



NOVEMBER 1994

A Publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc.
Box 102037, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Volume 37 Issue 11

NOVEMBER MEETING

Wednesday

November 16th, 7:30

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle Streets
Downtown Anchorage

Program: "Treacherous Traverse Tips for Tots"
a Comedy Play

TRIP REPORTS

Summer Ramblings

by Tim Kelley



Peak 6150 (Eska la Tor)
Talkeetna Mtns: Northwest of Granite Peak
(Anchorage D-6, T 20N, R 3E, S 22)

June 4, 1994. Every year I apparently need to be reminded that June is 'post-holing' season in the mountains of Southcentral Alaska. A strong reminder was found in this trip to Granite Peak's northwest sister peak.

From the Coyote Lake parking lot in Sutton, Bill Spencer, Steve Bull and I followed mining and ATV trails to the base of Granite Peak. Here we spotted our first, for the year, brown bear sow and 2 cubs in a willow thicket below Eska Falls. We quickly, and very quietly, skirted behind an old moraine above the bruins. We then climbed above Eska Falls to a bench and snow-line.

Route choice was based on minimizing wading through unconsolidated wet slop. At least that was our intention. We worked our way up to the 5850' foot point on the ridge to the northwest of our intended summit. From here we 'ridge-floundered' for a long time - setting off sluff-slides, post-holing to our arm-pits and enjoying being completely soaked from slush immersion, as the clouds dribbled rain and snow on us.



Eventually we summited, to an impressive view of Granite Peak's northwest face. Soggy clothes combined with a stiff breeze kept our summit stay short. We stayed long enough to take a few pictures, build a cairn and leave a register.

On the descent, wading through the wet snow became ridiculous. Steve and I both wished our legs were a foot longer - like Bill's. We resorted to literally swimming our way down the mountain. It was much faster than wading through the slush. I butterfly-stroked my way along. Steve preferred the crawl.

Peak 6150, Peak 6350
Talkeetna Mtns: Sheep Valley Headwaters
(Anchorage D-5, T 20N, R 4E, S 9&10)

June 11-12, 1994. A week later I teamed up with Greg Jacobson of Seattle to visit the headwaters of Sheep Valley. Our interest lay in two 6000 foot peaks up past Lava Mountain, on the west side of Sheep Valley, and Kodak Peak, on the east side.

Friday night we parked at the Kings River bridge on the Glenn Highway and hiked up the ATV trails that lead to tree-line along the West Fork of Young Creek. Near midnight we rolled out our bivy bags at the 3000 foot level of a ridge above the West Fork. Awesome views were to be had, through mosquito headnets, of alpenglow on the northwestern Chugach Peaks; Ice Cream Cone Mountain (a.k.a. Skybuster) in particular.

A quick breakfast scarf of trail mix and Power Bars fueled us to the head of the West Fork of Young Creek and over the pass to Sheep Valley. At the 4000 foot level we found snow fields that were still ripe for post-holing.

We skirted the west side of the frozen lake at the head of the valley and climbed a snow filled gully to a 5450 foot col on the ridge to Peak 6150. An enjoyable ridge scramble on uplifted sedimentary strata took us to the summit and cloudless views in all directions.

On top, Greg decided that he wasn't up to trying Peak 6350. He waited on the summit while I descended east to the col and then scrambled towards the summit. Things went straight-forward to the NW summit, which is not the highest summit.

Getting to the SE summit is probably quite easy later in the year - without snow. It took me quite a while to work my way below cliffs and above steep

snow fields to reach the summit block. I kick off many slush-slides on my way. For the final 40 feet or so I rigged up a self-belay to reach the summit safely.

No evidence of previous ascents were found on either of these peaks. Cairns and registers were left on both summits.

Peak 6350 (Dewlap Peak)
Talkeetna Mtns: Headwaters of Moose Creek
(Anchorage D-6, T 21N, R 2E, S 23)

July 2-3, 1994. Getting a late start, we were all at Bill Spencer's wedding reception party the night before, we left the lama filled Mother Lode parking lot at 11:00 A.M. Our group consisted of Bill Spencer (on his first mountaineering trip as a married man), Stuart Jennings (from Montana), Tuomo Latva-Kistola (from Anchorage via Finland) and myself.

Under ominous skies we hoofed it to the Mint Hut in about 3 hours. Luckily the hut was crowded with MCA members (Fortner, Hersman, Miller and Saylor), so we weren't tempted to stay. We pressed on in light rain across the Mint Glacier to Grizzly Pass and then descended to the headwaters of Moose Creek.

We set up camp for the night on a carpet of tundra in a boulder field south of the 'lake' in Section 25. The topo for the area is misleading. There actually is no lake, just a grassy bed where their once was a shallow lake. We found several half-eaten bags of oats on the old lake bed. In the spring I had met folks on horses near Wishbone Hill that said they used pack horses to get to the end of the Moose Creek drainage during hunting season.

