



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 2037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

OCTOBER 1973

VOLUME 16, No. 10

OCTOBER MEETING...Thursday, October 18, 1973...8:00 PM...Central Junior High Multipurpose Room...MINI-SLIDE presentation by Barbara Winkley of slides of Salmon River, a wild river candidate...Business Meeting including election of officers...Refreshments...MAIN PROGRAM: Ludwig Ferche's movies of ski-mountaineering by airplane and helicopter in the Bugaboos, the Wrangells and the Chugach--powder skiing at its best!

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE OF THE MCA BOARD HAS NOMINATED THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR 1973-74 OFFICES AND BOARD POSITIONS:

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| Bill Barnes, Jr. | President |
| Gil Todd | Vice President |
| Dona Agosti | Secretary |
| Steve Jones | Treasurer |
| Tom Meacham | 2-year Board term |
| Bill Stivers | 2-year Board term |
| Joanne Merrick | 1-year Board term (unexpired 2-year term vacated by Wendell Oderkirk). |

OTHER NOMINATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED FROM THE FLOOR AT THE OCTOBER MEETING BEFORE THE ELECTION IS HELD.

P R E S I D E N T ' S P E N

It is difficult to believe that a year has passed since the 1972-73 Club officers were elected. Unfortunately, not every plan which I had for the Club was carried to completion. In fact, some plans didn't go beyond the talking stage. We did get a fledgling backpacking program underway last summer, under the direction of Bill Barnes, Sr. We did continue our winter and summer mountaineering schools, though the lack of volunteer instructors placed an unreasonable burden on the leaders of these schools. And we did continue the monthly meetings with a variety of slide shows by Club members and guests.

But the Huts and Cabins and Geographic Names Committees remained dormant, and we experienced a real decline in our Club-sponsored hikes and climbs. I feel that our MCA hikes, one-day climbs and overnight trips are vital to the Club because they offer the only means for a new member to learn the terrain and meet other Club members. We don't
PRESIDENT'S PEN IS CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

ATTENTION! B-O-A-R-D M-E-E-T-I-N-G--Last year's officers and new officers (and board members)...Tuesday, November 6, 7:30 PM at Tom Meacham's, 1410 H Street.

RE: HIGH ALTITUDE RESCUE MISSIONS

The following is a direct quote of the complete letter sent by Lt. Gen. James C. Sherrill, Commander in Chief, USAF, to Senator Ted Stevens. Senator Stevens sent a copy of the letter to President Tom Meacham for information and stated that he would welcome any comments on the matter.

"Last summer the Rescue Coordination Center was requested and responded to seven high altitude rescue missions, principally to Mt. McKinley. This exceeds by one the total requests of the summers of 70 and 71. One rescue at an altitude of 17,300 feet on Mt. McKinley was attempted by a military helicopter but failed and the injured climber was evacuated by a civilian Alouette III.

"High altitude helicopter operations pose a special challenge to us in the Alaskan Command. The natural humanitarian instincts to help must be carefully balanced against the risk inherent in committing an aircrew and helicopter to the extreme limits of their operational capability. With this in mind, and based on the recommendations of Charlie Gettys and Don Smith, I directed the Rescue Coordination Center to refer specifically all requests for helicopter operations above 10,000 feet MSL to the commander of the service to which the helicopter is assigned.

"During the past year officers in the Rescue Coordination Center have met with members of the National Park Service. As a result of these meetings the National Park Service has agreed to accept responsibility for initiating all mountain rescue attempts within the park. If the rescue operations require a helicopter, Park Service personnel will contact commercial resources and arrange for the recovery. If suitable commercial equipment is not available, the Park Service may request military assistance to include a helicopter and a HC-130 for communication relay and weather reconnaissance.

"This procedure is in line with the general rescue policy that military assets should not be used to compete with available State or commercial services. I will continue, of course, to respond to all requests for rescue assistance when the military resources are more timely or effective.

"I hope this background data will be useful in response to queries that may be made to your office."

REFLECTIONS AT SITE OF MIGHTY MCKINLEY

BY Raymond E. Naddy
of the Chugach National Forest Staff

"The other evening while near Wonder Lake in McKinley National Park we had the occasion to see McKinley at what must have been its spectacular best.

"The clouds of the afternoon had lifted. The sky was generally clear. The shadows of twilight had chased the last bit of brilliance out across the red and gold tundra. A small herd of caribou drifted across the tundra in the direction of where the sun disappeared until they too, disappeared in the darkening shadows. And where the thick mass of clouds had been in the afternoon stood a f a n t a s t i c mountain . . . McKinley.

