

# SCREE

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 102037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

SEPTEMBER 1992

Volume 35, Issue 09

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

Sept 16 7:30 pm Wednesday, Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd and Eagle Sts.,  
downtown Anchorage, Alaska.

SLIDE SHOW: Jim Sayler will show slides of the East Fork of Eklutna valley.

## HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

- September 12 RAINBOW PEAK  
One-day climb from Rainbow Valley, Chugach State Park.  
Class C. Bring foul weather gear.  
Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184
- 19-20 SNOWHAWK TRAIL  
Trail work to be done for the trail leading to upper and  
lower Snowhawk cabins. Call leader for details.  
Leaders: Joe Kurtak 345-5512 and Chris Tomsen 428-2250
- 26-27 ICE-CLIMBING SCHOOL  
Beginning and intermediate ice training. Members only.  
Held at the Matanuska Glacier. Sign-up at the September  
meeting. A mandatory organizational meeting will be held on  
Thursday, the 24th. See details this issue.  
Organizer: Paul Denkwalter 272-1811, AMH

## BRADFORD WASHBURN AT AMH

We are expecting to have a visit from Bradford Washburn on September 17th at Alaska Mountaineering and Hiking, Spenard Road. He will be at the store, promoting recent books and maps, between about 4:00 and 7:00 pm. Everyone is invited.

## McHUGH - RABBIT LAKE TRAIL

Chugach State Park is expecting to finish work recently done on this new trail by MCA and REI. They are looking for volunteers to go in mid to late September. If you missed the first go-around, here's your chance to do some community service. Call Frank Wesser, 345-0678.

## Correction From Last Month's Scree

In the trip report for new hut construction last month, one person somehow was left out as a participant. Scott Bailey also helped with the 4th of July hut work, and should have been included on the list. Sorry about that.

## TECHNICAL ICE CLIMBING SCHOOL

2

place: Matanuska Glacier  
date: September 26-27

fees: \$ 5.00 equipment replacement fee  
\$12.50 access to glacier and camping

meeting: Thursday, September 24, Pioneer Schoolhouse 7:30 pm. This meeting is mandatory, as it is every year, so plan to attend.

The school will present the techniques necessary to become at least a competent second on steep ice, such as waterfalls and gullies. We will not be teaching any glacier travel techniques.

PRE-REGISTRATION WILL BE REQUIRED. Sign-ups were at the August meeting for present members and will be at the September meeting for present and new members. If you cannot attend the September meeting you may call Paul at AMH, 272-1811. We will not be signing up students (or new members) at the organization meeting on the 24th. All students should be members by the September MCA general meeting since AMH does not collect dues.

An equipment check will be done at the organization meeting on the 26th. Students are required to bring their boots, crampons and ice axes for inspection. Club equipment will be handed out. (The club has limited supplies of crampons, ice axes and helmets.) Fees will be collected. Questions will be answered. ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND.

The school will begin at 9:30 am on Saturday, September 26th, at Matanuska Glacier at the parking lot closest to the glacier. Plan on leaving Anchorage no later than 7:00 am or go up Friday night (no extra charge).

### ICE CLIMBING SCHOOL EQUIPMENT LIST

(Everyone must have all equipment underlined. Asterisked items are available from the club.)

\*Ice axe - 70 cm or shorter, curved pick with a web sling  
Ice hammer - get one if you can  
\*Crampons - 12 points, hinged or rigid or foot-fangs  
\*Helmet  
Harness - 1 or 2-piece or 22 feet of 1-inch tubular webbing  
Locking carabiner - or two regular carabiners  
Rigid-sole mountain boots - no hunting boots; plastic boots are best  
Lunch - for two days, a thermos is a good idea  
Wind parka and pants - Goretex or other semi-waterproof  
Pile or wool pants - definitely no jeans or cotton  
Pile or wool jacket (or synchilla, polarguard, whatever they have these days)  
Wool hat  
Wool or synthetic gloves and mitts - bring extras, it's wet out there  
Overmitts - water repellent  
Gaitors  
Day pack - for all this junk  
Sunglasses, sun cream, bandana, camera, guitar, violin, sax, trumpet, drums, walkmann, post-climbing refreshments, etc.  
Car camping gear, lawn chairs, salmon roasts, barbecue sauce, campfire stories  
Hey, the lodge will be open this year!

