

the SCREE

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

September 2010

Volume 53 Number 9



"The degree of reality may be judged by its consequences."

~W I Thomas

Monthly Meeting

Wed., September 15th @ 6:30 PM

Program: Jay Rowe will present highlights from seven separate attempts to climb the Broken Tooth

First Ascents in the Brooks Range

Ice Festival

POM – Fog Peak

The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

www.mcak.org

"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"

Join us for our club meetings the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the BP Energy Center, 900 East Benson Blvd., Anchorage, Alaska
www.akpeac.org/conference/BPEC_map_06-04-03.pdf

Cover Photo: Doug Piehl on the crux of the South Buttress of the Northwest Ridge, Peak 2250, Brooks Range. Photo by Erik Peterson

Article Submission:

Text/video/photography submissions for the Scree can be sent as attachments to mcascree@gmail.com. Do not submit material in the body of the email. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. If you have a blog or website, send us the link. Cover photo selections are based on portraits of human endeavor in the outdoors.

For best viewing of the Scree on a monitor using Adobe Reader, click on 'View' and 'Full Screen'

Contents

First Ascents in the Brooks Range

Peak of the Month – Fog Peak

2010 ICE Festival

Hiking and Climbing Schedule

September 4-5, Couples Trip – Lost Lake hike and berry picking
All on a trail (Class 1 Terrain), 1500 feet of elevation gain. 15 miles.
Contact Greg and Mary Beth Bragiel – 569-3008

September 25, Nature Center to Peter's Creek Trailhead

Join Eagle River resident Richard Baranow for a hike traversing the ridgetops from the Eagle River Nature Center area to the Peter's Creek trailhead. Long day hike with significant elevation gain/loss. Estimated elevation gain/loss is 6,000'. Estimated distance: 15-20 miles. Trip is limited to 12 participants. Sign-up at the September general meeting. Must contact leader at least 24hrs in advance. Leader: Richard Baranow, 694-1500.

October 22-24 (**Note new Dates**) Paria Canyon - Utah/Arizona

Tired of rain? Meet me for a trip down the most beautiful slot canyon in the world, where it rarely rains, and if it does, we'll skedaddle to safety while it rushes by. I have a limited number of permits for this mellow, 38-mile, three-day hike from White House trailhead to Lee's Ferry. Plan on wet boots (or sneakers) as you cross the warm, ankle-to-knee-deep Paria every 15 minutes, making your way toward the Colorado River. Dates cannot be changed. We will meet in Page, Arizona, on the 14th and spot a vehicle. Mileages from airports: Las Vegas - 277, Phoenix - 279, Salt Lake City - 386. Leader: Willy Hersman, mcak@gci.net



First Ascents in the Brooks Range

by Erik Peterson

Alaska's Brooks Range: not exactly a preeminent climbing destination. Overshadowed by the higher peaks and better climbing of the Alaska Range and the Saint Elias Mountains, the Brooks Range tops out at a little over 9000 feet, and is noted for its poor quality, crumbly rock, and lots of scree. The Brooks Range sits mostly above the Arctic Circle, so despite its relatively low elevation it hosts unfriendly weather, and remains rugged, remote, and mostly unclimbed. So when I called Doug for our summer climbing trip, it was as much about the climbing as it was the adventure. We were searching for unclimbed peaks and decided to focus our attempts on the northern edge of the Endicott Mountains, with Peak 2250 (meters; 7382 feet), the third most prominent peak in the Brooks Range, as one of our primary objectives. One reason the area was exciting was because of the lack of information, including none of the mountains in the regions having official elevations, only vague references within the 20-meter contours of the USGS maps.

One issue we had to decide before we left was whether to bring our snow/ice gear. Alaska had a dry winter, and after a cool spring, May came with summer in full force. Seventy-five to 80 degrees in Fairbanks, with 60s on the southern end of the Brooks, the week before we left, convinced us snow and ice would be minimal. The day before we flew out it was 85 degrees in Fairbanks: we figured leaving behind the snow/ice gear was a good idea.

