

# the SCREE

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

January 2022

Volume 65, Number 1



"It is not the failure of one's faculties – mental and physical – that makes old age hard to bear but the burden of dreams unfulfilled."

– W. Somerset Maugham

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Nenana Mountain, Hayes Range

Mount Benson, Kenai Mountains

Peak of the Month: Tututalak Mountain, Brooks Range

**JANUARY MEETING** Wednesday

January 5,

at 6:00 p.m.

Katherine Cooper presentation on her injury and recovery from a rock climbing accident in 2020.



**"To maintain, promote, and perpetuate the association of persons who are interested in promoting, sponsoring, improving, stimulating, and contributing to the exercise of skill and safety in the Art and Science of Mountaineering."**

*This issue brought to you by: Editor—Gerrit Verbeek assisted by Dawn Munroe*

## Cover Photo

Tristan O'Donoghue traversing snow slopes onto the summit ridge of Nenana Mountain.  
Photo by Ethan Berkeland

## JANUARY MEETING

Wednesday January 5, at 6:30 p.m via Zoom.

Voting will take place on the 2022 Budget. Following that, Katherine Cooper will discuss injury and recovery from a rock climbing accident in 2020.

The budget proposed by the MCA Board was published in last month's issue of *the Scree*, and is also printed in this issue on page 10.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83674706360?pwd=VUY4VElyVEpqc2xmN29BbG1OKzR3dz09>

Meeting ID: 836 7470 6360

Passcode: 033973

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,83674706360#,,,,\*033973# US (Houston)

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## Training

**January 12, 2022** – Waterfall Ice Climbing (Experienced Beginner/Intermediate) at Eklutna Canyon. The trip leaders are Pat Schmalix ([schmalix@hotmail.com](mailto:schmalix@hotmail.com) or text 907-942-3445 between 9 a.m.- 6 p.m.) and Kristen Sommers. The goal of this course is to improve “newer” climbers’ technique and knowledge. This will not be a class for first time ice climbers. Participants will have to have attended the Ice Fest at or above the Advanced Beginner level, or prove comparable experience. The course will be top-rope only and cover footwork, tool placement, and anchors. All participants MUST know how to top rope belay, supply all required gear, and have properly fitted crampons with clothing required to stay out all day. This course is limited to 8 students, please no late cancellations.

## Crevasse Rescue Training – Success

A 2-day training course was successfully held in Anchorage on December 11-12. Eighteen students practiced knots, self-rescue, and haul system techniques. Thanks to instructors Jen Aschoff, Andy Kubic, Nathan Pooler, Pat Schmalix, and Gerrit Verbeek for volunteering, and especially to Bob Goodwin and the Rigging International Group (RIG) for the use of their fantastic indoor facility, without which this would not have been possible.

**Article Submission:** Text and photography submissions for *the Scree* can be sent as attachments to [mcascree@gmail.com](mailto:mcascree@gmail.com). Articles should be submitted by the 11th of each month to appear in the next issue of *the Scree*. Do not submit material in the body of the email. Do not submit photos embedded in the text file. Send the photo files separately. Send high resolution file photos separately, including captions for each photo. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. If you have a blog, website, video, or photo links, send us the link. Cover photo selections are based on portraits of human endeavor in the outdoors. Please submit at least one vertically-oriented photo for consideration for the cover. Please don't forget to submit photo captions.

For the MCA Membership Application and Liability Waiver, visit <http://www.mtnclubak.org/index.cfm?useaction=members.form>.

## Announcements

### Steer the Scree

Although the Scree exists primarily as a record of mountaineering activity in Alaska, throughout the years it has been home to cartoons, poetry, book and film reviews, jokes and riddles, maps, and lots of other content.

Starting soon, some new volunteers should be working on *the Scree*. What would you like to see more of in the coming years? Feel free to vote for your top choices or suggest other topics to [MCAScree@gmail.com](mailto:MCAScree@gmail.com) (or submit some content!)

- Trip reports from members
  - Trip reports or interviews from athletes and high-profile outdoor recreators
  - Instructional material, tutorials, and techniques (e.g. 'How to rig a sled')
  - Gear discussions
  - Book and media reviews
  - Mountaineering history
  - Maps
- 



### Announcing the 'Goldline Club'

This September the MCA voted to create a new class of membership for our legacy members. This category is open to all MCA members with "30 or more years of substantially continuous membership in MCA," and grants lifetime membership for a one-time payment of \$60.

Proposals for a lifetime membership have come up more than once, most recently during some online banter between Pete Sennhauser, Kneely Taylor and Richard Baranow in 2019. "The Old Farts Club" and less printable variations were kicked around at that time, but the Board has taken to informally calling it the Goldline Club.

Goldline was a three-strand twisted nylon climbing rope known for stiffness, rope stretch, and durability first trademarked in 1957. Goldline dominated the American climbing scene through the 1960s, and was slowly replaced by kernmantle ropes starting in the 1970s. Those two decades were a prolific period of exploration and recreational use of Alaska's mountains, and if you read any trip report from that era mentioning a rope, odds are it was a 120- or 150- foot length of Goldline.

