride to our hotel. As we were moving the trashcan off the bus, the plastic handle broke and our food started to spill! In the chaos of the moment, we accidentally left our brand-new G7 pack on the bus. We realized immediately and our kind Canadian bus friends drove us to the next bus stop. We caught up with the bus but by the time we arrived, the bag was gone. We spent that night frantically searching the town and Facebook for

our bag. We delayed our search until the morning and we delayed our departure by one day. We were disheartened.



## July 26th

We spent this day seeing if we could find replacements for the items in the bag and searching for the bag itself. We were distraught and disheartened. In the afternoon, a nice Canadian reported on the local Facebook page that the bag had been found at the offices for the bus station! We recovered the bag, fully intact, and celebrated and packed. The trash can had to be replaced with a burly tote.

## July 27th

At 5:30 am, we got picked up by Jake, our jet boat driver. He brought us to the pier. He told us “damn. Tracy [his boss] always gives me the crazy trips ”Jake was smokin cigs on the boat with his head sticking out the roof of the boat staring at the reflective water with no sunglasses. Jake navigated us out on the open water and then up an inlet. The inlet narrowed and became a river. Jake expertly navigated through the turns and strainers for miles up this river. Jake dropped us off on a sandbar in the river and told us to not get eaten by any grizzlies. We unloaded our gear onto the pebbles and Jake sped off down the river. We gathered and sorted our gear on the sandbar and put all our excess food into our tote. We spent about an hour rigging the tote into the air away from bears. Once we had all our gear and food either stashed or on our backs, we started walking. We had about 10 miles to walk. We tried to stay in the old growth because the bushwacking was manageable. Quickly, the old growth forest transformed into dense slide-alders. We went from the forest and into the river. This first river crossing was deep and a little unnerving (see **Safety and Risk Management Concerns**). After this, we managed to cross the river with relative ease for another hour or so. Soon, the river got too deep and there were no old growth trees to provide us a path. Into the slide alders we went! Savian took the first shift leading in the dense bushwacking. After about an hour-and-a-half, we reemerged on the riverside. We were exhausted. We had been talking loudly the whole time to warn the bears of our presence and it was hot but also rainy and wet and muddy. When we emerged from the bushwacking, we realized that we had made it about 500 feet (150 meters for yall Canadians). We took a quick rest and then continued up the river on the rocks on the side of rapids. Although the river was less welcoming, the rocky scrambles on the shore were way more manageable to us rock climbers. A few hours later, we managed to make it to a rocky beach just upstream of the rapids. We set up camp in a constant drizzle and made dinner. We were dry and in bed at around 11pm. We had made it one mile from the Jet Boat.









## July 28th

Maybe this day was a collective low-point for the trip. We started the day by making breakfast in the rain and putting on our wet clothing. We packed up our camp (later we dubbed this spot: sad wet camp). We set off. We walked approximately 700 feet walking in the river. It quickly got too deep and we were required to enter the slide alders. After about two hours, we made it back onto the bank of the river. We had made it about 700 ft in those two hours. Only 8.7 miles to go! We stopped for a legendary bathroom break and a snack. We had one more heinous stint of

bushwhacking and we emerged onto a wide sand bar island. The upper end of the sand bar was small pebbles and sand. The lower end was bigger rocks covered in moss. Spoiler alert: this sand bar island would soon become our base camp. From this sand bar we tried to walk upstream. It quickly got too deep and we couldn't pass with our packs. Savian tried to cross the stream without a pack and with a rope to tow the bags with. He was unable to cross with the weight of the rope. Both sides of the stream were covered with steep, dense slide alders. We were sweaty, yet cold. We were soaked and dirty. We decided it was too risky to go any further that day and built our tent on the sandy patch of the island. This was the second day of walking and we had made it about ~2.8 miles from our jet boat drop off. Theoretically we had ~8 miles left to get to pangea valley.



### **July 29th**

The rain this day got worse, and the river only got higher, so we left our camp with plans to scope further up our path to see if it was even viable to continue with our heavy packs. We found a safe way to cross the river at a major confluence, and moseyed our way up to the base of what we knew was a 4 mile long stint of rapids. It was a cold and very wet hike, but from past days we learned that it was important to avoid the bushes whenever possible. Despite also being slow, the rocky banks of the river felt like a highway compared to the slide alder and devils club. By ~3pm we made it to the rapids, and we immediately could see that this trip was not going to happen. The route was too technical and too bushy. We were not going to make it to Pangea Valley. With

spirit low, but by no means surprised we walked back to base camp, cold and wet, reassessing what our plan for the future days were going to be.

