

Pichler's Perch



In the heart of the Western Chugach

Location:

Eklutna Glacier, about 4 miles from the last bridge (16 1/2 miles from the Eklutna Lake parking lot). Elevation: 4550 feet. Built: 1964.

Access:

Traveling South:

Follow Eklutna Lake Road around the lake. Continue on past East Fork bridge (Mile 11), to Eklutna River bridge (Mile 12).

As of this writing (1998), the Eklutna Glacier had receded to a difficult section immediately below an icefall and just beyond the Mitre Might, a long waterfall descending off the west wall of The Mitre. When there is ample snow, access to the glacier may be trivial, usually a snow ramp up the steep face. However, after mid-June the snow is gone, and the river is not low, and by August the river is very swift and dangerous. In addition there is often steady rockfall from the Mitre in the area of the Mitre Might, making anyone near the glacier face a target.

Getting past this spot might be easier on the right side, but the problem is getting there. When the river is not fordable, you must make one of two choices before you even see the problem: 1) the left side of the river, ascending well above the river on benches above the cliffs. 2) the right side of the river, ascending above the cliffs on short unmarked benches. Having done both, this author does not recommend the right side, unless you are very experienced.

The left side begins by not crossing the bridge, but turn left to the Serenity Falls cabin (which can be rented from the park service). After the cabin, continue to parallel the river, past rapids, to a level section. The river ahead runs through a series of short gorges. Start ascending early, over glacier-scoured bedrock and up scree gullies to a nice bench about 120 feet above the river. Follow this bench, on scree and boulders around the corner, the glacier finally coming in to view, to where the scree runs out. Just ahead are two bolted fixed lines which can be used to safeguard the traverse to

the Mitre Might (at least the bolts should be there).

Past the bolts, walk in scree past the waterfall to a trough next to the ice. This spot is changing rapidly, so a description of how to get over to the ice is not possible. See the most current picture (2003). Use common sense, there are nasty crevasses nearby. Once on the glacier, diagonal over to the right to avoid broken ice. Ascend past the icefall.

Begin to diagonal left, and aim for the hanging valley which is just south of The Mitre. When you reach the left edge of the glacier, get off the ice. Follow the glacial trough past Ovis Peak to the end of the trough. Note the steep slope just ahead. The hut is at the top of the slope.

It is recommended to avoid the slope unless you are entirely certain it cannot avalanche. Skill at self arrest is mandatory if you ascend the slope, due to a large crevasse. The safer route is to go right, get back onto the glacier, and swing wide around the crevasses which guard the hut. Continue beyond the hut and finally get off the ice after you are well past the icefall. Follow the final easy slope up to Pichler's Perch.

Traveling North:

As you descend Eklutna Glacier, past Peril Peak, begin to diagonal to the right side of the glacier, aiming for the lateral moraine which is just west of White Lice. Getting off the glacier is very easy for the next 1/2 mile. Once off the ice, continue along the moraine, ascending until you are on top of the knoll where the hut is located.