We're especially grateful for our members who have stuck with us for all these years, and the Board will do its best to reach out

to those who qualify each year, but please get in touch to request membership or nominate someone we missed – our membership records aren't that detailed! The inaugural group of members, starting in 2022, are:

**Pete Sennhauser** - member since 1969

**Charles Kennedy** – member since the 1970s

**Kneely Taylor** - member since 1981

**Patrick Thompson** - member since 1982

**Mindy Baum** - member since 1988

**Larry Rundquist** - member since 1988

**Dave Hart** - member since 1990

**Scott Bailey** - member since at least 1991

**Kris Hutchin** - member since at least 1991

**Mark Miraglia** - member since 1991

## Southwest Buttress (1,800 feet, NCCS Grade IV, 5.10+) of Nenana Mountain (7881 feet), Hayes Range

Text by Ethan Berkeland



*Basecamp on the Hotel Glacier with a foot of fresh snow on the ground.*

*Photo by Ethan Berkeland*

In late August, I managed to get one week off of work and was looking to make the most of it. After a day of cragging near Byers Lake on the Parks Highway with my girlfriend, I headed right back into the Hayes Range, where I had been performing geophysical surveys all summer. With my low fuel light on, my van sputtered to a stop three miles south of Cantwell. I managed to coast to the shoulder, where the little remaining gas settled into my fuel line and the engine came back to life. Cresting the hill, I began coasting back down the other side, optimistic that I could reach a gas station. My optimism, as it turned out, was no match for the empty tank, which was dry as a bone at the bottom of the hill. After calling the only towing service in Cantwell, I was informed that it was Sunday and everyone in town was in church except for one man. Bruce showed up shortly after my call, he smelled of weed and donned a “Stay Chiefin” snapback. He informed me his son just shot a moose down the road and asked me for some cash. I gave him my only \$20 bill and prayed that the only heathen in town wouldn’t stiff me as he drove away to get gas. He promptly returned with two gallons of gasoline, and I was painlessly on my way to the Denali Park entrance where we would fly in with Temsco Helicopters.

Tristan O’Donoghue, Brons Gerrish, Matt Capp, and I landed on the Hotel Glacier with 1-2 feet of fresh snow on the ground as well as plastered to the walls we wished to climb. I hoped my optimism might work better on climbing conditions than it did on my empty fuel tank. We had planned this trip around a brief high pressure system, which began materializing as soon as we landed.

On our first day, we hiked around scoping potential climbs and making a game plan in case conditions improved. Tristan and I had planned to attempt a route up the glacier on a sub-peak of Nenana Mountain, however, the idea of postholing several miles up a crevassed glacier through slush turned our focus to nearer objectives on Nenana Mountain’s South Face. The next morning, with warm temperatures and sunshine, Matt and I established a single pitch climb on the Southwest Buttress of Nenana Mountain. The climb started on a dangerously loose low 5th Class ramp, and quickly gained a beautiful crack system that required pulling over a 5.10+ overhang to gain a splitter corner which oscillated from fingers to offwidth. It was an excellent pitch and it appeared that the route could continue up further. Meanwhile, Tristan and Brons enjoyed the classic first two pitches of the South Buttress of Nenana Mountain.

The next morning brought the supposed peak of the high pressure system. Tristan and I revisited the pitch Matt and I had established the previous day hoping to push it as high as possible. We casted off in T-shirts, quickly dispatching the first pitch and two additional pitches of 5.8/5.9 to a large comfortable ledge where we enjoyed lunch. We decided we would continue further as a beautiful 5.4 handcrack awaited us on the next pitch which seamlessly led to a sopping wet pitch of 5.10+. Fortunately, the crack climbing was secure enough to make it through the wet, strenuous climbing. Atop the 6th pitch, we began simul-climbing a ledgy system of snow and rock gullies up to low 5th Class to join up with the South Buttress route above the major technical climbing difficulties. At



this point, we were suffering from cold feet from snow climbing in climbing shoes. We transitioned to mountaineering boots and started the final ridge to the summit. Electing to forego bringing crampons allowed us to carry a light pack. However, our lack of gloves was purely a result of recklessly preparing in haste that morning. The beautiful summit ridge of Nenana Mountain had difficulties of up to 50 degree snow traverses and 4th Class rock climbing with some complex routefinding. We made it to the summit around 10 p.m., right at dusk, to establish the Southwest Buttress of Nenana Mountain (1,800', IV 5.10+).

