

# the **SCREE**

## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

October 2010

Volume 53 Number 10



'How glorious a greeting the sun gives the mountains.'  
~ John Muir

Monthly Meeting (Board and Officer elections this month)

Wed., October 20th @ 6:30 PM

Program: Richard Baranow will present on recent adventures in the Chugach Range and the Hayes Group of the Alaska Range

West Kiliak  
Going for Bold  
Emeralds and Otters  
A Visit to the Neacola Mountains  
Pack Raft Hikes Between the Sues  
POM – Igitna Peak

# The Mountaineering Club of Alaska

[www.mcak.org](http://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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.akpeac.org/conference/BPEC_map_06-04-03.pdf)

**Cover Photo: Brent Voorhees on the Summit of Bold Peak. Photo by Brent Voorhees**

## Article Submission:

Text/video/photography submissions for the Scree can be sent as attachments to [mcascree@gmail.com](mailto: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'

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## Board and Officer Elections this month

Come and nominate/vote for your choice of MCA members who will serve in the open positions on the Board of Directors and also to serve as Officers of the Club

## MCA Calendar Photos

Okay, so it was the wettest summer on record by some accounts but that doesn't mean the 2011 MCA "horizontal" calendar will not be the best MCA calendar ever. Please bring your 8 by 10 or 8 by 12 photos of Alaska with your email and or phone number and name on the back to the START of the Oct. 20 MCA meeting at the BP Energy Center. Categories are as usual hiking, climbing, scenery, and people. As usual we will try to get the photos back to you ASAP but they will be handled by volunteers and stuck on a wall for folks to see and vote on at the October meeting so put a plastic cover over them if you are concerned about that. If you do not have time to make the Oct. 20 MCA meeting send them to me at Stu Grenier 8512 Boundary avenue, D4 Anchorage. AK. 99504 or email me at [oinkmenow@hotmail.com](mailto:oinkmenow@hotmail.com)

## Editor's Corner – Scree Opening(s)

I am retired from the working life and looking to some new adventures. I'll be phasing out of the position of editor after some 5+ years. I am looking for some folks to help with the Scree.

Prior to Willie Hersman's long tenure as Editor, this function was performed by several people at a time. It probably should return to that system. Steve Gruhn has helped for a while now with hunting down folks for stories and editing the submittals. His knowledge of Alaska and the English language has been a huge asset and he is willing to continue helping. I would like to find a couple of other people who are handy on a PC and would like to help. I am currently using MS Word and MS digital image suite. Please give me, John Recktenwald, a call at 346-2589 or [johnrecktenwald@gmail.com](mailto:johnrecktenwald@gmail.com)



# West Kiliak

by Victoria Lytle



Photos by Vicky Lytle and Tom Dolan

“Don’t put ALL your weight on this one,” Tom yelled from a few meters above me as he raced up the ridge. I tentatively followed, trying to figure out how I was supposed to know exactly how much weight I could put on which rocks. They all seemed to be loose, and I was slowly learning that this traveling over shifting on steep terrain was called “climbing” in the Chugach Mountains.

Tom Dolan and I were headed up West Kiliak in mid-August. We had hiked in the day before from the Eagle River Nature Center. After following the trail upstream for about 5 miles, we turned uphill just before Icicle Creek. Nice weather and an abundance of

berries made the bush bashing just tolerable. We headed up, trying to follow old scree slopes and avoiding the alders. Little did I realize this scree was to become the theme of this trip. We reached an obvious bench after climbing about 600 feet, and found some flagging which marked a trail. Following this around, we continued up the trail around the corner and heading up above and parallel to Icicle Creek. The trail followed along the base of a series of cliffs with some climbs and descents along small scree gullies. Eventually the trail headed down steeply to join Icicle Creek. After following

the creek a short while, we reached the cutest boulder camp alongside the creek at about 2,600 feet elevation. The view was spectacular – we could see across the valley to Mount Yukla, up the creek toward the Icicle Glacier and across to Eagle Peak. Just as we settled into camp, a rainstorm set in for a couple hours.

The next morning we set off on a not-so-early alpine start. Heading up the creek for a short time we soon headed up the seemingly endless scree field on our left. At least it was mostly up – sometimes it seemed like I was sliding down on the scree faster than I was going up! We followed the scree gully heading toward the col between East Kiliak and West Kiliak. A short section was hard



snow ice, where we needed crampons. The col, at 6,500 feet provided a good view down toward Peters Creek and the peaks beyond. After a few minutes, we were in the fog, and hesitated for a bit about continuing the climb when we couldn’t see. However, it soon lifted and off we went. An obvious, but very exposed, scree-covered bench provided the route around toward the northwest face of West Kiliak. We continued around and then up the ridge, taking the path of least resistance, which was mostly scree toward the summit. The footing was fairly stable, but with cliffs often just below, we were careful not to start sliding. After ascending 600 to 700 feet we came to a large buttress and could only continue by dropping down about 100 feet, still trending to our right. While



circumnavigating the buttress we did not gain much elevation. As soon as feasible, we ascended again, climbing up a sloping 20-foot corner. At the top of the corner, we dropped into a gully which had an old rappel station in it. The gully took us to the summit ridge and a short scramble along the ridge brought us to the summit tower, which was easily climbed by going right. The weather on top was delightful, relatively calm with the clouds drifting around the other peaks.