Our Brooks experience started before we even landed. We flew out of Bettles on May 30th, and our flight to the Killik River is a north-south traverse of the Brooks with a view across the continental divide. Our landing on a gravel bar was followed not 30 minutes later by a lone wolf walking through our landing site. After a few hours of getting our gear organized for our hike, and taking in our surroundings, we began heading upriver toward Aniakvik Creek, our access point to deeper into the mountains. We also encountered our first ankle turners: the tussocks of the tundra. The ground as bad as might have been expected, but tundra is tough traveling – wet, swampy ground, with unstable tussocks deceiving you into being able to keep your feet dry. On May 31st we moved high enough to move past the tundra, but the rocks along the river bottom threatened our ankles with every step as well. Near the head of Aniakvik Creek we set up our base camp with our altimeter reading 4705 feet. We woke up June 1st to a snow dusting with foggy, windy, and wet weather: not ideal for being on steep, unknown terrain.



Our route up Peak 2250 – South Buttress of the Northwest Ridge (of the four ridges in the picture, it is the third one)

We started up the slopes to our south toward the main ridge leading to Peak 2230 (meters; 7316 feet) North. The climbing was mostly 3rd class, on scree of various sizes. We stayed along the ridge to about 6500 feet when we met a tricky cornice in a col about 20 feet long. This was immediately followed by a vertical wall about 35 to 40 feet high. Our visibility was still very poor and we could make out that the wall angled back, but we couldn't see what happened above. In addition to our limited visibility, the rock was

still slick from snow and rain, so we decided to return under better conditions.

On June 2nd we did some scouting, but mostly relaxing as we prepared for a long day over the ridge to our east toward Peak 2250. On June 3rd we set out at 8:00 a.m. and quickly were climbing up scree that was more like boulders. Every one of these large rocks seemed to be tenuously placed, and it seemed that with every hand and foot placement a rock shifted and threatened to bring down the entire mountain in a rock slide. By 10:30 a.m. we had scrambled up our first first ascent, an unnamed peak at approximately 68° 14' 30" N; 153° 48' W, that our altimeter recorded at 7191 feet (2090 meters on the map). We dubbed it Donis Mountain, after Doug's girlfriend. We scampered down the scree on the east side of the ridge to the valley of the West Branch of the West Fork Okpikruak River. To reach Peak 2250 we had to trek down the river and around a group of mountains then back up the East Branch of the West Fork Okpikruak River a short way. This trek offered us a good view of the mountain and we chose the southernmost buttress to the huge northwest ridge. An easy river crossing took us to the base of the mountain at 3435 feet. We started our climb around 6:00 p.m. and almost immediately we were overrun by a thunderstorm, complete with lightning. We found a boulder just a couple hundred feet up the ridge and bivied partially out of the rain, dry enough to steal 15 minutes of uncomfortable sleep. An hour and 15 minutes later the lightning was gone, leaving only slick rocks.



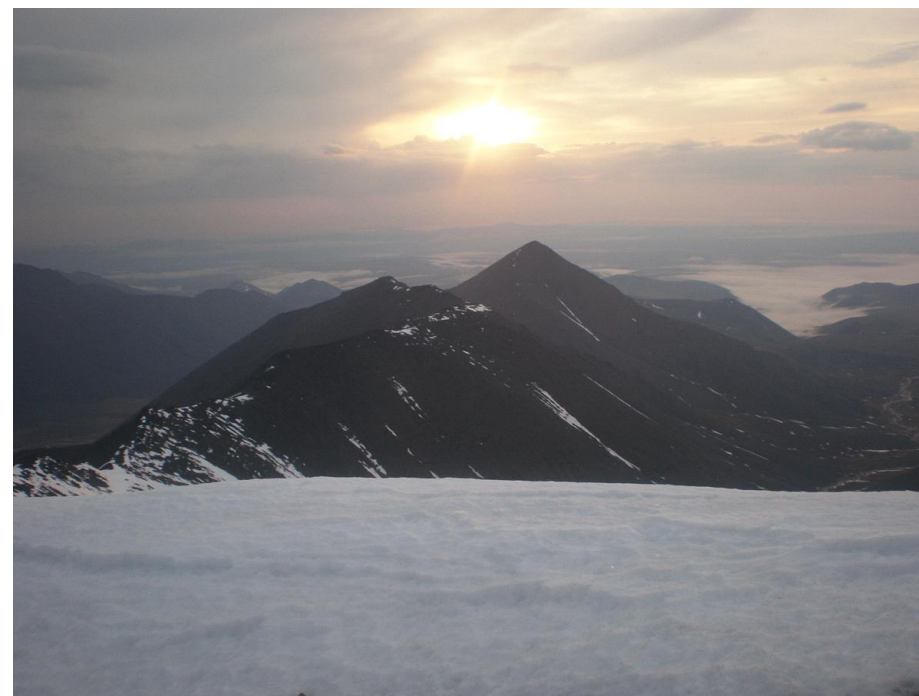
Erik Peterson on the lower scramble of the South Buttress of the Northwest Ridge, looking down on the East Branch of the West Fork of the Okpikruak River