Tuomo kept us constantly entertained with antics, stories and Finnish jokes. His bottomless reservoir of jokes that had us either doubled over in laughter, completely disgusted or both. Bill and I eventually developed a Pavlovian response to the phrase 'let me tell you this Finnish joke about ...'. Whenever we heard these words we'd pick up the pace to an all-out sprint so that talking wasn't possible!

Soon after stopping to camp, Tuomo realized that he was missing his big bag of bagels. The last he had seen it was at the Mint Hut. Bill, Stuart and I taunted Tuomo about how we were sure the guys at the Mint Hut stole his bagels. Of course this wasn't true, but it sure got Tuomo going!

After a soggy night we woke up to a thick soup of fog. Of the peaks we had considered climbing, we figured there was only one that we could navigate up in the current conditions. The 6350 foot peak to the east-northeast of Montana Peak was now our goal for the day.

This peak has two narrow glaciers on its east flanks. We climbed to the bowl where these glaciers used to meet (the map says they still do). From here Bill looked at the east glacier that climbed to a col below a precipitous ridge leading to the summit. Bill suggested that this might be the way to go. I shook my head and said, "No way - just look at the map, the northeast glacier route is definitely the way to go!"

We kick-stepped up the northeast glacier, roping up for the corniced area where the glacier breaches the main ridge. Soon we came to a big surprise. The map shows the glacier ending on a wide flat spot on the ridge. At the top of the glacier what we actually found was an unmapped 200-300 sheer drop to a col before a long steep pitch to the summit.

We joked that we had found a 'coffee break' area on the topo map. When the mapper came back from a break he or she forgot where they left off and continued on to another part of the map.

A quick consent was made to bail off of this route. We then descended back to the bowl. Here Stuart and Tuomo decided to head back to camp while Bill and I attempted the eastern glacier route.

The snow conditions made for easy travel up the glacier to the ridge line. From here we used protection for three short pitches. The third pitch involved burrowing under a big flake on the ridge top and pulling our packs up behind us. Careful high class 4 rock and snow ridge negotiating, with one roped section on an aborted route choice, brought us to the south sloping slab that forms the summit.

Though quite cloudy on top, we caught glimpses of Grizzly Pass, Moose Creek valley and the earlier route that we were now glad we had abandoned. The summit was clean, no sign of previous ascent. We set up a cairn and a register on a ledge a few yards south of the summit.

We were able to down-climb to the flake tunnel. From here we rappelled back to the col and glissaded back down the glacier. Meeting Tuomo and Stuart at the campsite we hiked out via Grizzly Pass and the Mint Hut that same day.

This climb was a satisfying mix of long access,

route navigation, technical climbing and ridge scrambling. Definitely one of my favorite local climbs.

Peak 4550

Western Chugach Mtn: Twentymile River Drainage (Seward D-5, T 10N, R 4E, S 14)

July 16-17, 1994. On this weekend Bill Spencer and I headed up the Twentymile River Valley to do some reconnaissance. We hiked gravel bars and bush-whacked to the head of the east fork of the Twentymile River. From here we hiked along the south side of the glacier. At one point we were startled by a large, and very loud, ice implosion.

We then climbed south, up a ridge to a 4335' sub-peak. There were two nasty gendarmes on this ridge that got a little spooky. The rock was too rotten for placing any decent protection.

We bucked high winds and driving rain to the summit of the 4550 foot peak in Section 14. Retracing our route back to the 4335' point we hiked out the scenic west ridge that lies between the Twentymile River Valley and the ice berg filled lake at the terminus of the Twentymile Glacier. When the tundra ran out it was a long descent through downfall and devil's club back the river.

It seems that the Twentymile drainage, more than any other part of the Western Chugach, suffers from many mapping errors. Of course the glacier terminuses have receded a lot. But we noticed many alpine pocket glaciers that we not on the map.

Maybe because there is so much snowfall in this area it is hard to tell what is glacier and what is not when mapping from aerial photos. But it's definitely a surprise when the map shows what should be a dry gully in mid to late summer - and you find in reality crevasses and seracs.

Peak 5755 (The Gorgemeister)

Western Chugach Mtns: Terminus of Knik Glacier (Anchorage B-5, T 15N, R 5E, S 30)

July 30, 1994. Up until the Good Friday Earthquake of 1964, the Knik Glacier would annually create an ice dam against the Western Chugach Mountains that would raise the level of Upper, Inner and Lower Lake George. Near the end of the summer the ice dam would burst. This phenomenon would send a horrendous torrent down the gauntlet between



the glacier and the mountain and spill out over the Knik River flood plain. This drain pipe of the Lake George is called 'The Gorge'.