We opted for the “normal” route on the descent. We headed down the easy-looking gully on the south side, below the summit, and headed toward the right-hand ridge. After a few false tries we found the route around the right side of the ridge along a small ledge and then down-climbed a 20-foot

chimney. From there we picked our way down through the scree and small corners and chimneys until we reached the top of the endless scree once again. “So, this is the climbing,” I thought as we continued back to camp, “rocks not to put ALL your weight on, rocks not to put ANY weight on, moving rocks, sliding rocks, unstable scree, big scree, little scree, scree in chimneys.” While I am beginning to learn what *climbing in the Chugach* means, I think that the English language needs another word for this type of climbing.



We reached camp after a 13-hour day (most of it on some sort of unstable footing), and ate dinner as the sun set. The next morning, I woke to thick fog surrounding us, giving me an excuse to go back to sleep for a short time. A brief boot inspection found a large hole in my boot and failed seams in one of Tom's boots. I decided that scree is rather unforgiving

on gear. After a leisurely breakfast we headed out the same way we came, back down Icicle Creek, around the shelf, and back to the trail along the Eagle River where I could finally put ALL my weight on one spot.





# Going for Bold – A Shared Success

by Frank Baker



**Brent Voorhees approaching the fixed line in Stivers' Gulley**

It almost seemed like the ridge above was moving farther away as we plodded steadily up Bold Peak's south side, favoring the firm footing of the rock outcroppings and clumps of grass over the loose scree that filled the nearby gully. A rounded saddle above at 6,500 feet promised the first glimpse of Eklutna Lake since we left camp early that morning.

It was September 15. Under clear blue skies, the mid-afternoon sun was at our backs. With almost no wind and temperatures rising into

the low 60s, we were now in short sleeves. Similar to a trip taken last year to spread a friend's ashes, I could feel my strength waning—my pace was slowing to the point that I began to think getting off the mountain and out to the Eklutna Lake trail before dark might become an issue.

Meanwhile, my hiking buddy Brent Voorhees, a well-conditioned athlete who competes

locally in running events, was moving uphill at a brisk pace. About 80 yards above me he crested over the ridge. When I caught up with him 15 minutes later, trying to catch my breath, I offered a suggestion:

"I'm slowing you down, and at this rate, neither one of us will get to the summit before our 5 p.m. turnaround time. Why don't you go on ahead? I'll go down and meet you on the flat near the stream," I said, pointing to the area 1,500 feet below us.

We'd been clamoring up Bold's rock-strewn slopes for 6-1/2 hours. Brent had scaled

many peaks in the Chugach Mountains, but I knew he really wanted to summit Bold on his first try. We'd talked about this trip for years, waiting for the right weather. And today, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being excellent, the weather rated a 12! Brent agreed and I watched him begin the gradual traverse across Bold's rusty-brown south slope, angling ever upward toward the 7,522-foot summit.

I rested for awhile in the saddle, chomping on cheese and crackers and admiring the sweeping view of Eklutna Lake, its blue-green waters sparkling in the afternoon sun. "Beaten again," I thought. "I thought for sure I'd make it today."

From the time I first climbed Bold Peak in 1993, the mountain had become one of my personal treasures, an almost iconic symbol of my love for Alaska's wild places. I wrote about it often in stories and poems and photographed it from nearly every angle possible. I wondered if my family believed my strange affinity with the mountain had become an obsession.

One summer I camped half way up. On two occasions I bivouacked on top. I relished taking others up there – in all, about 10 climbs, summiting 7 times. To date, it remains the highest Chugach peak I've climbed. And at my age, it will probably remain the highest. This summer I almost talked myself into trying nearby Bashful Peak, at 8,005 feet. But after two



unsuccessful attempts on Bold in as many years, and unreliable knees, I'm glad I didn't.



Bold Peak looms over the south end Eklutna Lake – dominating the view from all directions. It is unique, in that not many mountains in Alaska this high can be climbed in a non-technical fashion. The most common non-technical route is through Stivers' Gully, accessed by the East Fork (Eklutna) Trail on the mountain's south side. The rocky, steep-walled gully was named after former Mountaineering Club of Alaska member Bill Stivers, who pioneered the route in September 1969. Aside from a short, 50-foot section at the 3,000-foot level where there is a fixed rope, the rest of Bold is relatively low angle with a lot of rock hopping and scrambling.

