

## ISSUE INCLUDES

Outkaste Picket  
Mount Griggs and Broken Mountain  
Red Mountain and Peak 4550  
Baneful Peak  
Cooper Mountain  
The Beak  
Hidden Peak  
Peak 1675  
Mount Adams  
Amulet Peak  
Peak 6339

# the SCREE

Mountaineering Club  
of Alaska

November 2017  
Volume 60 Number 11



“The earth teaches us more about ourselves than all the books in the world, because it is resistant to us. Self-discovery comes when man measures himself against an obstacle.”

- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

MCA Meeting November 21, 2017  
at the BP Energy Center  
Membership meeting 6:30 pm  
Slideshow 7:30 pm: Ski Alpinism  
in the Western Chugach, by Mat  
Brunton

# The Mountaineering Club of Alaska [mntclubak.org](http://mntclubak.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."*

**Cover Photo:** Mike Miller and Ben Still below the south side of Outkaste Picket, photo by Will Wacker

**Scree Layout/Design:** Paxson Woelber

## CHOATE'S CHUCKLE

*Q: How are police and belayers the same?*

*A: They both make arrests*

## CONNECT WITH THE MCA



Check the Meetup site and Facebook for last minute trips and activities.

**Article Submission:** Text and photography submissions for the *Scree* can be sent as attachments to [mcascree@gmail.com](mailto:mcascree@gmail.com). Articles should be submitted by the 24th of each month to appear in the next issue of the *Scree*. Do not submit material in the body of the email. Do not submit photos embedded in the text file. Send the photo files separately. We prefer articles that are under 1,000 words. If you have a blog, website, video, or photo links, send us the link. Cover photo selections are based on portraits of human endeavor in the outdoors. Please submit at least one vertically oriented photo for consideration for the cover. Please submit captions with photos.

## Upcoming MCA Events:

### MCA Arctic Valley/Ship Creek Trail Maintenance

December 9-10, 2017 • Non-Technical • 10 miles • Leader - Greg Bragiel • Sign Up at November 2017 meeting

### Annual Winter Solstice Flattop Sleepout. December 22, 2017 \* No trip leader

### MCA Winter Mountaineering Instructional Trip

March 12-18, 2018 • Non-Technical • ~38 miles. • Training/ Learning Goals- Leadership, Trip planning, Leave no Trace, Stream Crossing, Navigation, Staying Warm, Nutrition/ Hydration, Snow travel, Avalanche Awareness/ Rescue, First Aid, Snow Shelters, 10 Essentials, Emergency Shelters/ Signaling/ Fires. • Participants share trip expenses • Leader - Greg Bragiel • Sign up at November 2017 meeting

### Summer Mountaineering Class Instructor Recognition:

The MCA recognizes the contributions of the following instructors for sharing their time and talents during the MCA Summer Mountaineering Instructional trip June 23 - July 1, 2017: Colleen Metzger, Brad Nelson, Jennifer Duford, and Cory Hinds. Thank you! Greg Bragiel - Lead instructor.



**MCA Librarian announcement:** The MCA library (at REI) cataloging and checkout system is undergoing an update. In order to check out books from the library, you must submit your name and email address to the MCA librarian (Charlotte Foley) via the library email address or in person. The library email is [library@mntclubak.org](mailto:library@mntclubak.org). A tutorial for using the new system will be given at the library on December 4th from 6:30-8:00pm. Please stop by to learn how the new system works. Ongoing updates will also be provided at the monthly meetings, on the MCA website, or via the MCA Facebook page. Thank you!

- Charlotte Foley, MCA Librarian

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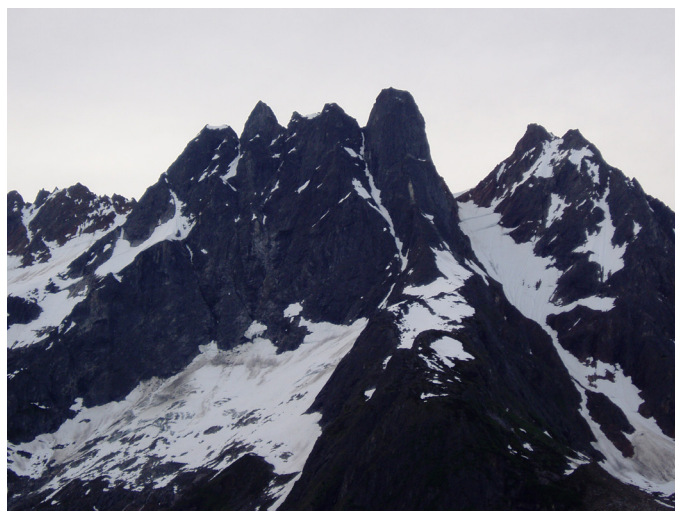
# Outkaste Picket (6012 feet)