"The spectacle was not without its audience. Those fortunate people who happened to be at Wonder Lake (to say nothing of those within the

200-mile or so eyeball range of the mountain) stopped whatever they were doing to look.

"While the sun was setting people moved toward a particularly fine vantage point looking out across the tundra where the mountain, 27 miles away, dominated everything in sight.

"The sun set. The evening shadows crept up the mountain. The people still sat there . . . the old and the young. The mountain gradually faded into the darkness though there was no mistaking the great bulk of the mountain out there in the mellow Alaskan night. And still the people sat . . . looking off across the great expanse of now darkened tundra at the Great One.

"The setting was somehow remindful of a great cathedral full of worshippers. It was as if they were trying to absorb the sight. . . the experience . . . into every cell of their bodies. And, indeed, I'm sure it was an experience that will remain with us for a long time.

"Too often we are in a hurry to take the time to give ourselves a break . . . time to just look and listen. There was no hurry at Wonder Lake that night. Time just stood still. The onlookers looked and they listened. . . and they thought their own thoughts.

"Mt. McKinley is not noted for its cooperation. More often than not McKinley is wrapped in clouds. One of the most frequent criticisms tourists have of this area is that they never got to see McKinley.

"During the summer just past, we're told, the mountain was visible from the park on fewer than 25 days. Thus, on one of those rare days when the sky clears over McKinley and the mountain looms big and bright the mountain worshippers move to their places . . . and they look and they listen and they think their own thoughts."

The above article is a direct quote of the complete article in THE GREAT LANDER SHOPPING NEWS, Volume 5, Number 38, September 26, 1973, Page 22.

MT. MCKINLEY BACKCOUNTRY

BY Steve W. Hackett
Seasonal Park Ranger

Mount McKinley National Park dominates an immense wild area of Alaska. Within the 3,030 square miles of the National Park are towering mountains, alpine glaciers and gentle rolling lowlands crossed by milky rivers. In the valleys and along the foothills, wildlife is abundant. Grizzly bear, caribou, Dall sheep, wolves and moose roam its tundra. The Park is also a place for man, a place for him to understand and enjoy.

The park is located at about the mid-point and culmination of the 600-mile arcuate Alaska Range. The Mount McKinley massif dominates the scene. Its apex (20,320'), rises nearly 3000' above its nearest rival, Mount Foraker, 17,400'. Twenty odd snow-laden peaks rise above 10,000' around their bases and in the immediate area. The Park embraces the north slopes of Mount McKinley, its surrounding peaks, headwaters and northward flowing streams.

There are many unclimbed, unattempted summits in the Park. Most peaks over 10,000 feet require expedition-type planning and are at least one or two-week endeavors. Yet there are clusters of summits from 7,000' to 10,000' that remain unclimbed, unattempted, waiting to be trekked upon.

Hiking and backpacking is not limited to the main Alaska Range. Many miles and days of hiking can be enjoyed in the adjacent foothills and the outside range. From the outside range, the panoramic view of the main range, twenty-thirty miles to the south, is spectacular. The thrill of sighting a caribou bull or a white Dall ram on the skyline with the Alaska Range in the background is an unforgettable sight.

A variety of life-zones exist, stretching from rivers and forested bottom lands, to wet and dry tundra of the lower slopes and hillsides above timberline, to talus slopes of higher hills, to permanent snow and ice cover of the peaks.

With the completion of the new Anchorage-Fairbanks Highway, easy access is available to the Park for the first time. The Park road is closed to general private vehicle travel beyond the end of the pavement (Mile 14) at the Savage River entrance station. A free public transportation system utilizing busses has been developed. Reasons for initiating the public transportation system was two-fold: 1) Heavy volumes of traffic over the graveled Park road have adverse effects upon wildlife and diminish an opportunity to view wild animals in their natural habitat. 2) Aesthetic values, such as natural and pioneer ones would be lost if the road were altered to accommodate a large volume of traffic. The present Park road leads west, paralleling the Alaska Range and north of it. The 37-mile-long road is bound on the south by the Alaska Range and to the north by the Outside Range of 7000' mountains. The public transportation system is designed to take visitors to prime scenic and wildlife areas where they may take time to enjoy the Park.

Hiking in McKinley Park is different in many respects than in our other National Parks in the Lower 48. There are few to no trails in the Park, walking is done on riverbeds, ridges, and benches. Silt-laden rivers roar from outlets at the base of glaciers. Snow and ice covered peaks at the river's source are eight and nine thousand feeters that rise from a 2000 foot high base. These glacial streams meander, depositing wide flat gravel bars. The rivers continuously change their course, shifting against one bank than moving towards the other. They change their course almost daily. Most of their water, except during rain storms come from glaciers and snowfields. As the day passes the glaciers discharge glacial melt and the streams rise. By evening, an easy fiord of the morning becomes a swirling mass of silt and mud colored water, making crossing hazardous.