We continued up various scree of 3rd and 4th class climbing. There were a few spots of easy 5th class climbing (5.1 to 5.3). The 5th class climbing could have been avoided if we had chosen, but it was the most direct and the most fun. At about 6500 feet more clouds and driving rain moved in, although this time we found a mostly dry cave and only had to wait 10 minutes. Other than the need to be careful on wet rocks, the 75-meter knife edge posed little problems. What we thought would be the easy summit ridge was fairly challenging without crampons, but otherwise it was the mellowest part. At 11:45 p.m. on

June 3rd, we reached the summit, for what we believe was the first ascent, of Peak 2250 (68° 17' N; 153° 33' W), where our altimeter read 7529 feet. When we began our descent at 12:01 a.m., the land of the midnight sun offered us a clouded view of the sun looking over the North Pole. At 2 a.m. the sun reached its lowest point, still visible between the peaks from our lower vantage point down the ridge.

Our easy river crossing a few hours ago saw the water level rise, with resulting colder temperatures. The much stronger current almost knocked us over, and our feet were losing feeling. We made the far side safely and threw our boots on and started moving

“Sunset” over the North Pole from the summit of Peak 2250



before our feet went completely numb. By . 7:00 a.m. it was already warm enough to take a nap in the sun, lying on some rocks near a small creek. Our return trip was in what must have been record-setting temperatures around 75 °F. As we climbed up the ridge separating the Okpikruak and Aniakvik valleys we were offered great views of Peaks 2230 North and South. After being turned back last time, this was our next objective. Thirty-four and a half hours after we left, we returned to camp for a nice long sleep and a rest day. Before we could even set out on our next climb, however, a rock near the stream we used for water turned into one of those dreaded ankle turners. Climbing was out, but a few days later the ankle was good enough to hike out.

the rock in the area is mostly crumbly sedimentary rock, we did encounter pockets of stable rock good for climbing. We were never able to get a feel of what the rock was like on the summit pyramid (the cornice kept us far enough away), but if it is stable enough, these peaks would offer some exciting climbs.



Peaks 2230 North (right) and 2230 South (left.) High point at the base of the summit pyramid where it meets the ridge on the far right of the picture.



Peterson and Piehl on the summit of Peak 2250

The peaks along the ridge of Peak 2230 are the gems of the area – classic summit pyramids connected by narrow ridges. While

Summary of Statistics

1. Unnamed peak (Donis Mountain) – summit, climb 2486 feet, 3rd class scramble FA Peterson-Piehl, June 3, 2010
2. Peak 2250, 3rd most prominent peak in Brooks Range – summit, climb 4094 feet, 5.3, FA Peterson-Piehl, June 3, 2010

The Brooks Range remains wild and remote.