Bold was first climbed on July 20, 1947, by Gene Brady, Jack Easley, Bob Henderson, Chuck Hightower and Wayne Jacobs, a group of soldiers from Fort Richardson. The team climbed the northeast ridge—a more difficult route than Stivers' Gully.

It took less than 15 minutes for me to descend from the 6,500-foot saddle to our rendezvous point. The sun was hot on my face and I smeared on some sun block. After about 45 minutes of lazing in the sun, peering through binoculars at a full-curl Dall ram about ½ mile away, Brent surprised me by emerging from a gully that he'd followed down the mountain. His wide grin made my question superfluous: "Did you make it?"

"I did! Got up there in about 40 minutes from where I left you and spent about 30 minutes on top taking photos. What an incredible day."

Through all my years of preoccupation with Bold, dealing with my personal goals and challenges, I suddenly felt something markedly different than before. Sharing his jubilation was tremendously uplifting. I realized how much this day meant to him.

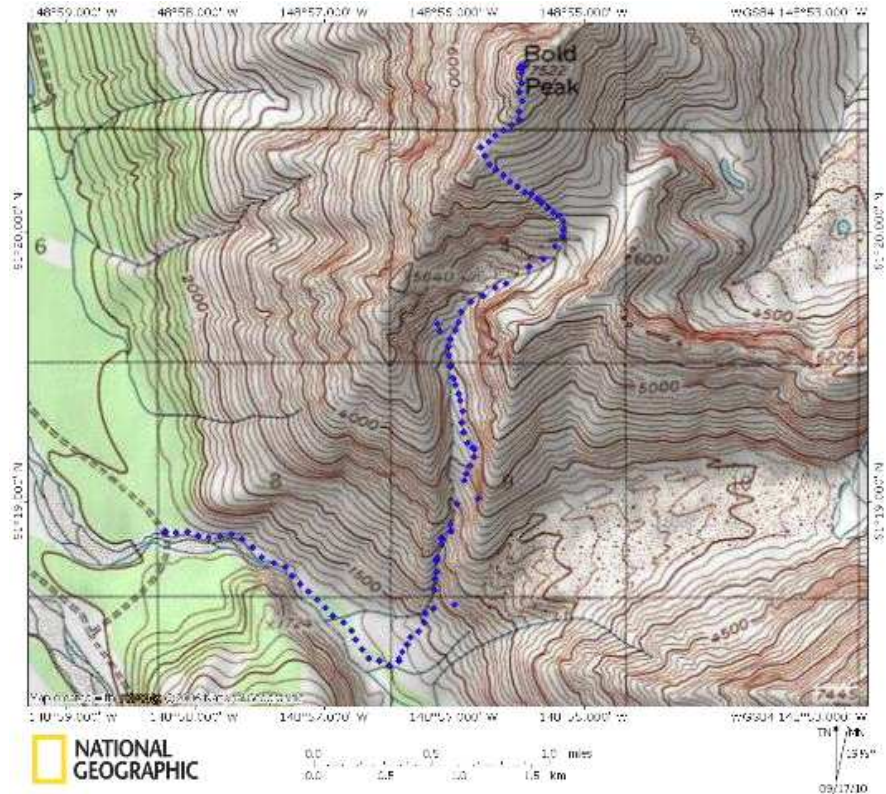
We both looked downhill about the same time. "It's a long way back," he said. "I know," I nodded. "We'd better get going."

We threaded our way back down through the rock-tangled gully and retrieved our bicycles just before dark for a 10-mile ride back to the parking lot, aided by headlights. Brent was running on a few more cylinders than I, perhaps

fueled by residual adrenaline from the day's adventure.

Climbers have tried, but they remain hopelessly stifled in explaining to non-climbers why they do it. I can say that one gains some kind of inner strength and awareness when venturing into places like this. Perhaps one's senses heighten as body, mind and spirit become more closely linked. But I find these words woefully inadequate.

It was perfectly explained on Brent's face. I could see in his eyes that he had experienced something memorable – something quite special. And in sharing it with him, I had, too.



# Emeralds and Otters

By Wayne L. Todd with accompaniment by Carrie Wang August 29, 2010

Crashing brush, the sound made by large animals, startles us from the right, then splashing sounds - most likely a moose. (Less than a week later I was charged by three brown bears at this spot.) We are concerned about bears because of the warnings, the area, the early hour, 'just the two of us,' and the complete lack of people - unusual for the North Fork Eagle River Trail.

A snort and splashing sounds startles me again just before Dew Mound. This time the perpetrator is spotted, a river otter, and a smaller one, and another smaller one. They defend this section of river swimming within 15 feet of us, snorting, diving; repeat. After 15 minutes we move on as we have a full day ahead.