As a result of the increased access and the availability of the free public transportation through the Park, backcountry use has increased in spite of a lack of trails. Although direct limitation of backcountry users is not envisioned by the National Park Service for quite some time, it is obvious that indirect controls (i.e., routing to unused areas, temporarily closing some locales to protect young wildlife and birds, and for safety purposes, etc.) had to be initiated and implemented.

A backcountry use plan was initiated because there are and will continue to be greater pressure for increase use of the Park, both in variety types of use and in quantity. This necessitates the establishment of backcountry use zones where type and amount of use can be eventually administered on a daily and direct basis.

Mount McKinley's backcountry has been defined as those areas one-half mile away from and beyond the road. No backcountry campsites have been designated, since there are virtually no trails to lead to them. The

f campfires is discouraged for they burn up scarce wood supplies leave unsightly fire rings.

Wildlife habitat, in the form of nesting and denning areas cannot be disturbed by human intrusion during particular times of the year. It is necessary to close these zones temporarily at times.

Some of the adverse conditions that are faced by hikers and backpackers trekking in the Park are:

Travel across tundra and tussock is difficult; river crossings can be hazardous, since there are no trail bridges. Mosquitoes are plentiful. There are no backcountry shelters. The best hiking routes are along river bars and on gravel ridges. Glacier and snowfield travel can be dangerous; hidden crevasses and thin snow bridges are common.

2. Grizzly bears with cubs and sometimes moose with calves present special hazards.

3. Rain is common and snow has been known to occur down to the 4000-ft. level in every month of the year. Very little burnable firewood is available.

A backcountry use booklet, "Hiking in Mount McKinley," is available to all visitors. This free brochure outlines in detail guidelines for the proper and safe use of the backcountry. It explains any restrictions and tries to assist the visitor in a variety of ways.

A backcountry use permit is issued to the hiker or backpacker as soon as he arrives at the Park. The Riley Creek Visitor Orientation Center, located at the entrance of the Park, is the main issuing station. Up-to-date information on current weather, use and accessibility can be obtained there.

The backcountry use permit serves several functions: It provides a basis for accurate recording of use density and location; it will provide much needed input by the hiker to help preserve his experiences and/or improve them for those who follow. The permit has a section for outlining the actual route taken as opposed to the intended route. Each party is required to carry a backcountry use permit with them and must check out to a ranger station in person immediately upon returning from the trip.

To maintain pristine conditions and to head off inappropriate use, the following regulations were initiated:

- 1) No pets are allowed in the backcountry (i.e., off the roadway and/or away from visitor development areas).
- 2) No cans or bottles of the non-reusable type will be allowed in the backcountry.
- 3) Fires and collection of wood are to be discouraged.
- 4) Party size will eventually be limited in number per group.

Going beyond the edge of the road is to discover Mount McKinley National Park. There is something for everyone--regardless of age, ability or motives. Hiking, backpacking and climbing enable a person to discover the areas beyond the edge of the road, its topography, wildlife, vegetation and wilderness secrets that are only revealed to he who treks there.

MT. MCKINLEY MOUNTAINEERING ACTIVITY

1970 - 19 expeditions (15 of which had some success)
124 climbers (75 to S. Summit)

1971 - 19 expeditions (9 of which were successful)
123 climbers (48 to S. Summit)

972 - 27 expeditions (14 success or partially successful)
188 climbers (86 to S. or N. Summit)

8 emergencies: 3 injuries & 2 altitude sicknesses required evacuation; 3 fatalities during descent of S. face.

85 foreign climbers (45 percent of total number): 60 Japanese, 11 French, 7 German, 6 Swiss and 1 Spanish

3 expeditions on Mt. Foraker (14,700'): 14 climbers (unsuccessful)

1 expedition on Mt. Russell (11,500'): 6 climbers to summit

1973 - 20 expeditions (151 climbers) have been on the mountain; last 12 groups have put 104 on S. Summit. 4 expeditions (15 climbers) are presently on McKinley: 3 parties on Muldrow and 1 on West Buttress. Six expeditions (48 climbers) are scheduled during the rest of the season, late July and August.