# P A R K W A T C H

## **What is "Park Watch"?**

Park Watch is a new, organized effort to reduce criminal activity at Chugach State Park facilities.

## **Why, "Park Watch"?**

In recent years, theft, vandalism and other crimes have escalated to unmanageable proportions. Cut backs in State spending have greatly reduced the resources necessary to adequately control our parks. The amount of personal loss in the destruction and theft of private property is enormous.

## **Who is "Park Watch"?**

"Park Watch" is a volunteer cooperative program involving park visitors, park neighbors, and various user groups such as outdoors clubs and organizations.

## **How will "Park Watch" work?**

Modeled after *Neighborhood Watch*, "Park Watch" volunteers use the non-aggressive approach keeping watch at trail head parking lots and greeting visitors. State Park Rangers supervise and train volunteers in observation and reporting techniques.

## **How can I get involved in "Park Watch"?**

### **Contact:**

- Chugach State Park Headquarters 345-5014 (Mon-Fri 8-4:30pm)
- Friends of Chugach (Patricia Joyner 762-2451 or 338-2128)
- Mountaineering Club of Alaska (Dan O'Haire 561-1141)
- Kris Spencer Park Watch Volunteer 346-1658

State Park Rangers will schedule a meeting soon.

### **Get Involved!**

Please call and leave your name and phone number for contact.

**Working together to enjoy and protect Chugach State Park**

## TRIP REPORTS

### Eagle River - Glen Alps, A Bear of a Hike

Scott Bailey

Rumors of a one day ski traverse, done previously by an AAC member, from South Fork Eagle River to Glen Alps prompted this exploratory hike on July 18. From the South Fork trailhead to the outlet of Eagle Lake the muddy trail was no match for knee high rubber boots. Right behind us came 8-10 members of one of Karen Cafmeyer's climbing classes. After a quick boot change, onto the Eagle Lake "hut", where two tents were on top and one inside. After a food break we started traversing the slopes above Symphony Lake to reach the eastern most saddle. This is not the lowest saddle on the ridge but the most doable. Below, the sprouting of multi-colored tents near the "hut" reminded me of many Sierra Nevada campsites.

After topping out at the saddle, the long telemark slopes 1-2 miles and steep chutes directly below us for the "ski-to-die" types made the side-hilling worthwhile. We headed down the west side of the bowl, saving time and distance instead of following the potentially faster ski slope. Two-thirds of the way down, a cry went up, "Bear!" A sow and yearling cub were about 100 yards below us and to the left. Dick Nenahlo unslung his .357 mag rifle while Dave and I blew the whistle and rang the bear bell louder. Off they went bounding down the slope much faster than us, heading 50 yards left of where we were planning to leave the slope and get into a clear area. Once we got to the drop-off, the "clear" areas next to Ship Creek looked more inviting and with no bear in sight, on we went. Into the swamp! Large piles of bear scat were frequent as we skirted the "really" wet areas to get to the first of two fords of the creek.

The ford was easy after a change to sneakers for the cold water. After the second ford and change to boots for the rest of the trip, we hit the Arctic-Indian trail and made good time even through the tall plants and willows. The Bird Creek fork of the trail went one way but we kept heading toward the Indian/Ship Creek fork. Two miles along the trail more bears! Dick spotted a blonde sow and a two-year-old 200 yards up the slope above us. The sow took off at a run but the "cub" was really curious standing up and looking and listening to our attempt at a wilderness "symphony." Once we made the Ship Creek cutoff no more bear, but unbearable brush lead to several miles of side-hilling on wet grass and slippery slopes (adjustable ski poles were very handy). The slope up to the saddle between the Wedge and the Ramp seemed endless. Finally, at 12:30 am, we saw the lights of Anchorage. After a rest and water break we dropped down the South Fork of Campbell Creek, crossed to the trail on the north side and got to Dave Hanneman's car at 4:30 am, 20+ hours for the "day."