### **July 30th**

At this point we were in no rush to push onward, and the rain had picked up even more. We decided to sleep in, rest, stay as dry and warm as possible and eat a LOT of food. We barely left the tent this day, and we learned how to use our own body heat to dry clothes within the tent! Some of our many soaking wet clothes from previous days were all of the sudden just damp (but boy did the tent reek in there)! Our spirits were still low, but we began to see the brighter sides of the trip, both metaphorically and literally, as the weather changed and our perspectives with it.

### **July 31st**

After a storm comes a rainbow! We woke up this day knowing the weather was going to be better, but the good omens of this day just kept coming! The day started off as wet and cloudy as always, all the peaks hiding out of site, and the river looking as menacing as ever, but as our second rest day continued onward, the slow shift crescendoed to a post-dinner double rainbow casting into a high mountain valley that we hadn't even seen until just before the rainbow surfaced! Bluer skies were ahead of us, we could feel it. (and we knew it too, because of our

garmin satellite device, but that's not nearly as romantic)



### **August 1st**

After two days of resting, and sitting in our old dampness, we were ready to get moving, and had decided on a day hike up the valley just south of Pangea Valley, which had a much smaller and safer creek to walk in. We left early, knowing we wanted as much time as possible to hike as deep into the offshoot valley as we could, and this valley did not disappoint. As we began the hike, we noticed how low the river had become since the rain had subsided, and then the clouds began to clear fully to give way to the first large swaths of blue sky we had seen since the very beginning of the trip! All of a sudden we were surrounded by 1,000 foot cascading waterfalls in every direction, with towering jungle cliffs looming even higher above, even some glaciers above those. Very quickly we realized there was climbing to be had even though we were not in Pangea Valley, but beyond the scope for our Ritt expedition. We scampered up the river, feeling light without our packs, rested from the stationary rainy days, and higher in spirit, our morales being lifted with the dissipating clouds. We hiked a good 3 miles upriver, spotting good campsites, beautiful water holes, and magical old growth forests along the way, but it was getting late so we needed to turn around. What took us the majority of the day on the way up, flew by on the way down since we now knew the exact route to take on the river, and we were back at camp

before 7pm, perfect time to make a good dinner and reminisce on the beautiful moments of the day. This was the first day of true excitement for the stunning place we were getting to play within.

### **August 2nd**

After an arduous 6+ mile day, we were wrecked once again and called for a rest day. We were running low on food at this point, but we knew we had enough to last us until the following day, which we planned on using to resupply, although we were dreading returning back down the valley we had such horrible memories of in the first two days of the trip. So, to both prepare physically and emotionally, we had a gorgeous sunny (and a little bit buggy) rest day full of food, chess, and a much needed session of stretching.





### **August 3rd**

This day, we set off as early as we could muster, in reality still a slow start to the day, to head off for our Jet Boat drop off site for a resupply for food. Originally, these two miles had taken us two days to walk through, so we planned on this mission taking two days, so we brought the minimum gear required for spending the night at the resupply site, knowing if it were to rain, we had a large tarp at the stash to sleep under. With us we brought trash from our past 7 days of

camping as well as a sleeping pad, sleeping bag, and the minimum gear needed to cook dinner. We flew past the technical rapids section, and then due to the river being much lower than it was upon the hike up, we were able to stay in the river for the entirety of our descent. We were making great time, and then we ran into Danny and Lisa, who were out fishing on their little blow-up Jet Boat. Because they had a much smaller boat than what we drove in on, they were able to boat a good way past our Jet Boat drop off. As surprised as we were to them as they were to see us, we spent a while talking before they offered generously to give us a quick ride downriver to our supplies, wait for us, and then give us a ride back up river. This midday shuttle saved us what could have easily been an entire other day of our resupply trip, and before they sent us on our way, Danny caught us a big Coho salmon as a gift. Their unexpected appearance and generosity left our hearts full and our eyes wide with hunger for dinner that night. However, we were only halfway through our journey for the day, so with the gutted salmon triple-bagged, and backpacks full, we headed back upriver, through the rapids, and finally back to our base camp. We then walked back downriver a few river bends with our cooking gear, made a fire, and grilled the salmon over the open flames. This day and particularly dinner were some of the biggest highlights of the trip and left us grateful for the universe that night as we went to bed content, tired, and full of the freshest fish I will likely ever eat.



### **August 4th**

Although a glorious day, the resupply day was also very large and exhausting, hauling all the new food supplies to camp as well as the entire adventure to cook the salmon. This said, we decided to take another rest day before adventuring up another nearby valley as a day hike. We played chess, sunbathed, bathed, and once again ate a ridiculous amount of food. We were finally settling into the coastal range environment that was feeling less and less threatening every day we were there.