In the October 1993 I made a solo attempt to climb the 5755 foot peak that rises above The Gorge. I bivied for the night at the 3000 foot level on the north ridge of this peak. The next day I made it to the last gendarme on the ridge, about a quarter mile from the summit. Here dangerous snow conditions on the west side of the gendarme made me decide to bail out.

It was a superb trip on a beautiful fall weekend. But not summiting after coming so close irked me. This peak was destined to be high on my list for the 1994 climbing season.

Bill Spencer said he could only take one day off from his current work project. So on July 30th, 1994 we decided to take a one day shot at 'The Gorge-meister'.

We parked at the end of the Knik River road at 11:00 AM Saturday and followed ATV trails down to the Knik River flood plain. The going was fast and easy. Then we reached the south channel of the Knik River. At this point I was ready to bail out of the trip.

The time I had been here before, in the fall, I had crossed this channel with water that was an inch deep, if that. Now I was looking at 50 yards of swift thigh deep silt water peppered with basketball sized ice floes. I told Bill that my enthusiasm for continuing had almost evaporated. Luckily Bill had no previous encounters with this section of the Knik to make comparisons by. So we decided to 'a least try this first crossing'.

On the other side we broke into a hobbling run to warm up. I had a headache from cold water immersion. The tendons in my legs were now so tight they felt ready to pop. By the time we got to the second crossing we were warmed up. The second crossing was wider, but it didn't seem hurt as much as the first. Oh yes, the brain going numb ... a good sign!

Due to the high water we spent more time bushwhacking, following game trails and wading than we would have had to in the fall. Finally we made it to the large gravel bar in Section 6. From here we began the long stretch of jungle bashing to get to tundra line at the 3000 foot level. At the tundra line base of the north ridge we were already getting low on water as no decent water source had been found.

When we reached the 4810 foot point on the north ridge we found remnant snow patches to help

replenish our water supplies. I put snow in a zip-loc bag and the bag inside my shirt to try to quicken the melt process for water.

We ridge scrambled to the gendarme where I had turned back on my previous attempt. Without the snow covering, we found a series of cracks and ledges that allowed careful 4th class scrambling to traverse. Once past this section we climbed gullies filled with classic Chugach crudite to the summit.

Seven hours into our climb, we sat on the summit. We were both beat, out of water - but happy to summit this tough little peak. Patchy clouds obscured most views but we were able to see the eastern peaks of the Western Chugach. No signs of previous ascents were found. We built a cairn a few yards to the south of the summit block and left a register.

For the descent we decided to down-climb a gully to the rock glacier in the drainage to the west. At the top of the gully we found a trickle of water that we drank profusely from. It was probably this water that gave both of us stomach problems for the next week. Chugach tequila! This descent went quickly and without much problem. Hoofing it out the valley was a breeze, until we reentered the alder zone.

Side-hilling through alders seemed to go on for ever. Once the side-hilling was over we followed a labyrinth of bear and moose trails. The trails would inevitably beeline to the nearest devil's club patch and take the longest route through it. We were relieved to finally reach the gravel bars of the Knik River.

We retraced our wet and brushy route along the river, including the two icy channel wadings. Just after midnight we stumbled out of the woods to a very pleasant surprise. It was Saturday night and my truck hadn't been vandalized yet!

Looking back - this was one of the toughest single day climbs I have done in the Western Chugach. But the two tries to summit this feisty little peak provided for time well spent in this rarely visited and unique corner of the Western Chugach.

Peak 8150 (Tyrant's Tor)
Talkeetna Mtns: East Fork Kings River Headwaters
(Talkeetna Mtns A-4, T 22N, R 5E, S 4)

July 12-14, 1994. Bill Spencer and I wanted to get deep into the Talkeetnas and climb an 8000 footer. Neither of us had ever been up the Kings River

drainage - so we had a good reason to go.

The Permenente mining trail provided mountain bike access for the first 13 miles of travel. The trail starts out as a driveable dirt road. It soon becomes a rough ATV trail with lots of ups and downs, mud pits, boulders and roots. This would actually be a fun technical mountain bike riding if we weren't carrying 50 pound packs.

After crossing the East Fork of the Kings River, a knee deep wade followed by some swamp thrashing, an intersection in the trail was reached. Here we took a right. According to Richard Larson's mountain biking guide book, from here the trail "loosely parallels the northeast fork of the river". Geometrically speaking - this is a very, very loose parallel!

Shortly after the intersection the trail switch backs and climbs almost 1000 feet above the river, and then switch backs back down to avoid deep gullies on the north side of the river. The trail surface is in great shape. However the trail is choked with interlocking alders from crotch level on up.