The miles click by and we still see no one, nor any tents; the recent deluge of water must be keeping people away. By Twin Falls we meet a group heading downriver, then another and another. Ahhh, it is the early morning rush hour of hikers who camped on the other side of the Eagle River to wait for the lower water of morning. In a clear

riverbank pool, we observe a dozen aggressive red commuters on their last drive.



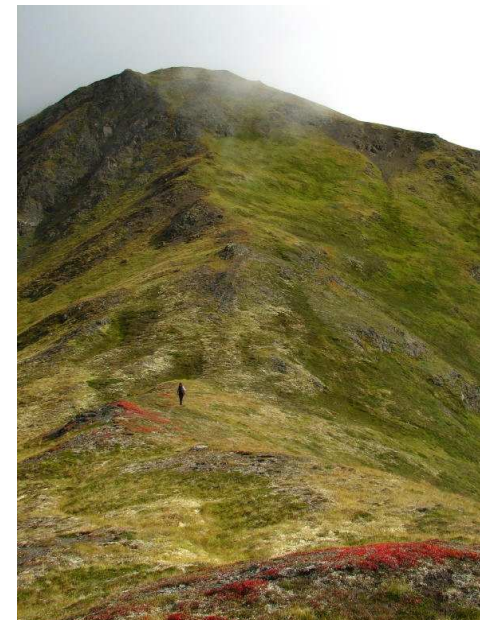
At Thunder Gorge we hoist our packrafts up a tree to keep them away from critters (four and two legged). We head up the south slope of the west ridge. If we weren't wet enough from the rain-covered foliage along the trail, we're soon soaked from the chest down from miscellaneous higher vegetation.

Progress is steady until a lovely, lower angle, very green section. Is this greenery where Emerald Peak derives its name? I mobilize for combat with helmet, eye protection, leather gloves, Whippet, and determination. We utilize occasional bear trails but they are not designed for *Homo erectus*, petering out and heading off in willy-nilly directions. This section is full-on thick alders and devil's club.

As the slope angles up again we connect areas of chest-high grass, elderberries, fireweed, and false hellebore. Slips occur here and later, on steeper sections of wet,

slick, alpine foliage (including tasty blueberries). Occasional moose droppings on the steep sections seem odd.

Local visibility is good, but the longer views are in and out as clouds form and abate. Briefly we receive full sunshine and think this is permanent for the day, not so.



On the summit of Emerald Peak, we see most of our surroundings for a few miles including the snow-free Eagle Glacier, glimpses of Vertigo and Devil's Mistress peaks, and oddly, a tent at the base of Emerald to the east. We sign the register along with the other regulars (RB, WS, TC, GB, SG, JT, RN, DS, and others, including boy scouts.)





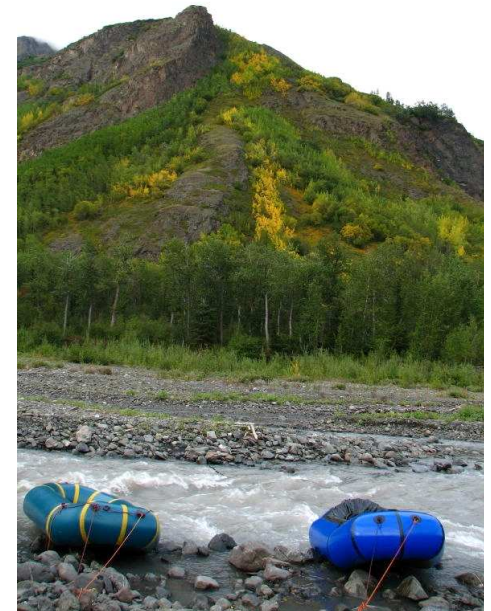
tasty white speckled chocolate morsel. ‘How nice of Carrie,’ I think. Hmm, I don’t remember her having any chocolate covered anything.

As I reach down to plop the morsel in my mouth I bump my watch which also resides in that pocket, the morsel sprouts legs and scurries deeper into my pocket. “Yecchhhh, I almost plopped a large spider in my mouth.” Perhaps I need to review my love of chocolate.

The descent process reverses the ascent route, including slips and the lower-angle bushwhack. Oddly, in the middle of the ‘whack we find a piece of old flagging, a tent fly, etc., but no trail. On the flats at the packraft stash, we notice again all the debris such as shoes, a chair, toilet paper, etc.