We concluded it would be a good TWO day trip skiing or hiking. The snow conditions would be critical and for the traverse above Symphony Lake, crampons, ice axe or self-arrest ski poles would be needed. A light weight rope, 8mm would be handy, too. Alpine skills, practiced and honed, and partners with a sense of humor are necessary. Trip members were Dick Nenahlo, Dave Hanneman and me.

### Harding Icefield Crossing

Dan O'Haire

Mountaineers on the icefield crossing, July 18-25 were Mindy Baum, Chris Brehmer, Ray Camissa, Sage Cohen, Arie Korving, Jim Scherr, Chuck Schuetze, Richard Smith, Eric Teela and me.

Saturday morning we had breakfast at the Summit Lake Lodge and then drove to Exit Glacier trailhead where we parked the cars. We then rode a motor bus to Tustamena Lake. Kenai guide George Pollard took us down the lake in his dory. Rope, climbing gear, skis, poles and sled all went on the pack and we staggered two miles through the woods and along the river to the glacier.

Sunday we put on our crampons and labored our way up the Tustamena Glacier, getting on at the far right side, then moving up the middle. Twelve hours of carrying the heavy packs left us exhausted but we made it to the fork in the glacier where it was easy to get off the ice. We camped on snow. From this point on we would ski and tow the sleds.

Monday we moved up alongside the north side of the south fork, avoiding the broken ice by traveling on the moraine and in the trough next to the ice. There was less snow than in past years and we had a couple of extra portages over rocks. At the end of an easy day of travel we arrived at my favorite icefield camp, sheltered from the icefield winds by a friendly moraine. We talked about this as a possible hut site (Sec 23 T10S R6W). The weather was good and we looked out over the southern icefield. After dinner our airdrop of beer and extra food arrived.

By Tuesday morning, clouds had appeared. A steady wind from the east and a bank of clouds on that side of the icefield foretold a change of weather. We skied up past the ridge, keeping it in sight to our left, then past a broad glacier flowing down from the highest part of the icefield, a region of granite nunataks. Meanwhile, the clouds were lowering and the wind carried drizzle. At that point, we should have put on rain pants but did not, and the wetness saturated our windpants and eventually, our boots. We pushed on, until we reached the prominent granite wedge beyond which we would turn left. We dug into the snow and built a snow-walled shelter to put our tents in.

On Wednesday the weather was miserable all day, with a steady twenty-mile-per-hour wind and drizzle. We put on our rain suits and wet boots and continued east for another mile past our landmark nunatak before setting our compasses for N31E, a bearing that would take us over the broad dome on our traverse, across the ice flats, and to the Exit Glacier, where we would get off the icefield. We were able to continue for about four hours before the wetness and cold drove us to make camp at 4500', the high point of our traverse. The rain fell in torrents that night.

When we looked out of the tents on Thursday the camp was shrouded in whiteout, there was just a light drizzle, and the wind had died. We broke camp and put our faith in our compasses and skied on through the whiteout across the ice flats for hours, losing about 100' in every mile and a half. After half a day, we dropped down out of the clouds and there straight ahead along our compass line, several miles distant was our target in the vicinity of Exit Glacier. We skied on and made camp three miles from the edge of the icefield. As the clouds continued to lift that evening, we got a look around.

Friday morning the sun was out for the first time in days and we were able to dry out some of our wet clothes. Visibility was good and we could look back across the ice along the path we had taken. We could also see the highest part of the icefield, with its granite nunataks. We skied over to the Exit, then along its left side. Just where the glacier drops off like a waterfall, we skied off the ice and onto a bedrock bench. From here a trail would take us the 3,000 feet down to the parking lot. We camped that night on the upper trail off the snow, looking down on the Exit and gazing out over the icefield.

Saturday the packs got heavier as we loaded the skis and climbing gear. We took our time descending one of the most spectacular trails in North America. The Exit Glacier tumbles off the edge of the icefield, splintering into fragments, its blue ice exposed. Further down, there were wildflowers of many varieties, another feast for our eyes. The lower trail took us through the woods to the ranger station.