### **August 5th**

Today we quested up the third, and smallest river valley near the major confluence/ base camp, but of course, small is relative and it was once again an incredibly large day. We weaved our way through river nooks and huckleberry bushes as we steadily climbed into a more sub-alpine environment. We kept saying we just wanted to see what was around the bend, but that bend never came, and although the views were beautiful, at the apex of the hike, the view was close to the same as it was from our base camp! We were once again humbled by how truly large these environments are. On our return, we stopped amongst the many huckleberry bushes, and easily filled an entire Nalgene full to have with our oatmeal the following morning. We arrived back at camp in the evening around 7pm, grateful to be back but happy to have had such a full and beautiful day!



### **August 6th**

As our final day at basecamp, we celebrated with delicious food, games, laughter, a good bath, and of course huckleberry oatmeal. The fruits of our labor one might say. We also packed and organized because we now knew via satellite GPS that we would be getting picked up around 8am on August 9th a few turns below where we had been picked up. We organized gear and food for our return, giving ourselves one day of wiggle room to make sure we did not miss our jet boat pick up.



### **August 7th**

We woke up around 7am, knowing we had a lot of packing to do. After barely fitting all of our gear into our bags, we waddled downriver, taking it slow and steady, making sure not to twist an ankle now, so close to the end of our trip. By this time, the salmon run had started, and we were ecstatic and mesmerized by all the deteriorating salmon putting their entire selves and life force into nesting the next generation of fish. This time around, we had to walk the final stint of the river including the particularly deep segment discussed in the Safety and Risk Management Concerns section. This time around we cautiously crossed slightly further upstream where it was

deeper, but the current much weaker. At the Jet Boat drop off site, we reorganized our gear, and then shuttled everything including our Action-Packer food container downstream two riverbeds to our pick-up location. After the two trips of shuttling gear downriver, we set up camp, happy to have one more day to lay low and enjoy the valley before getting picked up and getting sent back into the real world!

### **August 8th**

On our last day, we layed stuff out to dry, played chess, and meditated with the nesting Salmon. A special and quiet last day of introspection for our trip.

### **August 9th**

We were picked up by Jake around 8am, and just like that we were off! The river was lower than it had been on the way in, so it was a more technical and fast boat ride out. It was the craziest roller coaster-esque experience of our lives. We made it back to Kitimat Lodge and unpacked, called our families, showered, and dried our forever wet clothing on the balconies. Although this was the end of our first adventure in the Coastal Range, we were left excited to return, and after befriending Danny, we had a free ticket back into these remote places. After a few days of regrouping, buying more food, and leaving behind gear we did not need, we planned to head back out to what we had now nicknamed Middle Earth, to attempt some of the lines we had scoped on our many day hikes during the Ritt Expedition. But that is a story for another day!



## Itemized Budget:

### Amount Budgeted:

<b>Transportation:</b>	<b>Flight: CO Springs to Terrace</b>	<b>Bus Ride: Terrace to Kitimat</b>	<b>Jet Boat drop-off</b>	<b>Jet Boat Pick Up</b>		
Savian Czerny	\$1,200	\$2	\$650 (all)	\$650 (all)		
Wiley Holbrooke	\$1,200	\$2				
					<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$3,704</b>
<b>Food:</b>	<b>Pounds per person per day</b>	<b>Cost PPPD</b>	<b>Total pounds of food (for Wiley and Savian)</b>			
	1.53	\$25.71	39.83			
					<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$642.47</b>
<b>Fuel:</b>	<b>Amount:</b>	<b>Cost /unit</b>				
Butane	10	\$6.95				
					<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$69.50</b>
<b>Maps and Books:</b>	none					
<b>Gear Rental:</b>	none					



<b>Miscellaneous:</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Cost / Unit</b>	<b>Sub total</b>			
Bear Spray	2	\$54.95	\$109.90			
Aquamira	5	\$16.98	\$84.90			
					<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$194.80</b>
<b>Permits and Fees:</b>	<b>None</b>					
<b>Carbon Emissions Offsetting</b>	<b>Carbon Footprint</b>	<b>Cost to offset</b>				
	2.98 Metric Tons	\$14.89			<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$14.89</b>
					<b>Trip Total:</b>	<b>\$4,625.66</b>

**Total funding requested:**

\$3,000

**Amount Awarded:**

\$3,000

**Amount Spent: \*does not include what Anna Feldman bought, so the numbers are slightly skewed/ lower than actual total cost as a team**

Person	Purchase Description	Price	Total
Savian			2822.98
	Scent proof bags	27.99	
	Aquamuirra	15	
	Dehydrated food from Mtn Chalet	193.5	
	Dehydrated food from REI	69.49	
	Cash for Jet Boat	2000	
	Texts with Tracey on Garmin	15	
	Flights	502	
Wiley	Food	263	1342.54
	First aid supplies	16	
	Boat and hotel	536	
	Additional food	45	
	bear bells	32.54	
	Flights	450	
		grand total:	4165.52
		/2	2082.76