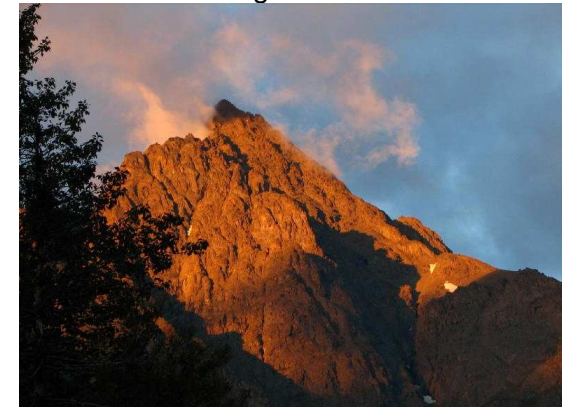
While inflating the boats at the Eagle River we observe a black bear with two cubs foraging on the hillside. The sun is really starting to shine now, but the angle is too low for us to receive direct rays.

The float from Mile 11 to Mile 3 takes only 1-¼ hours in the Class I/II water (watch out for strainers and sweepers). An otter briefly checks us out. Giving the legs and feet a break is wonderful, the view from the river refreshing and the alpenglow on Mounts Yukla and Kiliak stellar, but alas, we must take out at Echo Bend (we are not prepared for the Class III/IV water found in that section).



We hike into darkness (it’s headlamp time) and startle at a moose alongside the trail. I fire my camera flash, which has no effect on the moose, but does temporarily blind us and ruin our night vision. We scuttle by in the opposite woods.

Fifteen hours after starting, we make the car and relish in another incredible day in the wilderness of Chugach State Park.



I stray down the south ridge for more views. When I sit down in my previous spot and glance in my camera case pocket, I spy a





# A Visit to the Neacola Mountains

by Keith Sanfacon



**The Crux on Topo Map, Point 'B'**

Our trip to the Neacola Mountains was delayed by a few days of weather delays, a theme that would continue to play out throughout the trip. Finally on April 19<sup>th</sup> the weather broke. We chartered a Super Cub and Beaver from Doug Brewer's Alaska West Air in Nikiski, Alaska. Our target was a "T"-shaped glacier just south of Chakachamna Lake (Ed. note: now officially Ch'akajabena Lake). We chose this location for its potential for first ascents and first ski descents. We quickly established camp at the hub of the "T" and separated into two groups to get a feel for the snowpack. After a few hours and

a dozen or so pits we reconvened at the camp for some chow and discussion. There was an awkward graupel layer; compression tests were going in the mid teens or not at all. Large natural avalanches on north faces let us know to stay away from that aspect. Slope angle would be an issue as there was no low-angle love: it went from flat to 40°+. This area was going to be tricky.

The storm rolled in that night. Icefalls and avalanches echoed throughout the canyon. We shoveled, we cooked, we shoveled, we dug, we played cards, and then we shoveled. 36 hours and 36 inches later, the visibility improved enough to tiptoe out onto some

east-facing slopes just west of camp. The snow was good, but this slope had slid during the storm and it was only about 8 inches of fresh on supportable. After our first lap, the sun came out, and it was time to start sussing out a bigger objective: Peak 6690. I volunteered for trailbreaking duties and we were off up the northeast lobe of the "T." We eventually found an area that had slid at the tail end of the storm. This would be our "Hole in the Wall." The 1,000-foot vertical was steep (42°), but gave way to a mellower bench. Across the valley, north-facing snow was having a hard time staying put. Large avalanches kept piercing the silence. Stop. Look. Make mental note to stay off north-facing aspects. Close mouth. Skin. Repeat. We worked up to a second bench at about 5,000 feet and got our first look at a potential route to the summit. The

**Descent of Point 'B'**



shadows were getting long, so it was time to head back to camp. We skied back to the northeast lobe via a wide gully (1,200 feet, 38°) we christened the “Crossman Couloir.” The barometer was rising, so we had high hopes for the next day.

Dawn came blue and cold. It was going to be a warm one, so we knew we were racing the clock. We retraced our route to the previous day’s high point. We were making good time and entering new terrain. Emilie and Stefan were trading off with trailbreaking duty. At the third bench, we were able to choose our route to the summit, the southeast rib. The crux was visible and looked interesting. It was worthy of a closer look. The stronger



**Serac Avalanche**

climbers were able to boot straight up the crux, leaving mostly rock and ice for me. It was low fifth class, and the belay gave me confidence to get through. We were through

the technical crux, only to find ourselves at the mental crux. We had to cross a steep loaded snowfield and then it would be easy skinning to the top. Emilie and I opted to remain at our high mark, while Tom and Stefan continued opted to continue and summited less than an hour later (Peak 6690). Emilie and I watched the duo ski off the summit through some “cookies and cream” terrain, which opened up into a spectacular bowl. The team reconvened at the top of the Crossman Couloir and headed back to camp for a mini-celebration.