Soon I began to doubt that anyone had mountain biked this section of trail. To get a mountain bike through this mess you would have to drag it by a rope while you crawled beneath the alders. My suspicions were confirmed at the State Fair this year when I ran into Richard. He said that he hadn't actually ridden the trail. He claims he biked up the river bed.

After three to four mile of alder bashing Bill and I reached the river again. The trail crossed the river, but we didn't have the nerve to wade the torrent before us. We finally made a crossing a couple of miles up-river. It was a hairy crossing with one person sit-belaying the other.

Finding remnants of a trail on the south side of the river, we followed it to the Middle Fork of the Kings River. We then followed abundant caribou tracks along the Middle Fork to the 3500 foot level. Here we made a late evening bivy camp.

Continuing up the valley the next morning we crossed the rock glacier in Section 21. As we were descending the north edge of the rock glacier we spooked two rogue caribou. Big beautiful bulls.

At the 5000 foot level we jettisoned gear that we wouldn't need for the summit attempt. At this point we knew we were getting our money's worth out of this trip. We had started the trip below the

bottom edge of the Anchorage D-5 map. Now we were moving off the top of the map. Next topo please!

On the glacier at the head of the valley we saw our caribou friends again. Now they were at the 6500 foot level of the glacier, right below an icefall. We were amazed that caribou would be so far up on the glacier.

From the glacier we took separate routes, to avoid each other's rockfall, for the 1500 foot scramble to the ridge line at 7400 feet. Following the edge of the glacier we descended loose rock to the glaciated col south of our 8150 foot destination summit.

The ridge we climbed towards the summit was very Chugach-like - crumbling rock with debris filled gullies. These conditions persisted for the 1000 feet of climbing to the south summit, which is slightly higher than the north summit spire.

Clear conditions on the summit provided a great geography lesson on the high peaks region of the Talkeetna Mountains. No sign of previous ascent was found. We left a cairn and register bottle. I suggested Tyrant's Tor for the name of this peak that is at the head of the Kings River East Fork drainage. 'Tor' is Welsh for 'a high pile of rocks'.

We descended our ascent route and awoke our napping caribou buddies while glissading scree back to the glacier. One caribou began descending the side of the valley opposite to us. The caribou got confused when it noticed that we were hiking past it, not towards it.

Eventually the caribou didn't consider us a threat. We rolled our bivy bags at our gear stash, while the caribou napped on its feet - 30 yards away from us.

During the night conditions turned sour and we awoke to rain. We decided to abort further climbing plans and hike out before the already raging East Fork swelled further. A long day of stream crossings, busting through wet alders, another hairy river crossing under belay and bumpy mountain biking concluded a super foray into the Talkeetnas.

In the world of mountaineering, our local mountains - the Talkeetnas, Western Chugach and Kenai Mountains, are not big peaks. They're quite modest actually. Because of this, some climbers of local mountains, such as myself, feel the obligation to match or exceed the efforts of the previous generations of local climbers. There are other climbers that don't feel this way.



This summer saw several Western Chugach mountains climbed with aid that had never been utilized on these mountains before - that of airplanes and helicopters. Early ascents on Western Chugach Mountains had always been by human power from low altitudes.

I could express my opinion on the use of aircraft to gain quick access to local mountains. But instead I'll use this climb of Tyrant's Tor as a statement. Climbs of Talkeetna 8000 foot peaks had rarely or ever been done without the aid of an aircraft. That's why we wanted to climb our first Talkeetna 8000 footer under our own power.

Peak 5390 (Compass Butte)
Western Chugach Mtns: North of Organ Mtn
(Anchorage a-6, T 12N, R 1E, S 11)

August 21, 1994. Why climb this obscure peak in the Eagle River Valley? Well, it's a true peak - it meets the 500 foot minimum drop off all ridges, and it's a unique geological phenomenon in this part of the Western Chugach. This peak is a fugitive nunatak. It is escaping from the icy clutches of the Organ Glacier which surrounds all sides of this peak except the north.

Bill and I also had unfinished business with this peak. The previous fall Bill Spencer, Steve Bull and I tried approaching this peak from the Flute Glacier area. The maze of gaping crevasses of the Organ Glacier made us decide to climb Eagle Peak instead, and to try Peak 5390 by another route later.

Our second attempt started at the Eagle River Visitor's Center. Bill Spencer, Tim Miller and I left at 10 AM under overcast skies and hoofed it to Icicle Creek. Here we unpacked an inflatable pack raft to use for crossing the deep and swift Eagle River.

We tied a climbing rope to the raft and sent Bill out in the current to test things out. After a couple of tries Bill was on the other side and we pulled the raft back to our side. In doing this we ripped a grommet out of the raft which caused it to deflate.

Tim and I laughed hilariously at the predicament of stranding Bill on the other side of the river. But our laughter diminished quickly when we realized that to climb this peak we would have to get across Eagle River without the raft!