### Brooks Range - Upper Alatna

Don Hansen

After flying from Anchorage and Fairbanks to Bettles, Alaska on Saturday, August 25th, the party of seven, Bill Wakeland, Charles Lane, Pam Page, Sid Moglewier, Breck Tostevin, Linda Stanton and I, chartered from Bettles to Gedit (Summit) Lake at the headwaters of the Alatna River. We left a food and fuel cache at the lake and hiked down the Alatna to the Weyahok River valley. and headed up the valley. On the way there we saw a few lone bull caribou heading down the Alatna valley and two wolves on the lower slopes between the Weyahok and the Alatna and had one bull prance a circle around us during a lunch break, trying to get our scent and satisfy his curiosity. That was an exciting experience that would prove to be a prelude to future encounters with more caribou on the trip. It was particularly exciting for Sid, who came from Prescott, Arizona, and wanted to see caribou and get pictures.

On the day's journey up the Weyahok, an airplane flew low a few times and dropped a sleeping bag to us, inadvertently hitting the stabilizer on the plane, but causing no damage. We were not missing a sleeping bag and at the time thought the bag might belong to a lone hiker whose tracks we had seen along the river. Later we found out that our charter pilot, Steve Ruff, had dropped the bag to us thinking that we had left it on his float plane. The bag really belonged to his assistant pilot. It was heavy for the size and lack of loft, and we left it at our next camp rather than carry it along our circle route back to Summit-Gedit Lake. The next couple of days at different campsites up the Weyahok River we tried to climb Cravens Peak, a dominant monolith of the upper Alatna area by gaining different ridges that we hoped would easily lead to the summit, but ended in rotten rock and precarious drop-offs. We spent another day on the upper Weyahok exploring the valley and high pass on the continental divide separating the Alatna drainage from the Noatak River to the west, another pass heavily used by caribou, as evidenced by their trails funnelling through the pass. Breck and Sid brought along fishing poles and reels and caught several grayling in the Weyahok. We then back tracked a few miles and hiked up a tributary of the Weyahok and camped in a pretty valley and spent two days. Most of the group climbed up a nearby mountain with great views in all directions, while Sid caught enough grayling and one char to feed the rest of us and we fried grayling over a fire on willow sticks. A taste supplement to our freeze-dried meals.

The next morning we had frost on our tents as we broke camp for our hike up a ridge and over a pass to the north. On approaching the pass we saw a few caribou and then several caribou and then more caribou at the pass. Some of the young caribou bulls came pretty close to investigate us as we ate lunch at the pass. On the way down from the pass we saw several more bands of caribou coming up the pass. We set up camp at the bottom of the slope leading to the pass and witnessed an almost continuous parade of caribou coming up the north-flowing drainage towards the pass in back of our camp. We spent two days watching caribou and Bill and I tried stalking them to get close action pictures with our low power lenses, but with little success. Generally, the caribou would only come within about 50 yards of our camp, get our scent, and detour. In the morning, when everybody was in the tents, some of the more curious caribou approached within a few feet, if the wind was right, but by the time you opened the tent flap to take a picture they would move away.

encountered many more bands of caribou as we hiked north towards the river and back around the bend towards our pickup point on Geditry Lake. We hiked a few miles north of the lake on a knoll at the continental divide overlooking several (at least 13) lakes and the Arctic north slope drainage of the Nigu and Killik Rivers that flow into the Colville River and on to the Arctic Ocean and the Alatna River that flows south to the Yukon. On the way back to the lake the next day we saw a black grizzly bear loping north in the tussock valley below, heading from Geditry Lake and our food cache, but fortunately the bear had not gotten into the cache box. The last two days (the only time we had much rain during the day) were spent around camp fishing successfully, for Bill and somewhat for me, using a willow stick as a rod to catch grayling in a clear water stream flowing into the lake from the north, while Breck and Sid had great success in catching lake trout, grayling and char in the lake. We each had a fish to fry on a stick over the fire. Steve Ruff and his assistant pilot, Den Howard, of Brooks Range Aviation picked us up Friday evening, first in the 185 that took Pam, Linda and Breck and two to three hours later the rest of us in the Beaver.