After a snack on the summit, we turned on our headlamps and began the descent in the dark. From our perspective, the best and perhaps the only route down was an obvious gully off the summit directly down the southeast face. In the previous days, we'd watched avalanches rip down this gully and the upper portion of the gully was still loaded with snow. We stayed on rappel or on an anchor for the entire length of the descent in order to protect ourselves from avalanche danger. The eight 70m rope-stretching rappels led us through waist-deep slush and at one point, a full-on waterfall. Tristan and I both received a sub-freezing shower which made crafting anchors without gloves even more difficult than it already was. We reached the bottom of the gully flooded with the euphoria of relief, despite the beginning stages of hypothermia present in both of us. The 20 minute hike down to our camp warmed our bodies as we ran down a bootpack we had made two days prior. It was around 3:30 a.m. when we got back to our tent and crashed in a stupor of exhaustion. Going to bed without making any dinner, Tristan and I vowed that we weren't going to climb the next day.

A feast for breakfast and entirely too much coffee threw the vows we made not to climb out the window. Soon, Brons and I were three pitches up the South Buttress of Nenana Mountain while Tristan and Matt established a beautiful 50 meter splitter crack they named Chef's Kiss (5.10b). Brons and I rappelled off the South Buttress astounded at the quality of the climbing, a true classic alpine moderate if we had ever climbed one. We then went over to Tristan and Matt's new route, where I made the second ascent of what is one of the best pitches of 5.10 any of us had ever climbed. The winds picked up throughout the day and we returned to camp to find one of our tents completely snapped. Polishing off our plentiful supply of beer made the horrible weather that night slightly more tolerable, but it made packing up the next morning in wind and rain slightly less tolerable. Fortunately, our pilot made it through the inclement weather and retrieved us, perfectly timing our trip around the last weather window of the summer. Our trip was partially funded by a Mountaineering Fellowship Fund Grant.

*Pitch 5 of the Southwest Buttress, a sopping wet 5.10+ corner that went from thin hands to chimney. Photo by Tristan O'Donoghue*



*Looking down at the belay while starting up the 3rd pitch (5.8 R), a long featured slab with sparse protection. Photo by Ethan Berkeland*

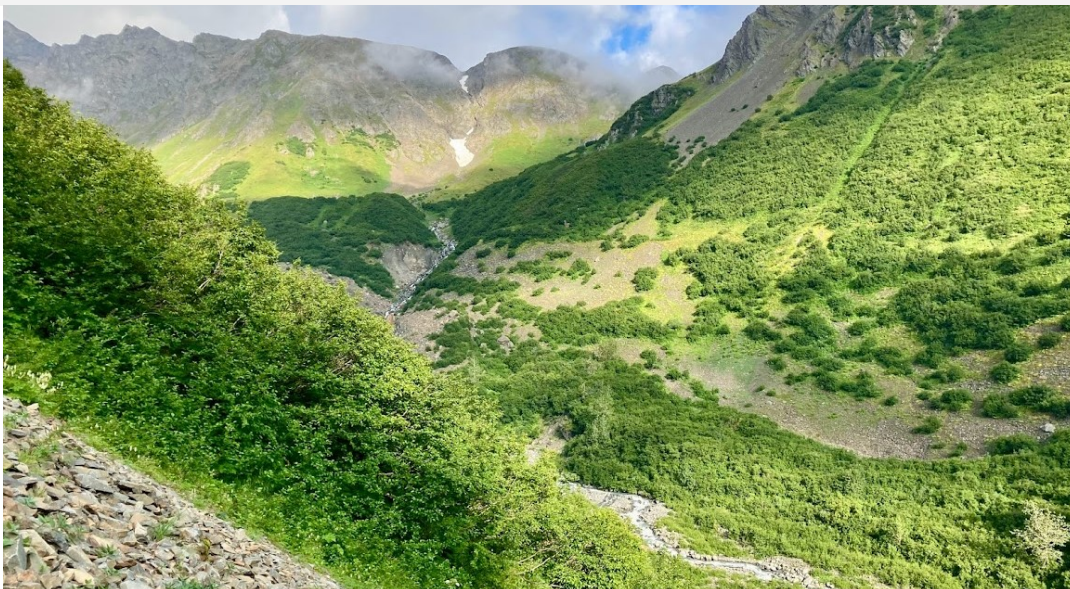
*The route as seen from the air (a friend flew by in his plane while we were climbing). Photo by Jesse Mayo*





## Benson Revisited: Mount Benson (4465 feet), Kenai Mountains

Text and photos by Dano Michaud



*Japanese Creek Valley.*

The stars aligned for an early start on a trip up Mount Benson; not that we needed to beat an anticipated storm, or the seasonal diminishing sunlight factor, or the travel time to the trail head, or the beginning of a route. No, a team member needed to make it to work by 3 p.m. So this trip started early and from my front door. It was a symbolic gesture that I started out from my house and walked the four blocks to meet up with the other team members and begin our adventure. Anyone familiar with Seward townsite knows of the old red historical Episcopal Church. Its location is snuggled at the base of Bear Mountain on 2nd Ave., not far from my front door. The true trailhead starts at the infamous “Jeep Trail” located at 1st & Monroe. An emergency access road by design, the locked gate keeps it to foot traffic during normal conditions. This primitive road serves only one vehicular exception: it is used by EMT personnel in the event that a vehicle could assist an emergency on the mountain during the Mount Marathon Race. The Jeep Trail starts out with a steep angle necessitating you lean into your walk as you incline. The initial 100 meters are a series of direct shots to 90 degree turns, eventually petering out to a casual walk through a hemlock forest. It does have different levels and pitches as the trail makes its way to a section locals refer to as “the Bench;” a land feature providing a wooded plateau that nicely accommodates the trail.