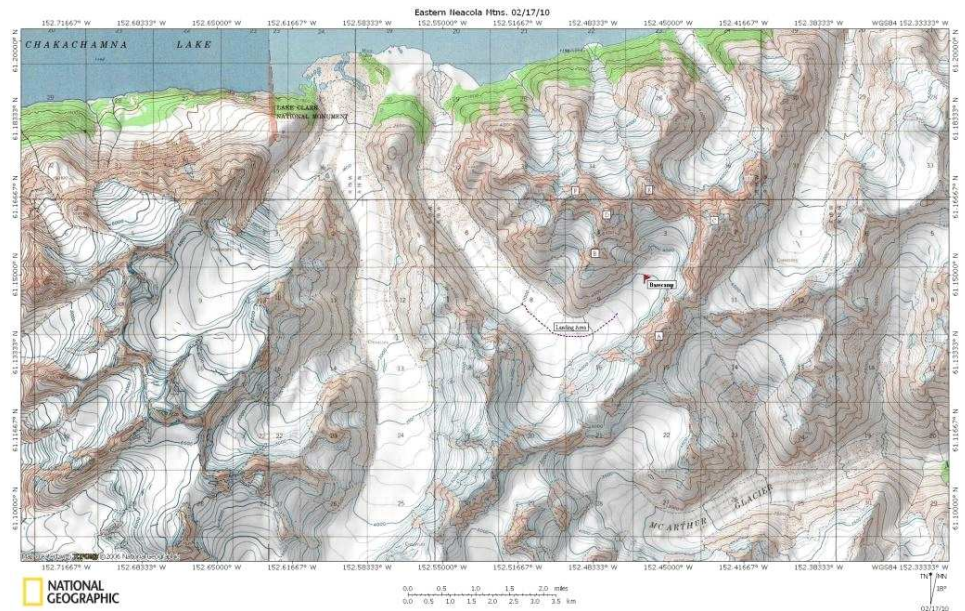
Over the next few days we made some attempts at other peaks, but the deep snow was effective at slowing progress. There was a valiant attempt at Peak 7230, but time was not on our side. Perhaps it could be finished tomorrow, but the barometer was indicating otherwise. We awoke to a full-on storm. After listening to weather band and talking to the pilot; we decided our only way back to pizza would be an escape down the “T” to Chakachamna Lake.

We didn’t really plan on being mobile, so I’m sure it looked like a clown parade down the glacier. In addition to large packs, I had an overloaded, top-heavy sled and the other three were dragging dry bags. Progress was slow, but we adapted and eventually made it to the terminal moraine



on the rainy shores of the lake. Visibility was much improved, but the hour was late. We made a hasty camp and finished the last of the bourbon. The next morning we used willow branches to delineate a runaway to make the pilot’s job easier. The plan worked. The Beaver was in for maintenance, but Alaska West Air was able to use their two Cubs to get us back to Nikiski quickly. Yes, cotton, pizza, and beer!

Team: Stefan Bettie, Emilie Hart, Tom Murphy, and Keith Sanfacon





# Pack Raft Hikes Between the Sues.

by Stu Grenier



With an eye set on eventually making an attempt on Beluga Mt. up the Yentna River I have started exploring the vast wild area between the Little Su and Big Susitna Rivers. This has become an intriguing area for me of late and has been the subject of numerous paddle hikes with pack raft and or canoes and kayak or just rubber boots. As I have published numerous times before in this publication trips involving kayaking or pack rafting the Big Su (Susitna River) or Alexander Creek in an effort to climb Mt. Susitna and explore the area in general, this fascination with the area between the Big and Little Sues and the NLSRA (Nancy Lake State Rec. Area) should be of no surprise. After all it is more accessible from the Parks Hwy. or the Sues so requires far less time and resources to enjoy than the Mt. Susitna area. Also having the ability to find food on these trips can really help in reducing pack weight and greatly extend range and length of trips. With the skills I develop here in this vast swampy training grounds I hope to go

after the not so low hanging fruit like fall summits of Beluga Mt. and someday points farther west.

Recruiting partners to go swamp mucking with pack rafts or larger boats isn't easy. I have been using the KCK (knik Canoers and Kayakers) list serve and the MCA list serve but it just doesn't seem to be that appealing of a concept for most people or maybe my reputation precedes me. I am extremely honest about what can be expected, which is vast expanses of wet terrain with the associated bugs and occasional alder thickets and small creeks and lakes studded with beaver dams and spruce-birch forest. I rarely see anyone out there and if there is any sign of humans it usually is something that has to do with winter snow machine travel which is when folks are most likely do make it out into these areas with the exception of the occasional hunters. Sometimes portages are miles long and if we happen to be hauling canoes it is a lot of work.