## West Ridge, Coast Mountains, Alaska

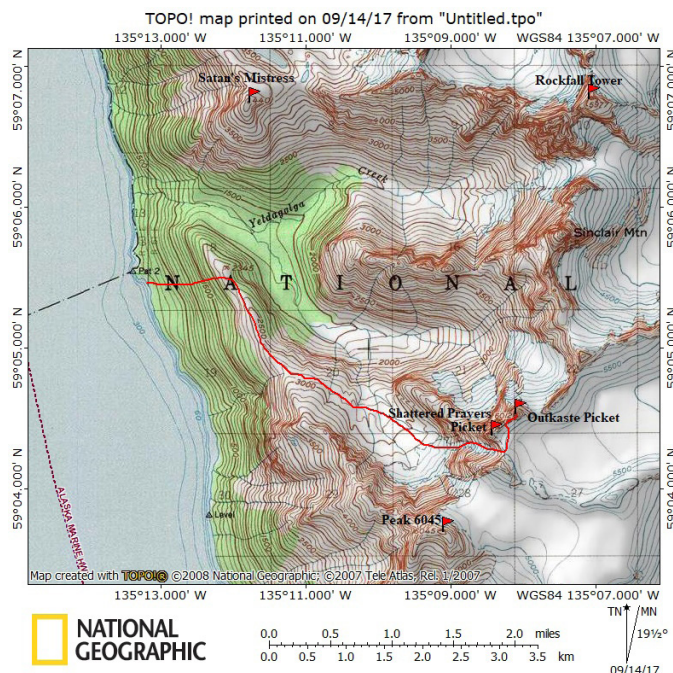
Text and photos by Ben Still

The afternoon of July 7th, 2006, Mike Miller and I left Juneau in Mike's 22-foot Fiberform boat the *Nunatak*, heading north up Lynn Canal. After weeks of rain and low ceilings, we had a one-and-a-half-day weather window to fit in a climb. We had been looking at the high point of the Pickets group on the east side of Lynn Canal for some time. We boated up to Dry Bay near Haines and picked up our friend Will Wacker to join us on this fun adventure. There are no safe anchorages for small boats along this coastline, so we had to wait for high tide later that evening to beach the *Nunatak*. We woke at 5 a.m.; I ate a quick breakfast of donuts and coffee and we began the fun bushwhack up the west side of the northwest approach ridge from sea level.

We climbed up the steep, mossy mountainside for 1500 vertical feet with minimal brush, some large windfall trees and a few fun steeper sections. The final 500 vertical feet before timberline slacked off in steepness, but thick brush slowed our progress. We broke out of the brush at about 2000 feet and continued up, weaving around thick stunted mountain hemlock patches to the ridge line at 2300 feet. There we found a prominent goat trail along the ridge, which we followed south to around 2800 feet.



View of the Pickets from the goat trail



At that point, we began side-hilling across steep heather into a north-facing rocky basin. The goat trail sporadically continued along this traverse into the basin as well, but we all seemed to lose it. Nearly into the basin we spotted a group of mountain goats ahead of us, all running away. The rocky basin was guarded by a 30-foot steep dirt slope and a steep swift glacial stream at the bottom of the slope. All three of us down-climbed the slope and crossed the stream in different locations. None of us liked our own route and we each planned on looking for something better on the way out.

Across the basin loomed a steep 2000-foot west-facing snow- and-ice gully, which Mike and I had climbed up the previous summer in horrible conditions. We encountered significant rockfall, huge bergschrunds, 50- to 60-degree ice for 800 vertical feet and a 40-foot vertical ice headwall. That trip was later in the season on a hot summer day while today was cool with high clouds already building overhead. The gully looked to be in great condition, with all snow and bergschrunds completely filled in except for one smaller one near the top. After crossing the basin, we found a nice, flat rock to gear up, putting on crampons and harnesses.