Peak of the Month: Fog Peak

by Steve Gruhn



All Photos by Wayne Todd

Mountain Range: Chugach Mountains
Borough: Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Drainage: Matanuska Glacier
Latitude/Longitude: 61° 38' 21" North, 147° 30' 34" West
Elevation: 8555 feet
Prominence: 1305 feet from Iceland Peak (8870)
Adjacent Peaks: Iceland Peak and Peak 7740 in the Matanuska Glacier drainage
Distinctness: 1305 feet from either Iceland Peak or Peak 7740
USGS Map: Anchorage (C-2)
First Recorded Ascent: Unknown
Route of First Recorded Ascent: Unknown
Access Point: Matanuska Glacier parking lot



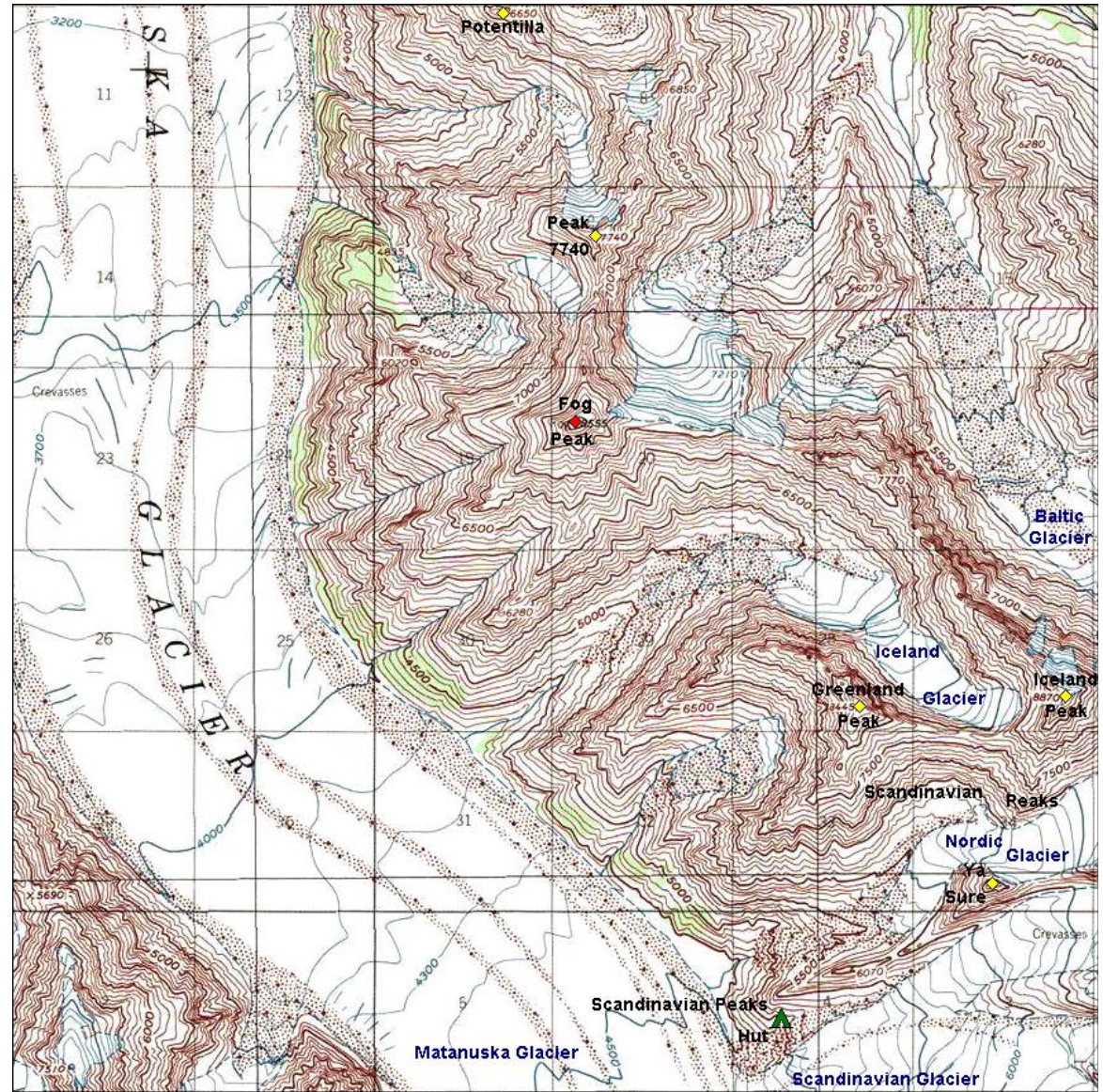
Named after the benchmark "Fog" on its summit, Fog Peak rises prominently above the east edge of the Matanuska Glacier.