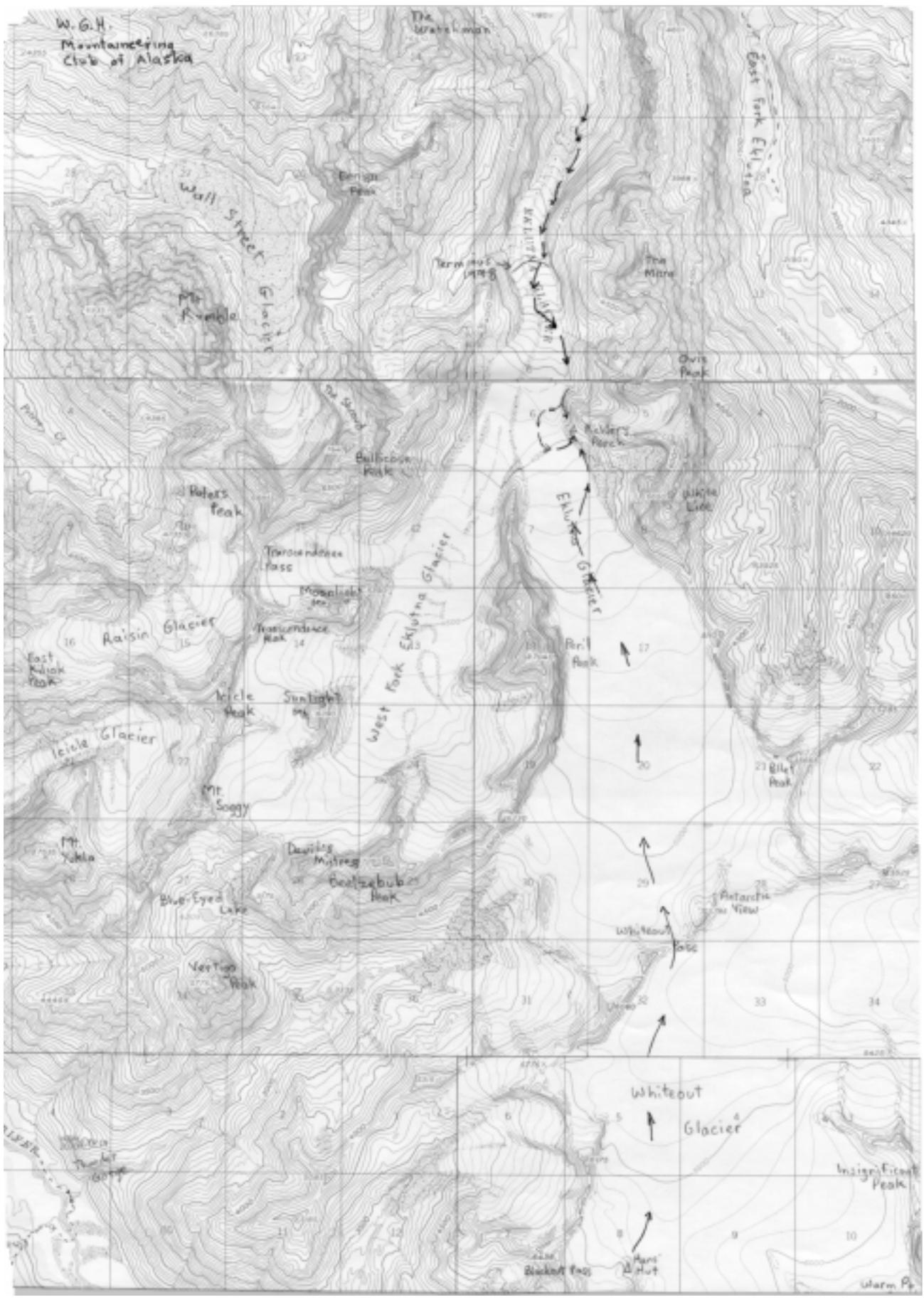
Exiting the glacier via the face may not be possible, there is a large cavern at the base. Going left means fording the river, or negotiating the cliffs downstream. Try going right, aiming for the long waterfall, the Mitre Might (if possible to get over). Pass the waterfall to the top of a bolted fixed line. This will help in descending to a bench which will lead to easy scree around the corner.

Quite possibly the best way to deal with the problems of getting off the glacier is to avoid it. Head west instead. Ascend the West Fork of Eklutna, turn right past Moonlight Mt., and go through Transcendence Pass to the Raisin Glacier. Now you can either get out via Peters Creek or over Bombardment Pass to Eagle River.

Water: in summer, about 30 yards southeast is a trickle

Accommodations:

A-frame design, sleeps 8-10m 2-burner cookstove, lantern, no beds, no radio, bring your own fuel, please carry out all trash.



W.G.H.
Mountaineering
Club of Alaska

The Washerman

Wall Street
Glacier

Mt. Rumblo

Beriga Peak

Termas Pass

Tom Mine

Olvis Peak

East Fork Elvanger

Peters Peak

Ballicose Peak

Kahler's Peak

Jukle Lake

Raisin Glacier

Torvaldsen Pass

West Fork Eskjoting Glacier

Elvanger Glacier

Iceberg Glacier

Ice Peak

Sunlight

Peri Peak

Bilet Peak

Mt. Soggy

Davies Mt. Pass

Bealzebub Peak

Mt. Yukla

Blue-eyed Lake

Peterson's View

Veritas Peak

Whiteout Pass

Whiteout
Glacier

Insignificant Peak

Blackout Pass

Hans Hut

Warm Pt.



**Toe of Eklutna Glacier. May, 2003.
Photo taken by Keith Ross.**