Mount Benson can be climbed from many different angles, all of which offer excellent approaches for the scrambler seeking a free-style summit obtainable without the assistance of ropes or protection. This is a classic mountain for those who love the challenge of

finding a route through the chaos of rock, glacier ice, devil’s club and alder. The average summit bagger ascends and descends Mt. Benson from the east-facing side via a large avalanche runout streak across her east face, starting just below the rock band at 3500 feet. Everything gravity breaks from her top falls into the chute, solidifying her base. This sweeping rock avalanche chute is very distinguishable and sets Mount Benson, also known as Iron Mountain, apart from all other mountains anywhere.

My two previous trips up this route familiarized me with the physical terrain, the route, its obstacles, and best view points along the way. So I led this crew of adventure seekers and scree scramblers including Cliff Reid, Josh Thomas, Samantha (Sammy) Allen and Josiah Bonner. The lucky visitor, Josiah, did not expect his tag-along was going to amount to a great mountain adventure and his first local summit top. Haste makes waste or something like that, so after our jovial greeting we managed to get moving. The road and Bench trail we traveled on took us gracefully up through the guarding shields that protect the base of all Kenai Peninsula mountains, the alders & devil’s club bonnet.

After being held trail hostage by a grumpy moose, in short order we made it up into the “Marathon Bowl.” This extremely beautiful mountain cirque tends to be local’s favorite turn-around point. Owing to the fact that most hikers turn back at this point, I view the bowl as the true beginning of our adventure. Seated at 1800 feet, the DNA from adventurous cores might push on and reach for the top of Mount, or “Big” Marathon at 4826 feet, for this too is the beginning route to the true summit of Marathon Mountain.

However, our sights were set on the beautiful mountain due north of us, requiring us to push on.

Exiting the bowl via the Japanese Squeeze, a short but precarious goat trail at the bottom of the MM ridgeline, we wrapped around Marathon Mountain and dropped into the Japanese Creek drainage. The trail to the Squeeze is goat-designed and built, requiring precise foot movement for the 100' trail. To one side, a rock wall. The other side rolled off into a steep, rocky slope disappearing into the morning fog below. We could hear the creek below us as we moved along the trail, making our way to an 8' drop through a pinch in the rock. As the team's skinniest runt, I went first and the others followed suit. It was a simple task to drop down on your butt and slide through.

Inside the beautiful Japanese Creek Glacier and Japanese Creek valley is like a keyhole in time. This short and narrow valley of rock and ice can be viewed from the eastern half of Seward and across the bay. The creek, glacier and valley are on the outer edge of the Phoenix Icefield. Dropping down the scree slope was as if we were entering into another time. As a modern explorer, I could spend many hours poking and prodding around this glorious place. But instead, we kept moving up the southwest side of Mount Benson and exploring our way to her summit.

Once we dropped down to the creek, we couldn't help noticing that this portion of the waterway was recently entombed in an avalanche of ice, snow and debris. This was made evident by the golf ball sized stones littering the ground and resting upon the larger boulders. The rock in this area takes a lot of abuse from the constant freezing and thawing, causing the rock to split and crumble. When an avalanche drops from above it'll leave a thousand of these remnant stones scattered about for the curious to enjoy. We encountered situations when the boulder we'd use for leverage was the single rock holding the entire mountain



*Cliff Reid descends to the pinch on the Japanese Squeeze.*

from slipping into the sea...or so it seemed. This climber's bane is an expected norm for us.

We made our way up the creek enjoying the fresh flowers and vegetation. Even in August, spring was reappearing with the retracting ice. Traveling up the creek's rocky banks, the tongue of the Japanese Creek Glacier, a wall of ice covered in boulders, rocks, and stones was our next challenge. Even though the angle was steep, the rocks added the needed grip to continue up without an assist from the infamous MicroSpikes. We carry these small crampon units almost all year, as experience has proven the chance of encountering year-round ice in the mountains is very likely, not to mention wet grassy slopes or thick wet soaked

vegetation. The MicroSpike and some of the aftermarket knockoffs (there are a few good ones) have been a game changer in this country, allowing trips to be completed, or even begin in the first place. After topping out on the glacier tongue we turned north, climbing a small lateral moraine, with a smooth transition from ice to earth on her southwest slopes. The time had come to leave the valley of rock and ice and start our ascent up Mount Benson.