In late August Tom Choate joined me for a three dayer from the Nancy Lake Parkway near Willow to the last take out on the Little Su known as Burma Landing but officially called the Little Susitna Public Use Site. We hiked the Red Shirt Lake Trail in tropical like down pours to Red Shirt Lake where we used a canoe and camped. We caught more pike than we could eat so released more of the invasive fish than we cooked. The next afternoon we cut through a marsh to Cow Lake where we pack rafted and portaged to the small lake just east called Calf Lake. There we tried to sample the fish in Calf Lake to see if the invasive pike had made it that far yet. Calf Lake is in the Little Su drainage. We found no sign of any fish but there were loons so Tom said there must be fish. We hiked across a large swamp on a seismic trail that has appeared in a number of Tim Kelley accounts on his website and then cut through the forrest to some small swamp lakes. The very wet weather we had this summer made for very wet soft marshy travel so Tom was rather vocal about his displeasure which was good because I like for folks and things to know that we are coming. As I looked up near a small pond I saw two hunters heads sticking up in the grass looking at me. I waved at them and apologized for being so noisy and scaring off all the moose. They asked me if we wanted a ride in the canoe they were sitting in so I said no I am okay but the guy behind me is 75 years old and climbed Denali when he was 70 and I think he would like a ride. I directed Tom to the Canoe and then proceeded to a

beaver dam that we were all to meet up at. As the canoe came in Tom was sitting in the middle with a big smile. "How's it feel to be rescued", I said with a laugh.



That night we shared a fire with the two hunters Chris and Tom, and we told stories and had some good laughs and a few mushrooms that were plentiful like crazy this year. The hunters complimented me on my blaze orange hat and Tom and I remembered the name of a common friend who was killed when someone thought he was a moose.

Camping on the bank of the Little Su I was eager for first light to try for a late silver. I got up and grabbed my pole and headed for the water with the morning mist just rising. An orange pixie did the trick and I got to get Tom up with the best good morning call - Fish On! I brought the silver up where Tom could see

it and then before I knew it Tom was fishing and I was filleting. The style on this trip was to roll the fish in tin foil with olive oil and onion and cook it over the fire. There were no complaints and then Chris and Tom the hunters showed up and they too had some salmon and Chris tried fishing, for a while.



Wanting to get to Burma Landing before it was too late Tom and I got to inflating the pack rafts and showing them to the hunters. I decided to leave my pole and tackle with the guys so they could fish when they were not hunting. When I passed through again three days later there was a note thanking me and all my gear in a pre-arranged secret spot.

It took Tom and me about 6 hours to raft to Burma Landing. The Little Su was pleasant to raft with a few rocks that were just visible in the water that may have been a problem for a canoe, but were no threat to rafts. At one point it rained down on us quite hard while the sun also shined on us. When we looked up we only saw blue sky above us. Tom said when this happens they call it a monkeys wedding in Africa. Imagine that, a monkeys' wedding on the Little Su.

I would like to try variations of this trip in the future. There are many lakes and untraveled areas I hope to see and fish in. Also I would like to go to the Big Su from the NLSRA. So much country to see. Fall can be so satisfying.





# Peak of the Month: Igitna Peak

by Steve Gruhn



**Aaron Clifford and Fred Beckey in front of Igitna Peak**  
Photo by Ray Borbon

Mountain Range: Alaska Range; Hidden Mountains  
Borough: Kenai Peninsula Borough  
Drainage: Igitna River  
Latitude/Longitude: 61° 14' 53" North, 153° 13' 43" West  
Elevation: 7150 feet

Prominence: 2300 feet from Goldpan Peak (7450)  
Adjacent Peaks: Peak 6945 in the Igitna River drainage and Peak 6350 in the Igitna River drainage  
Distinctness: 1100 feet from Peak 6945  
USGS Map: Lime Hills (A-1)  
First Recorded Ascent: This peak might be unclimbed.  
Access Point: 4900-foot level of unnamed glacier southwest of peak

On one of his many trips to the Alaska Range, Fred Beckey saw a towering peak in the Igitna River drainage that struck his fancy. He named the prominent peak Igitna Peak after the nearby Igitna River. In 2004 he planned a trip there, but the snow conditions that year were not suitable for an airplane landing on the nearby glaciers, so his desire to climb the peak grew.

On May 20, 2005 Beckey, Ray Borbon, and Aaron Clifford flew from Anchorage to a landing strip on the Stony River in two Cessna 206s. From there Rob Jones, Jr., flew them one at a time in his Super Cub to the 4900-foot level of the unnamed glacier southwest of prominent Igitna Peak, which Beckey had previously named after the nearby Igitna River.