Tim and I ran up river a ways to a likely crossing spot. I splashed 3/4's of the way across and it was only in up to

my knees. Hey - no problem! Two steps later and my feet no longer touched bottom. It was now Bill's turn to laugh.

We crossed Heritage Creek and then paralleled it for 2000 vertical of vegetation navigation. At tundra line we entered the wide, flat outlet of the Organ Glacier cirque - an impressive and beautiful valley. We opted to climb the northwest rib of our destination peak.

It was easy going to a mesa at the 4400 foot level. Here we worked a series of rotten rock gullies upward. Careful scrambling got us to within 300 feet of the summit. From here I led a protected pitch to the summit plateau.

On top the wind was picking up and we encountered light snow (termination dust was sticking at the 6000 foot level in nearby peaks). Though clouds were rolling in, being on an elevated point in the middle of this glaciated cirque offered impressive views. We feasted on bacon strips that Tim Miller had brought, built a cairn and left a register. We found no signs of previous ascents.

We rappelled back into the crudite gullies as it began to rain. There was no decent rock to place protection in from here on, so it took a lot of careful down climbing in deteriorating weather to get back to the mesa. By the time we got to the valley floor a full tilt downpour was in effect.

After a slippery bushwhack through an old burn area and a crossing of Heritage Creek we were back at the Eagle River. We found a crossing that was only chest high and then began a 6 mile run against darkness back to the trailhead. Just as pitch darkness was setting in at 11 PM we reached the Visitor's Center.

An obscure peak - yes. But this rugged nunatak provided an enjoyable adventure for all of us.

(Editor's Note: Peak 5390 was first climbed Winter of 1988 by Karl Swanson and friend.)

Peak 6250, Peak 6450
Talkeetna Mtns: North of Castle Mountain
(Anchorage D-5, T 21N, R 5E, S 33&34)

September 10, 1994. Hurricane John was tormenting the North Pacific, and some of this weather was due to hit Southcentral Alaska this weekend. Before sun-up on Saturday Wiley Bland and I headed for the Talkeetnas. As dawn revealed a high overcast, Wiley and I headed out the Permenente Trail on mountain bikes. Our destination was the two 6000 foot peaks north of Castle Mountain.

After a few miles I came around an uphill corner and saw a man tumbling down the embankment next to the trail. I had apparently startled a hunter. When he got back up to the trail I asked him how his hunting trip was going. "Five



days and I haven't even seen a pile of moose shit!" was his response.

After 7 miles of riding we ditched our bikes at the creek that drains the north side of Castle Mountain. Easy bushwhacking got us to tundra line and an impressive vista of the Castle Mountain ridge.

Straightforward ridge scrambling brought us to the summit of Peak 6250. The weather was still holding so we decided to give Peak 6450 to the northeast a go. We worked a roundabout route of scree gullies to the col between the peaks and scrambled to the summit of the 6450 foot peak. No sign of previous ascents were found on either peak. We left cairns on both summits and a register on the 6450 foot peak.

As the weather was starting to worsen, I decided to get a weather report - a la cellular phone. Cell phones work well from many places high in the Talkeetnas (including Mint Glacier). My wife said that heavy rain was now hitting Anchorage, so Wiley and I began hustling back the way we came. We almost made it to treeline before high winds and driving rain hit.

A muddy bike ride back to the trailhead concluded a quality day in the Talkeetnas. As we drove home in heavy rain it was satisfying to know that we had snuck in a climb before Hurricane John had its say.

1994 Ice Festival Review

by Josh Sonkiss

The weekend of September 24 saw the ice at the Matanuska Glacier formed up, not surprisingly, fat and blue and in fine condition for the annual Ice Climbing School. There were some significant differences between this year's outing and last. One of these was that the planners this year decided to emphasize more formal, organized instruction, both to provide a better learning experience for beginners, and to increase the margin of safety for everyone. Another difference was that last year I was struggling up my first steep ice on a top rope, while this time I was expected to be one of those providing the safe, organized instruction.

On Saturday morning we broke up into groups divided roughly according to experience, then diverged at the toe of the glacier in search of the meanest looking seracs we could find. My own group of five contained a wide

range of ability, which was fortunate: This allowed me to maintain some credibility as an instructor while being able to rely on the more experienced group members for input whenever my expertise ran thin.

Since my goal was to reinforce basics before moving to more advanced skills, the first thing we did was to find a low-angled wall. On went the brain buckets, then everyone practiced flat-footing. First came French-technique with no axes; then Eckensteining with one axe in various configurations; and then on to front-pointing, sometimes with one foot snagged on the opposite leg just to keep things interesting. To demonstrate the sticking power of ice tools, or lack thereof, we finally did away with the crampons and climbed up and down a 45-degree slope on our bellies, relying on our tools alone.