Ascending the southside cirque provided many land features beckoning investigation. The passing of the glacier over time

reveals more of the earth for us to explore, like the cold and refreshing stream coming from the icefield above. This water that has been suspended in ancient ice for time unimaginable, free of pollutants, tasted fresh and its spray was refreshing. As we crossed the creek in different areas by jumping over our chosen rocks, the cascade was unavoidable, so we had to stop to gander. I filled my water bottle, for this was the best Mother Nature had to offer and I always like to show my respect to her.

Moving up, we were drawn to a rock face and a snow drift that has held its ground all summer. We walked between the drift and the rock wall as we moved upward to our target ridge. This ridge provided comfortable travel ground: a solid, semi-



*Josh Thomas, squeezing through the pinch.*



rocky alpine tundra slope. Moving on we reached a steep slope gaining us access to the target ridge. Breaking on flat ground in the sun, we viewed and observed our final route. To the west, a small icefield lay between us and Phoenix Peak (5156 feet). To the southwest, its ominous face is the highest point on what I call Seward's West Range, starting at the top: Redline, then Phoenix, Marathon, Lowell, Bear and to the far south Callisto Peaks making up the chain.

Before my joints began to stove up, we began the final push to the summit up steep terrain. Though the need for pro was unnecessary, the need to focus was paramount because a slip, trip or fall at this point would be disastrous. The ridge took us to the top with only a few more meters to the summit. Tired from the push, we strolled in as if we were walking on main street U.S.A.

For unknown reasons, the original summit log was removed from Benson's high point. Retrieving the new log, we scribbled in our names, dates and conditions of the trip. Following ritual, we then named off all the major land features we could see; mostly mountain tops but bodies of water usually hit the list as well. There are few local mountain tops where Cook Inlet can be seen to the far northwest, and Resurrection Bay and the Gulf of Alaska in the opposite direction.

At 3 p.m. on the summit, we knew our team member would be late to work, but still our spirits were fulfilled as this day was successful so far. Gathering our belongings, we proceeded to make our descent. Backtracking towards and beyond our entrance ridge, we continued on the summit ridge south for 500 feet. Deciding on an exit down the steep, scree-riddled rock face sent excitement through our bones. We huddled up in a pack, agreeing not to stray too far from one another, thus avoiding possible rock danger. If a rock is kicked loose, it minimizes the travel of the projectile. We were shouting "ROCK!" the majority of our descent. In the past, having been hit and then having to walk out seven miles on a broken bone, I tend to get a little uppity about that sort of thing.

This is by far one of the best descent routes around these parts, as you're descending the view of Seward, Resurrection Bay, and the Resurrection Peninsula with her majesty Mount Alice, remains the same until you are into the brush. Alice is flanked by some of our finest mountains: Eva, Paradise, and Hearth to her north; Mary, Santa Ana, The Watchtower and Likes Peak to the south. This view is world-class in my opinion, and you view it on the entire descent, it's like viewing the world from the top down... manually.

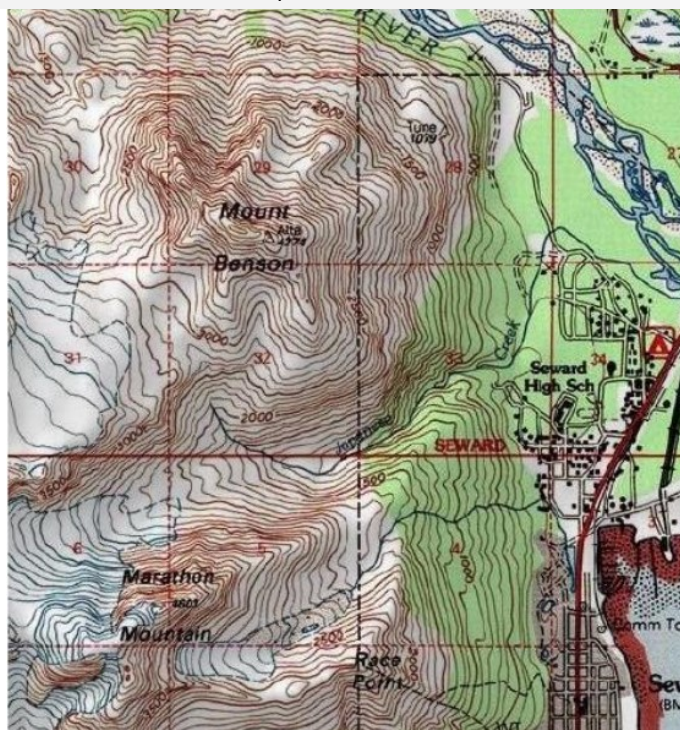
The scree avalanche chute occupies nearly the entire descent. Save for the rock band at the top 100 feet and Lucifer's fencing at the bottom 100 feet. But again, this day would not be tar-

nished by inconveniences such as this because a month prior, Cliff Reid had cut in a trail through this 100+ feet of alders, devil's club and pushki. And when we hit bottom, as so many people often do, we were in a cottonwood floodplain with large stands of the cottonwood and water running through the entire area 2-3" thick. Like kids in a playground we walked, splashed and kicked the water on our way out to the road and our vehicle waiting 300 feet away.