### Nevada Peak

Willy Hersman

On August 15th Phil Fortner and I headed up to the Talkeetnas and the Little Su valley for some exploration. We hiked in about five miles to a hanging valley SW of Telemint. After a lunch we decided it would be prudent to get any climbing over with right away, the weather being as fickle as it was. I remembered from reading Screes that at least one party had climbed up to the 5715-foot point shown on the map. Their account (Dec. 1970) seemed to fit the cliffs above us, but they stopped short of the true summit. A connecting ridge keeps going with granite towers which are obviously higher.

After bouncing through the boulders we reached an unmapped glacier NW of 5715 and proceeded up a snow gully towards the ridge S of Telemint. Progress seemed to screech to a crawl as the going got more and more vertical, and out came the rope. Phil took off towards what looked like the highest tower, neatly and delicately leading the greasy cracks in his plastic boots to finally reach the ridge, just below the summit. We did a short rappel and climbed on to the top, higher than 5715, and probably close to 5800 feet.

We found no evidence of an ascent, but it had been a long day and I didn't care. I was hungry. My snacks were too small, and nothing but sugar. All the way back in the dark, sliding and slipping through the dang boulders, I could only think of food. That lovely MRE was waiting for me in the pack, a Meal-Ready-to-Eat. We reached camp and I immediately got the stove out.

If you've never had an MRE before, it's an experience full of curiosity. The army has improved over the days of C-rations, when you got beans and franks in a can. Now you get beans and franks in a foil packet. An MRE is a little like a Chinese puzzle inside. Everything comes in its own neatly labeled package, like Accessory Packet A; with a wet napkin, matches designed for damp climates but no good when wet, packets of salt and sugar, cream substitute for 1/3 canteen cup, two chiclets (Roy Smith says the generals wouldn't want soldiers with bad breath), a Spartan-sized packet of toilet paper and of course, coffee-instant-Type-I. I wondered if Type-II might be more like Del Mundo.

The main entree is simple, just toss the packet and all in hot water, or eat it cold. I was hungry, but not starving, so I heated it up. Sometimes they surprise you with what looks like toothpaste, but turns out to be jam. And most amazing of all is a bomb-proof package labeled "cracker." The generals must think an unbroken cracker is essential. I'll bet those weather-beaten Floridians were just as happy as I was to eat a modern MRE, a technological wonder of the 90's.

## MINUTES OF THE AUGUST MEETING

August 19, 1992, and a 1/4 inch of volcanic ash is currently on the streets. New members introduced themselves.

### TREASURER'S REPORT:

Money Market	-	\$4286.08
Checking Acct	-	1504.79
Petty Cash	-	<u>52.10</u>
Total		\$5842.97

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Hiking and Climbing.

Spurr volcano changed some trips. Trips for the 22nd were curtailed. Dan O'Haire reported on the Harding Icefield crossing. Chris Tomsen reported on the Eklutna Traverse with AWS and the clean-up of MCA hut latrines.

Conservation. (Environment and access.)

Dan reported on potential federal money for trails being used for "other" (road building) purposes by Mayor Fink. He recommended reading the Anchorage Transportation Improvement Program and calling the mayor at 343-4431. Chris Tomsen is looking for assistance in wording a club position statement on trails.

### OLD BUSINESS

Park Watch.

Volunteers are needed. Friends of Chugach State Park and Chugach State Park are gathering evidence on trailhead vandalism. You can assist by providing a presence at trailheads and following up on what is done to convicted vandals.

Refreshments.

Eric Teela needs a volunteer to replace him. Responsibilities include buying and bringing snacks, which the club reimburses, to the meetings.

### NEW BUSINESS

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

A reception with Brad Washburn was scheduled for August 27 at AMH.

Gorilla Rock - if climbing there, please do not stand on the tracks while belaying. And definitely do not use the track as a belay anchor.

Weakest Mountain Joke:

How does a mountain hear?

With its mountaineers. (got any better?)

Chris is offering a salmon for the best mountain-related short short story or joke.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Chris Tomsen

Sept 92