We made quick work of the lower 1000 feet of snow, finding great snow conditions. The upper section had very steep runnels and narrow ridges. We tried to



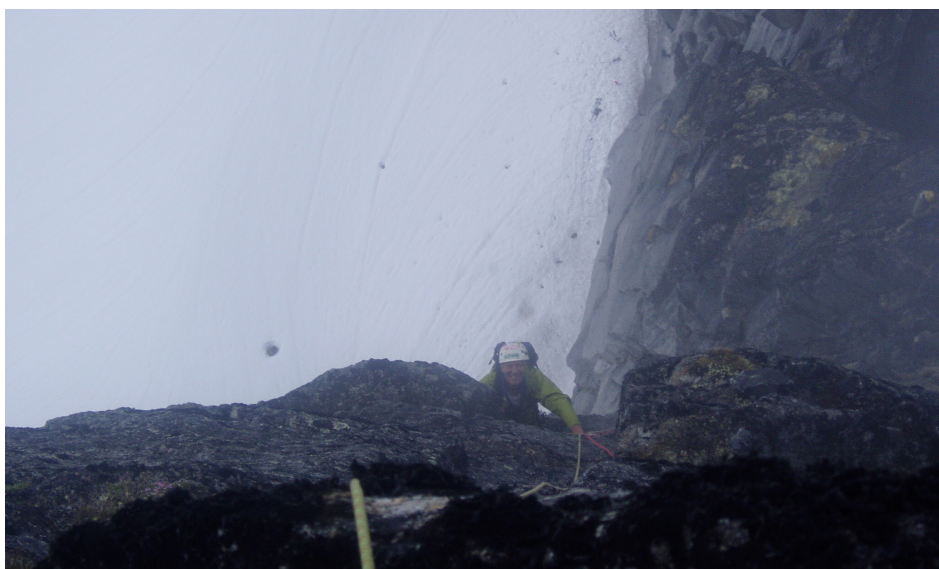


**Mike and Will climbing up the snow gully**

pick the best runnel, but ended up traversing around a bit to take the easiest path. We were able to climb over the bergschrund easily on the far-right side of the gully and crest over the top onto the small icefield at 5500 feet. We continued north along the easy icefield for a quarter mile to the base of the south face of the final summit tower. We broke out our rock gear and I led up the first pitch, which went up an easy chimney to the low point on the west ridge. I continued up the ridge over easy 4th-class terrain until I ran out of rope. Mist was forming on the north side of the peak and the rock was getting wet. The second pitch went directly up the steep ridge line, which turned more into a face, following some fun cracks full of wet lichen. This made placing protection fun. My boots gripped just well enough on

the wet lichen and the crux of the climb was mostly lichen-free for a couple of fun 5.6 moves up steep cracks. I ran out of rope about 30 feet short of the summit on a nice ledge where I belayed up Mike and Will. We all scrambled up the last 30 feet of rock and took in the deteriorating views as the clouds and drizzle rolled in. Views to the north were completely obscured by clouds and we made out a few peaks to the south and west through the mist. We built a small cairn and left a summit register as there was no sign of a previous ascent.

Two 60-meter rappels later we were back on flat ground and continued across the glacier to the top of the steep snow gully. We made one rappel over the bergschrund and down-climbed the remaining 1500 feet of the snow gully, placing an occasional snow picket for protection. Once down into the lower basin, we packed up our climbing gear and traversed back to the goat-trail ridge and bushwhacked back down to the boat waiting for us on the beach. We made it back just before high tide and were able to push the *Nunatak* into the water as soon as we arrived on the beach. We headed north to Dry Bay to drop Will off near Haines in the waning light. Mike and I turned the boat south and made a very interesting boat ride back to Juneau in the dark with rain picking up and visibility scarce. The climb took about 16 hours roundtrip from beach to beach, a nice long day in the Coast Mountains of southeast Alaska. 🧭