With all the excitement of this spectacular day I try not to take it all for granted, for this world is shrinking daily, so any time I can seized the opportunity to experience this time, of this world, I will take it. And this was a great mountain to do that on!



Sammy Allen, Joshia Bonner and Cliff Reid scouting out the Japanese Creek.



Topo map of Mount Benson.



## Announcements

<b>Proposed 2022 Budget</b>						
	Budget 2022	2021 Appr. vs. Actual	Actual 2021	Approved 2021	Actual 2020	Actual 2019
<b>REVENUE</b>						
Membership Dues <i>received during calendar year</i>	\$14,500	(\$2,478)	\$12,022	\$14,500	\$16,581	\$15,608
Scree subscriptions <i>scree included in membership dues</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$270	\$225
Training <i>BMS, ice climbing, rock climbing, other</i>	\$3,000	\$739	\$3,239	\$2,500	\$0	\$5,086
Photo Calendar	\$2,500	(\$2,726)	\$275	\$3,000	\$2,820	\$2,423
MCA Products: T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.	\$0	(\$150)	\$250	\$400	\$706	\$710
Interest on Accounts	\$100	(\$100)	\$0	\$100	\$196	\$0
Other - Donations, etc <i>Donations, check reimbursements</i>	\$500	\$16,700	\$17,200	\$500	\$7,175	\$455
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$20,600</b>	<b>\$11,986</b>	<b>\$32,986</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>	<b>\$27,768</b>	<b>\$24,507</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>						
Training <i>Campsites, access fees, instructors, trip leaders</i>	\$3,500	(\$894)	\$2,606	\$3,500	\$80	\$3,702
Scree <i>Postage, mailing, printing</i>	\$2,000	(\$123)	\$1,877	\$2,000	\$1,988	\$1,240
General Meeting <i>Rent, refreshments, entertainment</i>	\$400	(\$50)	\$350	\$400	\$941	\$43
Administrative <i>Supplies, PO box, web site, ads, travel, misc.</i>	\$2,000	(\$3,097)	\$1,403	\$4,500	\$684	\$579
Hut Construction & Maint. <i>Materials, supplies, hut equipment, lease fees</i>	\$4,000	\$14,303	\$22,703	\$8,400	\$19,704	\$3,176
Insurance <i>Reincorporation fees, insurance</i>	\$110	(\$80)	\$30	\$110	\$0	\$100
Club Equipment <i>Climbing gear, misc equipment, storage</i>	\$600	(\$27)	\$573	\$600	\$561	\$480
Library <i>New books, periodicals, storage</i>	\$75	(\$75)	\$0	\$75	\$0	\$0
Other: <i>Miscellaneous expenses</i>						
Photo Calendar	\$1,800	(\$1,726)	\$74	\$1,800	\$1,275	\$1,530
MCA Products <i>T-Shirts, Patches, Etc.</i>	\$200	(\$200)	\$0	\$200	\$0	\$300
Other - Awards	\$350	(\$186)	\$164	\$350	\$0	\$0
Other -	\$0	(\$0)	0	\$0	\$208	\$0.
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$15,035</b>	<b>(\$7,845)</b>	<b>\$29,780</b>	<b>\$21,935</b>	<b>\$25,441</b>	<b>\$11,149</b>
<b>DUE TO (FROM) RESERVE</b>	<b>\$5,565</b>	<b>\$4,141</b>	<b>\$3,206</b>	<b>(\$935)</b>	<b>\$2,306</b>	<b>(\$9,383)</b>