After starting from the Matanuska Glacier parking lot and climbing Mount Wickersham (7415), Lemonade Peak (7050), and Peak 8450 (in the Icing Glacier and Glacier Creek drainages) on the west side of the Matanuska Glacier, Tom Choate, Willy Hersman, and Greg Higgins – three future MCA Hoeman Award winners – established a camp on the east side of the Matanuska Glacier near a waterfall due west of Fog

Peak. They set out on July 19, 1987, to climb the peak. In dense fog, they navigated through various routes on the western side and emerged into brilliant sunshine above. On the summit they found a benchmark and some debris from a survey party, but no cairn. They presumed that the only previous visit to the summit had been via helicopter. On the descent they glissaded some 2,000 feet and descended the west-flowing stream to their camp.

Fog Peak was visited again on June 13, 1995, when James Larabee and Wayne Todd climbed to the summit by ascending the north spur of the east ridge from their camp at 3500 feet in Spoon Valley northeast of the peak.

Greg's trip report appeared on pages 5 and 6 of the September 1987 *Scree*. Willy's trip report appeared on page 120 of the 1988 *American Alpine Journal*. Wayne's trip report appeared on pages 2 and 3 of the January 1996 *Scree*.



Map created with TOPO!® ©2003 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)

“Nature reaches out to us with welcoming arms, and bids us enjoy her beauty;
But we dread her silence and rush into the crowded cities,
There to huddle like sheep fleeing from a ferocious wolf.”
Kahlil Gibran

Online Registration
Starts Aug. 1st.
Late Registration
Sept. 29th
Mail-in Registration
Available until
Sept. 27th

\$65*

Teaching others to climb!



Ice Climbing Festival 2010 October 1st-3rd

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

MCA Ice Climbing Festival
6694 DeLong Landings Circle
Anchorage, Alaska 99502

Phone: 907-382-0212
Website: www.mcaak.org
E-mail: mca_icefest@yahoo.com

Do you want to learn how to climb ice? Or just hone the techniques you already know? Come join the Mountaineering Club of Alaska and its volunteer instructors for a two-day instructional ice climbing weekend on the Matanuska Glacier. After climbing all day on the glacier, camp out in an established campground and socialize with other climbers around the bonfire at night.

Each day you will head out onto the ice in a group of 6 students and 2 instructors. Instructors will teach you skills such as: knots, belaying, equipment, climbing communication, foot placement, tool placement, movement skills, anchors and rope management techniques.

MANDATORY PARTICIPANT MEETING

Wednesday, Sept. 29th
at 7pm

Location TBA

PLEASE BRING YOUR
CRAMPONS, CLIMBING
BOOTS and HARNESS to be
inspected.

*COST for the event is \$65
if you register before 9/29.
COST does not include
membership fees, gear rentals
or transportation.

MCA Ice Festival Registration and Questionnaire

Directions: Please answer all applicable questions and submit with payment to the Ice Festival Coordinator. Mailing info at the end.

1. Have you attended a previous MCA Ice Climbing Festival?

Yes No

If so, what experience level? (please circle one)

Novice Beginner Advanced Beginner
Intermediate Advanced

2. Do you have previous experience with: (*circle all that apply*)

- a. Walking in crampons
- b. Belaying/belay commands
- c. Ice climbing (*if you circle this option please answer questions 2a & 2b*)
- d. Rock climbing

2a. If you have ice climbing experience, how many times have you been?

- a. 1-3 times
- b. 4-6 times
- c. 7-9 times
- d. 10 or more times

2b. If you have ice climbing experience, do you have experience leading? Please explain (i.e. climb names, rating and dates).

3. Please list one goal that you have for this weekend?

4. Special Requests:

Instructors: _____

Want to be paired with friends: _____

Contact information:

Name: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Emergency Contact:

Name: _____

Phone _____

Relationship: _____

SUBMIT REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT TO:

**MCA Ice Fest Coordinator, 6694 Delong Landings Circle,
Anchorage, Alaska 99502**

Must be mailed before 9/27.