They had planned a rock climb of Igitna Peak as their objective. After waiting through several days of dramatically variable weather, Borbon and Clifford climbed the west-facing snow-filled couloir south of the peak to the 6050-foot col between Igitna Peak and a 6945-foot peak, which the party had named The Penthouse after a magazine that Beckey was reading. From the col the two climbed low-angle slabs of rotten rock. After two 60-meter pitches of extremely chossy rock, they started up a crack system and a flake. Clifford liebacked the flake and attempted to climb the rotten rock above it. He estimated that the climbing was 5.8 or 5.9, but protection was scarce and a weather system was moving in, so they rappelled to the col, leaving their rope fixed and stashing their gear for a future attempt.

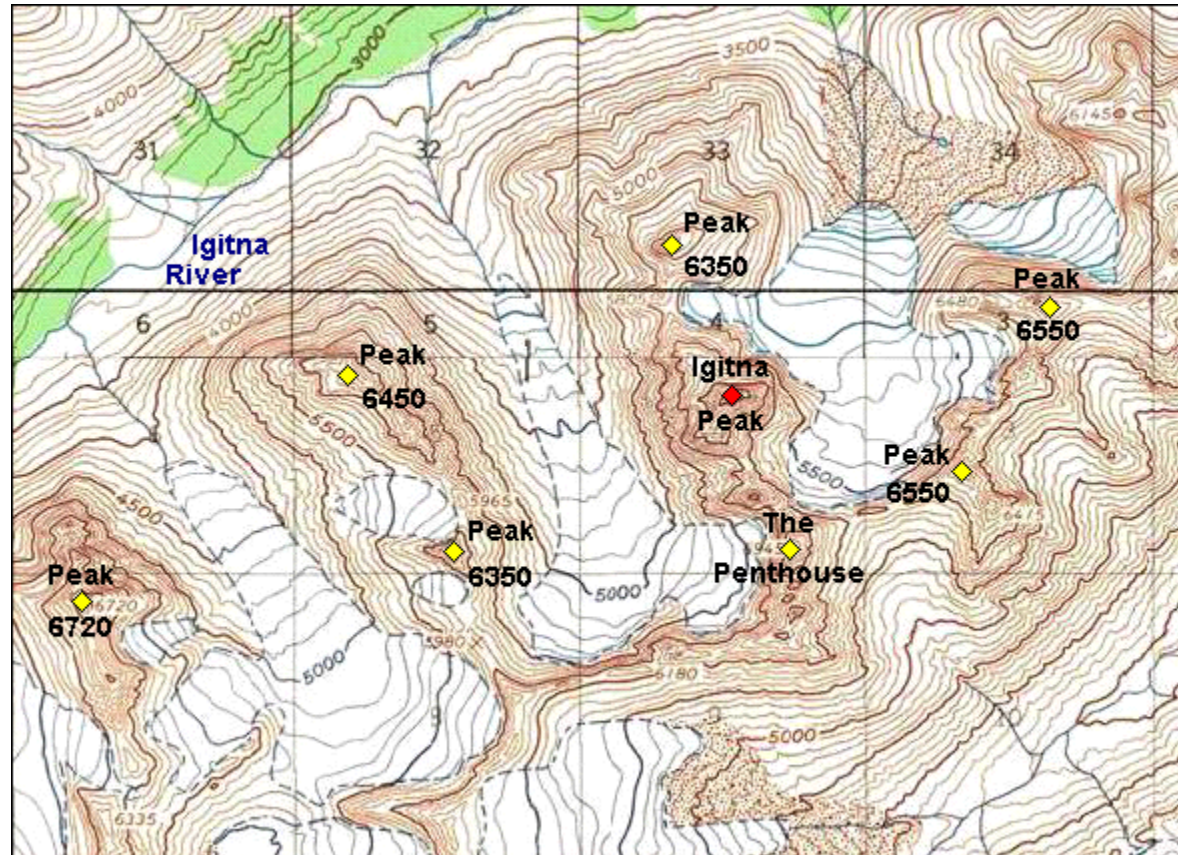
That future attempt never materialized – a victim of the schizophrenic weather. The weather continued to be variable, keeping the party tent-

bound for five days. On May 30 Jones shuttled them to the Stony River landing strip and then to Anchorage.

After that 2005 trip Borbon stopped alpine climbing. Beckey continues to travel to Alaska to accompany climbers on expeditions and Clifford continues to climb in Alaska. Both are always seeking potential partners; those interested in partnering with them can contact me for

their email addresses. In the meantime, it appears that the summit of Igitna Peak remains untouched by humans.

The information in this article was obtained from correspondence with Fred Beckey and Aaron Clifford and from Ray Borbon's photographs posted online at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Fred-Beckey.jpg> and <http://www.chep-net.com/images/palbums/Ak/webimagelister.cgi>.



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



## 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](mailto:MountaineeringClubofAlaska@gmail.com)  
Huts: Greg Bragiel - 569-3008  
Calendar: Stuart Grenier - 337-5127  
Scree Editor: John Recktenwald - 346-2589  
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