## Peak of the Month: Tututalak Mountain, Brooks Range

Text by Steve Gruhn

**Mountain Range:** Brooks Range, Baird Mountains, Maiyumerak Mountains

**Borough:** Northwest Arctic Borough

**Drainage:** Okiotak Creek

**Latitude/Longitude:** 67° 45' 52" North, 161° 10' 24" West

**Elevation:** 4474 feet

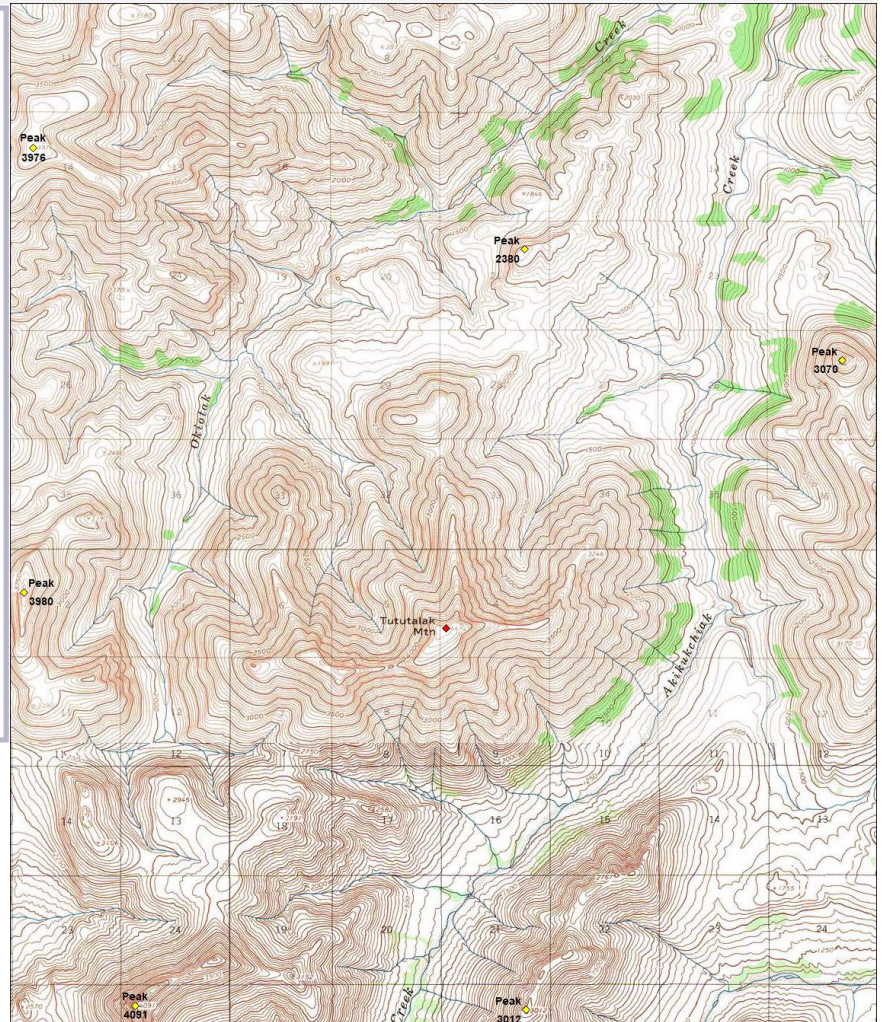
**Adjacent Peaks:** Peak 4091 in the Akikukchiak Creek and Eli River drainages and Peak 2380 in the Okiotak Creek drainage

**Distinctness:** 1764 feet from Peak 4091

**Prominence:** 3199 feet from Mount Angayukaqraq (4760 feet)

**USGS Maps:** 1:63,360: Baird Mountains (D-5), 1:25,000: Baird Mountains D-5 SE

**First Recorded Ascent:** This peak might be unclimbed



The Maiyumerak Mountains comprise the northwestern extent of the Baird Mountains. In 1956 Donald J. Orth reported that *maiyumerak* was an Iñupiaq word that he learned in Noatak and that it meant “all the mountains are steep.”

Located in the Noatak Wilderness, Tututalak Mountain is the highest peak in the Maiyumerak Mountains. There is no higher point within 39 miles. The USGS’ 1955 1:63,360 *Baird Mountains (D-5), Alaska*, and 1956 1:250,000 *Baird Mountains, Alaska*, quadrangles indicate the summit elevation is 4474 feet, but the USGS’ 2015 1:25,000 *Baird Mountains D-5 SE* map indicates the summit elevation is between 4480 and 4520 feet. Where the data from the maps conflict, I use the elevations

reported on the older maps because I’ve noted numerous errors in the newer series of maps.

While in Noatak in 1956, Orth also reported that he learned that *tututalak* was an Iñupiaq word that meant “caught a caribou.”

The information for this column came from Orth’s 1967 [Dictionary of Alaska Place Names](#).

I don’t know of any recorded ascents to the summit of Tututalak Mountain; you could be the first to visit this steep, virgin peak in a federally designated Wilderness Area. One might even catch sight of a caribou while en route.



# Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2021, at 7:00-8:00 p.m., conducted online via Zoom

## Roll Call

Gerrit Verbeek (President) - Present  
Nathan Pooler (Vice-President) - Present  
Curtis Townsend (Secretary) - Absent  
Katherine Cooper (Treasurer) - Present  
Luke Konarzewski (Director) - Absent  
Brendan Lee (Director) - Present  
Josh Pickle (Director) - Present  
Heather Johnson (Director) - Present  
Andy Kubic (Director) - Present  
Peter Taylor (Director) - Present  
Mike Meyers (Past President) - Present

**Scribe:** Gerrit Verbeek

## Committee Reports

### President (Gerrit Verbeek)

- Nothing to report.

### Vice President (Nathan Pooler)

- Heather Johnson and Nathan Pooler to organize a December bonfire with AMH. This will count as our December meeting.

### Secretary (Curtis Townsend)

- Nothing to report.

### Treasurer (Katherine Cooper)

- Nothing to report.

### Liability Committee

- Nothing to report.