After lunch and a lecture on the importance of stylish clothing and shiny, expensive gear, it was time to do some real climbing. After a review of ice anchors, top ropes were set up on short walls to run laps and polish technique. For an added challenge, the more advanced of the group aid climbed over the lip of a nearby "bergschrand" which overhung at approximately 135 degrees. This proved to be a surprisingly strenuous undertaking using runners, ice screws, and double ropes, but it was ultimately successful and proved that an ice screw driven upside-down will support body weight, at least for a little while. The 'schrund was later freed on a top rope with much less effort in about one-tenth the time, suggesting that climbing with skill and boldness is preferable to engineering one's way up a route. So much for another last great Alpine problem.

On Sunday, everyone had an opportunity to put Saturday's skills to the test by trying a lead. Varying degrees of success were met, but all found their experiences interesting and informative. One participant even had the good fortune to take a 15 foot fall off an overhang, onto a Russian ice screw. It held, suggesting that these screws are not entirely worthless when placed well—though the energy-absorbing runner attached to it probably didn't hurt any, either.

All things considered, the '94 Ice Climbing School was a success, and the new teaching plan seemed to work well. There is one matter of concern, however. Over the course of the weekend, at least three people were injured badly enough to necessitate leaving early, and two of these required medical attention. This number seems high for an organized outing. Although some risk is of course unavoidable, this can be largely controlled through careful planning and a constant eye to safety. Hopefully, next year's ice climbing school will provide students and instructors with just as much information and enjoyment, but without any injuries.



In closing, some mention should be made of the debauchery which took place on Saturday night. By the grace of whatever benevolent spirits reside in the Chugach mountains, I slept through most of this and thus am unable to write about it. But this is as it should be. Some things should be left to the imagination.

Snowbird Hut Information

Mark Gronewald

The Snowbird Hut was built in 1985 on the terminal moraine of the Snowbird Glacier in the Talkeetna Mountains at 4800 feet. It is operated under an Alaska Department of Natural Resources land lease. It is surrounded by some of Alaska's finest telemarking terrain, with some 12 feet of annual accumulation and excellent powder skiing from late September until late April. The hut consists of a 16-foot diameter prefab steel dome, insulated and furnished with bunks for seven, a large table, benches, cooking area, stove, windows on three sides, and heated with an oil stove. It resembles a yurt.

The hut is rented on a nightly basis to backcountry skiers, climbers, and hikers year round. Rates are \$40.00 per night per group of four plus \$10.00 per person per night for additional guests. Payment is required in full to reserve the hut and is refundable in case of cancellation within 48 hours of the trip. Payment is also fully refundable if bad weather or avalanche conditions force cancellation of your trip. There is no additional charge if a group is forced to stay past their scheduled departure due to avalanche danger or inclement weather.

An outhouse is provided. All refuse must be hauled out in garbage bags at the end of each trip. Fuel for the Coleman stove, lantern and heating stove is the responsibility of your group (a gallon per day of #1 diesel fuel for the heating stove). Access is by skiing or hiking from the Hatcher Pass Road. In the summer, park at the Reed Creek Trailhead, then hike in to the Snowbird Glacier via Glacier Creek.. All routes pass through avalanche terrain. Call for updated information on snow conditions and crevasse conditions. Air charter is available by calling Soloy Helicopters at 376-3444 or Mountain Helicopters at 745-1250. Guide service is also available.

Mark Gronewald.
Summit Adventures
Box 870537.
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Last Chance to Prevent Final Approval of "Administrative" Fee to Climb Denali

by Todd Miner

It was recently learned that the Alaska Region of the National Park Service is recommending that the proposed Rescue Fee, despite near unanimous opposition, be approved with only minor changes. The minor changes include a semantic word adjustment, changing the name of the fee from "rescue" to "administrative," and a 25% reduction in the cost of from \$200 to \$150. The mandatory 60 day registration period (particularly onerous to Alaskans) remains as does the fact that the fee will cover both Denali and Foraker.

Now is the time to fight this recommendation, before it is finally approved. Please write to your Congressional Delegation and to Secretary Bruce Babbitt as soon as possible. In addition to your own criticisms and questions, please ask the following questions:

How can the near unanimous opposition to this idea be ignored? Does it not make a mockery of asking for public hearings if the public is going to be so blatantly ignored?

Exactly how will this make the mountains safer? How does N.P.S. predict that the accident rate will go down?

Exactly how will this save the N.P.S. and taxpayers money?

What other options besides this fee were really considered (insurance, giving up the Lama helicopter, fees on foreign climbers, etc.) to increase safety and lower costs?

Why are climbers being singled out for an "administrative fee" when other kinds of users (backpackers, road tourists, etc.) also generate "administrative" as well as rescue costs?

What is the impact on many small private businesses and their employees who rely on these mountains for the great bulk of their business and income?