***MCA Membership is required to participate.**

**Please include a check or money order for \$65, all monies
should be made out to MCA**

SIGN AND INITIAL THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY— READ IT CAREFULLY

I _____ (print name) am aware that mountaineering and wilderness activities (including hiking; backpacking; rock, snow, and ice climbing; mountaineering; skiing; ski mountaineering; rafting and packrafting, kayaking, and use of remote backcountry huts) are hazardous activities. I wish to participate and/or receive instruction in these activities with the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc. (“MCA”). I recognize these activities involve numerous risks, which include, by way of example only, falling while hiking, climbing, skiing or crossing rivers or glaciers; falling into a crevasse or over a cliff; drowning; failure of a belay; being struck by climbing equipment or falling rock, ice or snow; avalanches; lightning; fire; hypothermia; frostbite; defective or malfunctioning equipment; and attack by insects or animals. I further recognize that the remoteness of the activities may preclude prompt medical care or rescue. I also recognize that risk of **injury or death** may be caused or enhanced by **mistakes, negligence or reckless conduct** on the part of either my fellow participants; MCA officers, directors, instructors, or trip leaders; and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding MCA backcountry huts. I nevertheless agree to accept all risks of **injury, death, or property damage** that may occur in connection with any MCA activity, including use of MCA furnished equipment and MCA backcountry huts. (As used in this agreement, MCA includes its officers, directors, instructors and trip leaders.)

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

GIVING UP MY LEGAL RIGHTS I agree to give up for myself and for my heirs all legal rights I may have against the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities (except to the extent that insurance coverage is provided by automobile insurance policies) and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding MCA backcountry huts. **I give up these legal rights regardless of whether the injury, death, or property damage results from mistakes, negligence or reckless conduct of others.** I understand this agreement shall remain in effect until I provide a signed, dated, written notice of its revocation to the MCA.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY PROMISE NOT TO SUE I will not sue or otherwise make a claim against the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities (except as noted above for automobile accidents); and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding use of MCA backcountry huts, for **injury, death, or property damage** which occurs in the course of my participation or instruction in mountaineering and wilderness activities. Any lawsuit relating to MCA activities or this release shall only be filed in Anchorage, Alaska. The provisions of this release are severable and if any part is found unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in effect.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY RELEASE OF LIABILITY I agree to release and discharge the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities; and the State of Alaska and its employees regarding use of MCA backcountry huts, from all actions, claims, or demands, both for myself and for my heirs, dependents, and/or personal representative, for **injury, death, or property damage** occurring in the course of my participation or instruction in mountaineering and wilderness activities.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY PROMISE TO INDEMNIFY I will pay all expenses, including attorney fees and court costs, that the MCA; my fellow participants in MCA activities; and the State of Alaska and its employees may incur as a consequence of any legal action arising out of **injury, death, or property damage** suffered by me in connection with any MCA activity or the use of any MCA backcountry hut.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY CONSENT TO MEDICAL TREATMENT I consent to any hospital or medical care that may be necessary as a result of my participation in MCA activities. I understand and agree that I am solely responsible for all charges for such medical treatment, including evacuation and/or rescue costs.

_____ (initial that you have read this paragraph)

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT, UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT, AND RECOGNIZE IT IS A BINDING LEGAL AGREEMENT

Dated: _____ Signature: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian (if under 18): _____

General Rules for Participation on MCA Sanctioned Trips

1. Participants shall familiarize themselves with the *physical demands*, *anticipated terrain* and *potential hazards* associated with the proposed trip.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

Physical Demands: Estimated elevation gain, distance and duration.

Anticipated Terrain: Trail hiking; bushwhacking; off-trail hiking on tundra, snow, ice, scree, talus or boulders; exposed hiking on steep slopes covered with snow, ice, slick vegetation, scree, talus or boulders; scrambling on loose rock; exposed scrambling on loose rock; technical snow, ice, rock and/or mixed climbing; stream crossing; glacier travel on snow, ice and/or scree.