### Awards Committee

- Mike Meyers, Gerrit Verbeek and Brendan Lee to present mug and Honorary Lifetime Member certificate to Steve Gruhn. Gerrit asked Steve if he would attend the Christmas party.

### the Scree (Gerrit Verbeek, Dawn Munroe)

- Gerrit to include the proposed budget in the next *Scree*.

### Trips Committee

- Brendan Lee to organize a list of loaner gear volunteered by Club members.

### Training Committee

- Anyone - please contact Gerrit if you are interested in leading trips/trainings this winter.

- Heather Johnson will create guidelines for the MCA to arrange non-certified snow safety / avalanche practice, Nathan to help.

### Huts Committee (Jonathan Rupp Strong, Greg Bragiel, Cory Hinds, Vicky Lytle)

- Jonathan Rupp Strong working to submit interim report for the MSTPF Grant, windows to be installed in the spring.

### Mentorship (Lila Hobbs, Katherine Cooper)

- Nothing to report.

### Communications Committee (Andy Kubic, Heather Johnson)

- Andy is the Point of Contact for final edits and QA/QC of the new website (target Dec. 1st), will set up handover sessions with Gabriela, collect feedback from Board, and delegate as needed.

- Brendan Lee is editing unrelated Wikipedia pages to build credit required to create an MCA page.

### Calendar Committee (Vicky Ho, Lila Hobbs, Heather Johnson, Mike Meyers, Lexi Trainer)

- Calendar is almost ready for distribution.

### Board Votes/Decisions

- Voted to send the 2022 budget to the membership for a vote to adopt. (thanks Katherine)
- Voted to provide a place for members to list gear they are willing to loan to other members This reduces legal risk and administrative hassle compared to Club ownership of gear, and fosters interactions between members.

### **Date and Location of next Meeting**

- General Meeting December 15, 2021 (Christmas Party at AMH)
- Next Board Meeting on December 15, 2021 at the Christmas Party / General Meeting.

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Gerrit Verbeek	<a href="mailto:president@mtnclubak.org">president@mtnclubak.org</a>	Director 1 (term expires in 2022)	Luke Konarzewski	<a href="mailto:lukekonarzewski96@gmail.com">lukekonarzewski96@gmail.com</a>
Vice-President	Nathan Pooler	<a href="mailto:vicepresident@mtnclubak.org">vicepresident@mtnclubak.org</a>	Director 2 (term expires in 2022)	Brendan Lee	<a href="mailto:brendanlee718@yahoo.com">brendanlee718@yahoo.com</a>
Secretary	Curtis Townsend	<a href="mailto:secretary@mtnclubak.org">secretary@mtnclubak.org</a>	Director 3 (term expires in 2022)	Josh Pickle	<a href="mailto:joshuampickle@gmail.com">joshuampickle@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Katherine Cooper	<a href="mailto:treasurer@mtnclubak.org">treasurer@mtnclubak.org</a>	Director 4 (term expires in 2023)	Heather Johnson	<a href="mailto:hjohnson2211@gmail.com">hjohnson2211@gmail.com</a>
			Director 5 (term expires in 2023)	Andy Kubic	<a href="mailto:andy.kubic@gmail.com">andy.kubic@gmail.com</a>
			Director 6 (term expires in 2023)	Peter Taylor	<a href="mailto:peter@petertaylor.co.nz">peter@petertaylor.co.nz</a>

Annual membership dues: Basic ("Dirtbag") \$20, Single \$30, Family \$40

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the Treasurer at the MCA address below. If you want a membership card, please fill out a club waiver and mail it with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you fail to receive the newsletter or have questions about your membership, contact the Club Membership Committee at [membership@mtnclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtnclubak.org).

*The Scree* is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes, and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be emailed to [MCAScree@gmail.com](mailto:MCAScree@gmail.com). Material should be submitted by the 11th of the month to appear in the next month's *Scree*.

Paid ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be in electronic format and pre-paid. Ads can be emailed to [vicepresident@mtnclubak.org](mailto:vicepresident@mtnclubak.org).

Missing your MCA membership card? Stop by the monthly meeting to pick one up or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope and we'll mail it to you.

Mailing list/database entry: Katherine Cooper — 209-253-8489 — [membership@mtnclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtnclubak.org)

Hiking and Climbing Committee: Vacant—[training@mtnclubak.org](mailto:training@mtnclubak.org)

Mentorship: Katherine Cooper and Lila Hobbs—[mentorship@mtnclubak.org](mailto:mentorship@mtnclubak.org)

Huts: Greg Bragiel—350-5146 or [huts@mtnclubak.org](mailto:huts@mtnclubak.org)

Calendar: Lexi Trainer

Librarian: Gwen Higgins—[library@mtnclubak.org](mailto:library@mtnclubak.org)

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Find MCAK listserv at <https://groups.io/g/MCAK>.



*Josh Thomas on Mount Benson.  
Photo by Dano Michaud*

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