Addresses: Congressman Don Young
2331 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator Ted Stevens
522 Hart Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510



Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt
Office of the Secretary
1849 C St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20040

Senator Frank Murkowski
709 Hart Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

MCA Trip Classifications

The classifications below do not take into account individual trip hazards such as river crossings, scree slopes, snow fields, bears, etc. Trip leaders are required to inform the trip participants of any such hazards either verbally, on the sign-up sheet, or in the trip description. Leader approval is required for participation on all trips.

NON-TECHNICAL: Following are a few standards used to classify non-technical trips. The classification is made in terms of hiking distance and altitude gain. Many trips are not on established trails.

CLASS A: Easy hikes with a maximum distance of 8 miles for day trips or 4 miles per day for overnight trips. Altitude gain up to 1200 feet.

CLASS B: Trips involving a maximum distance of up to 12 miles for a day trip or 6 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain of 1200 to 2500 feet.

CLASS C: Trips up to 15 miles for a day hike or 8 miles per day for an overnight trip. Altitude gain up to 3500 feet. Scree, steep grass or other rough terrain problems may be encountered.

CLASS D: Hikes and climbs with an altitude gain of over 3500 feet or a distance of greater than 15 miles for a day-hike or greater than 8 miles a day for an overnight trip. Peaks in this classification may require minimal climbing skills.

CLASS E: Hazardous climbing conditions may be encountered. A basic mountaineering course may be required.

TECHNICAL: Technical trips are open to all qualified climbers. However, the registration on any particular trip must be restricted to a safe and manageable number of climbers. Registration is made directly with the leader, who determines the qualifications needed for the trip.

GLACIER TRAVEL: Trips requiring roped travel over glaciers. Knowledge of crevasse rescue, and ice axe and crampon skills are required. Basic understanding of ice and snow anchors is also required.

FIFTH CLASS: Trips which involve fifth class climbing. A Basic Mountaineering course or equivalent is required. Knowledge

of belay and rappel techniques and placing anchors is required. Climbing difficulty varies widely with each trip.

TRIP PARTICIPANTS have the obligation to acquaint themselves with the nature of the trip and to verify that it is within their capability and experience. Anyone wishing to participate in any trip above CLASS A must have completed one or more trips of the next lower classification, or the equivalent.

Approved by MCA Board, March 1987

General Rules for MCA Sanctioned Trips

1. Proper equipment follows of this list.
2. No dogs. (Among the reasons are bear problems.)
3. The leader's suggestions are to be followed. Do not go off alone, return or rush ahead without his (her) permission, and don't 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 separating from the group without the leader's approval is no longer considered a participant in the MCA Sanctioned trip.
4. Trip participants who, in the leader's opinion, put themselves or other members of the group in danger by disregarding the leader's suggestions, shall be subject to sanction by the club. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, reprimand at general meeting, exclusion from future trips, termination of annual membership or lifetime exclusion from the club.
5. You must sign up on a trip roster (club meetings) or contact the leader, and you must have signed the club waiver to be on a club trip.
6. When carpools are arranged, please plan to pay the driver your share without his (her) asking you. Generally \$5 - short trips, \$10 or more for longer.
7. If you find you cannot participate after signing up on the roster, please let the leader know, both for transportation and gear-planning and so someone else can go. If you are the leader, help find a replacement.
8. Total number of people on club trips:
Minimum: 4 (for safety reasons)
Maximum: Leader option, depends upon the trail and campsite conditions,
but generally limited to 12 in trailless areas or State and National Parks
9. Firearms are not encouraged, and please let the leader know if you want to carry one - it will be leader's option. Aerosol bear repellent is preferred.



Leader Qualifications

1. Must be a member of the MCA.
2. Must have approval of the Hiking and Climbing Committee (A simple majority.)
3. Must have participated in trips of the same or higher classification than the one being led, showing competence in the opinion of the leaders of those trips; or equivalent experience acceptable to the Hiking and Climbing Committee.

Approved by MCA Board, March 1987

Leader Guidelines

1. Follow the general rules for MCA Sanctioned Trips.
2. Must have a sign-up sheet with all participants' names on it and turn it in to the Hiking and Climbing Committee at the end of the trip.
3. Select a meeting time and place disclosed only to those persons on the sign-up sheet, unless call-ins are acceptable to the leader.
4. Must verify that each participant has signed a valid waiver and that it is on file.
5. Can require special equipment and refuse participation to any person that is ill-equipped (including clothing).
6. Has the authority to split the group (fast and slow), but must select a co-leader to help.
7. Must report any injuries to the MCA President.
8. Must report any personnel problems to the Hiking and Climbing Committee.