Potential Hazards: Avalanche; falling while skiing, hiking or climbing; falling into a crevasse; being struck by falling rock, snow or ice; attack by a bear, moose or insects (bees, wasps, mosquitoes, biting flies, etc); lightning; fire; carbon monoxide poisoning; suffocation; frostbite; hypothermia; drowning from falling through snow, crossing a stream, packrafting or kayaking; injury from use/ misuse of equipment. Note that it is impossible to predict all potential hazards that may be encountered while participating on MCA sanctioned trips.

2. Participants may be required to demonstrate the skills and experience necessary to participate on any given trip.

3. Participants shall sign-up on the club sanctioned trip sign-up sheet.

4. Participants shall read, initial and sign the Release of Liability Agreement prior to departing on the trip.

5. The trip leader may refuse participation to any member for any reason. If someone feels that they have been discriminated against or treated unfairly, they may present their case to the Hiking and Climbing Committee and/or the Executive Committee.

6. Proper clothing and equipment is required to participate on club sanctioned trips. The trip leader can require special equipment and refuse participation to any person that is ill-prepared (e.g. inappropriate clothing, footwear or gear). See recommended equipment list at the end of this policy.

7. Participants shall follow the leader's instructions. Participants shall not go off alone, return or rush ahead without permission from the leader. Participants shall not ford a stream before the leader assesses the situation. Remember, this is a club trip and the leader must know where all participants are. Anyone intentionally separating from the group without the leader's

approval shall no longer be considered a participant on the club sanctioned trip.

8. The trip leader has the authority to split the group (fast and slow), dependent upon current conditions and experience level of the participants. The leader must appoint a qualified co-leader to lead the second group using the guidelines specified under Trip Leader Responsibilities.

9. **Glacier Travel:** For trips requiring roped travel over glaciers, knowledge of crevasse rescue, and ice axe and crampon skills are required. A basic understanding of ice and snow anchors is also required.

10. Participants who in the leader's opinion, put themselves or other members of the group in danger, shall be subject to sanction by the club. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, reprimand at the general meeting, exclusion from future trips, termination of annual membership, or lifetime exclusion from the club. The Executive Committee, and only the Executive Committee, shall have the authority to issue sanctions.

11. Number of people on club trips:

Minimum: For safety reasons, three people minimum. Trips undertaken with fewer than the minimum required participants shall not be considered club sanctioned trips.

Maximum: Registration on any particular trip must be restricted to a safe and manageable number of members. The Leader and/or Hiking and Climbing Committee shall determine the maximum number of participants. In trail-less areas or State and National Parks the maximum number depends upon the trail and campsite conditions, but will generally be limited to 12 people.

12. In general dogs are not allowed. Among the reasons are bear problems. Well behaved, bear savvy dogs may be approved at the discretion of the trip leader and all trip participants. Approval must be unanimous and must occur prior to meeting for the trip.

13. Firearms are not allowed on club sanctioned trips, unless approved by the trip leader and all participants. Approval must be unanimous. Aerosol bear repellent is preferred in lieu of firearms.

14. If you find you cannot participate after signing up on the roster, please let the leader know as soon as possible, for transportation and gear-planning and so someone else can go. If you are the leader, help find a replacement.

Revised 6/18/10

Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Wayne Todd	522-6354	Board member	Jayne Mack	382-0212
Vice-President	Ross Noffsinger	336-2233	Board member	Mark Kimerer	360-5935
Secretary	Brian Aho	223-4758	Board member	Travis Taylor	382-4823
Treasurer	Tim Silvers	250-3374	Board member	Mark Smith	868-3155
			Board member	Tony Lutes	242-3559

Annual membership dues: Single \$15, Family \$20

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the Treasurer at the MCA address at right. 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 Treasurer. The Post Office will not forward the newsletter.

The 'Scree' is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be e-mailed to the Scree Editor. Articles can be submitted anytime.

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.

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: Yukiko Hayano and Randy Plant - 243-1438
Hiking and Climbing Committee: MountaineeringClubofAlaska@gmail.com
Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008
Calendar: Stuart Grenier - 337-5127
Scree Editor: John Recktenwald - 346-2589
Web: www.mcak.org (change your address here)

Mailing list service: MCAK@yahoogroups.com

Mountaineering Club of Alaska
Box 102037
Anchorage AK 99510