Project Total (1973): 30 expeditions and 204 climbers

5 emergencies: 4 injuries and 1 altitude sickness required evacuation--W. Buttress (2 climbers) and Muldrow (3 climbers)

2 expeditions scheduled on Mt. Foraker--

Italian group (16 climbers) August 5th

Japanese group (9 climbers) July 23rd

Party of 2 (Keith Anderson & Ken Kleiner, Seward, Alaska) climbed Mt. Silverthrone (13,270') on June 27th--second ascent and expedition of six climbers scheduled to go in same area on July 22nd.

--Steve Hackett--

PRESIDENT'S PEN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

need a scheduled climb every weekend; one or two per month is sufficient. But we need them on a regular basis, with capable volunteer leaders and a sign-up schedule at each meeting. If this club is to survive and grow, the club trips are mandatory.

Strange as it may seem, individual club members were more active this year in their own expeditions than in past years. There were trips to Foraker, McKinley, Mt. Drum, Mt. Blackburn, the Northwest Chugach, and the Wrangells. There were first ascents and new routes were explored. The South Fork, Eagle River saw the most active climbing summer in history.

But all this activity doesn't help the newcomer meet MCA members or learn about our part of Alaska. This function is served best by club trips, if only leaders would volunteer their services for one or two days out of their climbing year. A strong trips chairman is also needed to plan trip agendas and draw prospective leaders out of the woodwork.

Will things change for the better next year? For the sake of the club, I certainly hope so. I urge each member to give full support to to the new slate of officers elected at our next meeting. Without the support of MCA members, the officers will be left with a hollow shell instead of a formerly-thriving outing club.

LOST LAKE TRAIL TO COOPER LANDING July 27-30, 1973 Bill Barnes, Sr.

This was done by Bill Barnes, Sr., Clay Munlev and Frea, a Norwegian Elkhound. We left on Friday morning, the 27th and drove down to Seward and started to walk up the Lost Lake trail about 1:30 in the afternoon. We took Clay's car to the end of the Russian Lake Trail and left the car belonging to Bill at the Lost Lake end where we started. The map reference here is Seward quadrangle, A7. We left from Section 12. We camped at the west end of Lost Lake about eight o'clock at night; the map reference here is Seward B7, Section 9. The next morning, we got up and were off on Sat., the 28th. We walked due west from Lost Lake to about Section 12 where Martin Creek is shown on the map. Then we went north about 4 miles to Section 25 and from there we turned west again covering Sections 26, 27 and 28 and moving to Section 17 on Seward B8 where you will note a small lake. In examining the map, I see that we probably were in Section 20 in the lake up in the top of the mountain. We didn't arrive there until 10:00 PM on the 28th so we put in a full 12-hour day of walking. The walking was not difficult; we were moving across alpine country and there was no brush. In looking at the map we had planned to come down from this lake, a distance of 3 1/2 or 4 miles and hit the Cooper Lake Trail which is shown as being only a relatively small distance away. We got off about 10:00 AM from the campsite and traversed across Sections 17, 18 and 13, hoping to hit the trail around Section 14 which apparently on the map is about 3 1/2 miles. We encountered deep stream cuts, fell into the alders, beat our way through the spruces and finally got to Cooper Lake Trail after about 8 hours of bushwacking on what appears to be a distance of only 3 1/2 miles on the map. And, at that, we had great difficulty in finding the trail because the vegetation on the map doesn't seem to follow the vegetation on the ground. We decided to push on to the cabin on Upper Russian Lake and we walked that night until almost 12 o'clock. This was the longest day's walking that I think I've done since I've been in Alaska and we were on the move about 15 hours. We put up the tent in the rain at midnight as the cabin was full of fire fighters as there had been a fire that burned some 30 acres on Upper Russian Lake.

We had eaten very little and in the morning we prepared some chile and spaghetti and ate that and then moved on down to the bottom of Lower Russian Trail a total of about 13 miles. On the map we covered about 46 miles, but it must have been a lot more on the ground.

The trip took us 4 days and we planned on only 3 but it is impractical to count on any cross-country work being done at anything over 1 mile per hour. Both Clay and I would recommend this trip if you have plenty of time to do it. The country is beautiful and on the way out of Russian River we saw 50 sheep.

ANNOUNCEMENT--IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT: Chugach State Park is holding a public hearing on snowmachine zoning in the Park on October 17th at 7:30 PM in Service-Henshaw School Cafeteria. DO GO AND VOICE YOUR OPINION!!! THIS IS OUR OPPORTUNITY!

BITS & PIECES: Mark Rainery and Dave Homple climbed East Twin via the south face on September 16th.

Mark Rainery and Rick Greeley along with Mike Sawada climbed Caiope in August.