Approved by the MCA Board, March 1987

Equipment

Summer

Raingear that works
Windgear
Wool or fleece pants
Shorts
Light polypro
Wool shirt
Jacket
Baseball cap
Gloves
Extra socks
Wool or pile hat
Hiking boots
Stream-crossing footwear
Sunscreen
Mosquito repellent
Whistle
Large plastic bag
Lighter, matches
Map, compass
Aerosol bear repellent (if desired)
Moleskin/Spenco 2nd skin

Ace bandage
Surgical tape
Aspirin
Gauze
Anti-bacterial ointment
4" x 4" pads, band-aids
Wire
Vice grips or pliers
Utility cord
Sewing kit
Tent
Sleeping pad
Sleeping bag
Backpack cover
Cook pot
Stove (fires not allowed)
Fuel bottle
Walking stick or ice axe
Water bottles (not canteens)
FOOD

Additional for Glaciers

Ice axe
Gaitors
Climbing boots
Slings, carabiners
Rappel device
Belay device
Rope
Wands
Shovel (?)
Mittens
Crampons
Seat Harness
Ice screw(s)
Pulleys
Prussiks/ascenders
Picket (?)
Skis or snowshoes (?)
Glacier glasses/cream



RELEASE OF LIABILITY -- READ CAREFULLY

I, _____ (print name), am aware that mountaineering sports (including hiking; backpacking; rock, snow, and ice climbing; mountaineering; skiing; and ski mountaineering) are hazardous activities. I wish to participate and/or receive instruction in these activities with the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc. ("MCA") I recognize that these activities involve numerous risks, which include, by way of example and not limitation, falling while hiking, climbing, skiing or crossing rivers or glaciers; being struck by 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. I further recognize that risk of injury or death may be caused or enhanced by mistakes or negligence on the part of either my fellow participants or MCA officers, directors, guides, instructors, or trip leaders. I nevertheless agree to accept any and all risks of injury, death, or property damage that may occur in connection with any MCA activity, including use of MCA furnished equipment and use of MCA backcountry huts.

(initial that you have read this paragraph)

GIVING UP MY LEGAL RIGHTS

By signing this Agreement, I agree to give up for myself and for my heirs all legal rights I may have against the MCA or my fellow participants in MCA activities. I give up these legal rights regardless of whether the injury, death, or property damage results from mistakes or negligence on the part of either my fellow participants or the MCA. (As used in this agreement, MCA means the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Inc., and all of its officers, directors, guides, instructors and trip leaders.) I understand this agreement shall remain in effect until such time as I provide signed written notice of its revocation to the MCA.

(initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY PROMISE NOT TO SUE

I agree that I will not sue, or otherwise make any claim against, the MCA or my fellow participants in MCA activities for injury, death, or property damage which occurs in the course of my participation or instruction in mountaineering sports.

(initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY RELEASE OF LIABILITY

I also agree to release and discharge the MCA and my fellow participants in MCA activities 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 sports.

(initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY PROMISE TO INDEMNIFY

I agree to pay all expenses, including attorney's fees and court costs, that the MCA may incur as a consequence of any legal action arising out of injury, death, or property damage suffered by me, or suffered by someone else as a result of my conduct.

(initial that you have read this paragraph)

MY CONSENT TO MEDICAL TREATMENT

I consent to any hospital care or medical or surgical diagnosis or treatment which may be necessary as a result of my participation in activities with the MCA. I also understand and agree that I am solely responsible for all applicable charges for such medical treatment, including evacuation and/or rescue cost.

(initial that you have read this paragraph)

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS. I AM AWARE THAT THIS IS A BINDING, LEGAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN ME AND THE MCA AND I SIGN IT OF MY OWN FREE WILL.

Dated: _____

Signature: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian (if under 19): _____

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

OFFICERS

President	Mike Miller	243-6521
Vice-President	James Larabee	522-3854
Secretary	Mark Flanum	258-6993
Treasurer	Ron Rickman	345-7919

BOARD

Dave Pahlke	243-5234
Julia Moore	243-6521
Mark Miraglia	338-0705
Dave Logan	276-2666
Dave Hart	

Annual membership dues: Single \$10.00 Family \$15.00

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the treasurer at the MCA address. Please sign and mail the club waiver found on the reverse side of this page and include it and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to receive your card.

SCREE is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles and notes submitted for publication and other communication related to the newsletter should be mailed to my address at 3051 Elderberry Dr., Wasilla, Alaska 99654. Articles should be received by the 25th of the month for the following month's issue. Computer diskettes are acceptable, and save typing time.

Paid ads may be submitted to the attention of the Vice-President at the club address and should be "camera-ready" and pre-paid. Your cooperation will be appreciated. Willy Hersman, Editor, 373-4734.

DUPLICATION: Mark Findlay

MAILING: J. Rose, D. Lefever, B. Kazmierczak, G. Runa, J. Larabee