**Looking down the second pitch while Mike climbs up, Will is visible on the right at the top of the first pitch**



# Mount Griggs (7600+ feet), West Ridge, and Broken Mountain (3786 feet), East Ridge

## Katmai National Park, Aleutian Range

**Text and photos by Dave Hart**

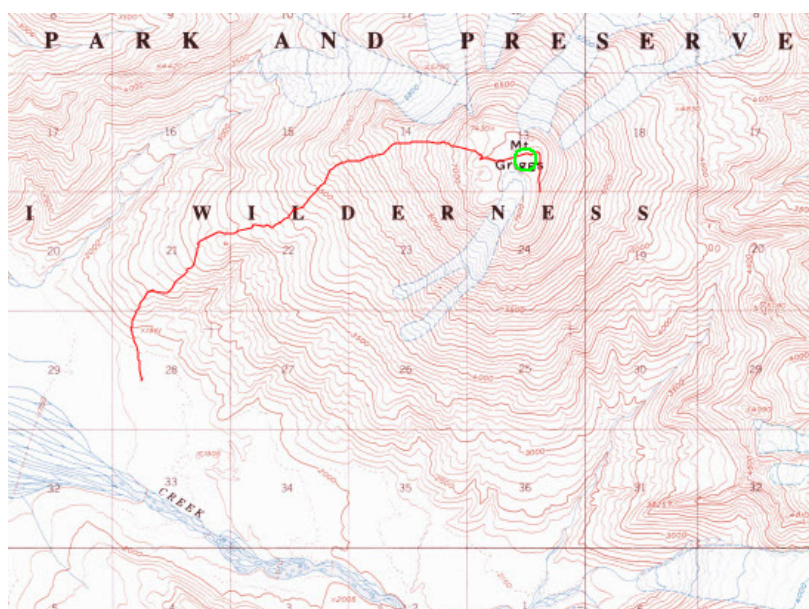
**M**ount Griggs (formerly known as Knife Peak) is an inactive stratovolcano and is the highest peak in Katmai National Park. Interestingly, Katmai's Mount Denison is shown on the Katmai National Park map to be potentially higher at 7606 feet. This differs from the USGS topographic map which shows Mount Denison's highest closed contour of 7500 feet. Local mountaineering historian Steve Gruhn reached out to the National Park Service and they acknowledged the error on the Katmai National Park map. The next update on the map will have a corrected lower elevation for Mount Denison of 7500+ feet.

Mount Griggs' 7300 feet of topographic prominence ranks it 19th of Alaska's 64 ultra-prominent peaks. It is located at the head of the magnificent Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, seven miles northeast of the Novarupta volcano (2760 feet), both of which were formed in 1912 during the largest volcanic eruption of the 20th century. Seven cubic miles of pyroclastic ash and magma buried 40 square miles of lush valley up to 700 feet thick. The resulting lunar landscape is truly a wonder to behold. Mount Griggs was named after Dr. Robert Griggs, a botanist whose repeated explorations of the area after the 1912 eruption of Novarupta led to the discovery of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes and the creation of Katmai National Monument in 1918. Two summit plaques commemorate both Dr. Griggs and his wife Laura, and their son David Tressel Griggs along with David's daughter Nicola Griggs Andron. David climbed Mount Griggs and placed the plaque of his parents and buried their ashes on the summit. Years later, David's son Stephen Griggs climbed the mountain to

place the second plaque and bring a simple urn containing the ashes of his father David and his sister Nicola, though the dates of these events are unclear.

I spent five days from July 28 to August 1, 2016, climbing Mount Griggs and Broken Mountain and exploring the area with Dahr Jamail and Ted Cahalane. Planning the logistics and actually setting up a base camp in the Valley of Ten Thousand Smoke was equally as challenging as the climb itself. This article will hopefully remove some mystique of getting into the area.

Most visitors to the Valley begin with a commercial flight from Anchorage to King Salmon, then charter a floatplane with Katmai Air to Brooks Camp and spend the night. Alternatively, one can charter directly from Anchorage to Brooks Camp with Katmai Air. From Brooks Camp, a two-and-a-half-hour bus ride takes one to the end of the road and the entrance to the Valley where the hike in begins. The Valley is bisected by the Lethe River



**GPS track of our western route up Mount Griggs from base camp.**



and Knife Creek, which are only crossable by either two short (yet fatal if missed) jumps near the bus drop-off, or a braided river crossing at the head of the Valley 12 miles distant. For those exploring the upper Valley and the Novarupta volcano, these rivers don't pose any significant access problems. Climbing Mount Griggs is another story entirely, as it is on the opposite northern side of both rivers. We opted to charter a Cessna 206 from Egli Air Haul in King Salmon to take us directly to the base of Mount Griggs, and avoid the long approach and scary river jumps.



**Ted Cahalane and pilot Sam Egli dropping us at base camp below Mount Griggs. Broken Mountain (L) and Baked Mountain (R) visible 3 miles southeast across impassable Knife Creek**

On July 28, Dahr, Ted, and I flew from King Salmon to a base camp at 1800 feet, four miles southwest of the summit of Mount Griggs. The winds in the Valley are notorious for shredding lightweight tents, so we were prepared with four-season mountaineering gear. In addition, there is very limited water available in the valley, so at the recommendation of our pilot, we hauled in water for our five days. In retrospect, the creek one mile northwest of our camp would have provided sufficient, though inconvenient, water for our trip.

We woke the next morning to misty, overcast clouds, but calm wind. We were unsure how the day would end, but Dahr and I left camp ready for our 6000-foot ascent at 7 a.m. It seemed odd to be carrying crampons, ice axe, a rope, and glacier travel gear while camped in the lunar landscape of the Valley. Ted had joined our trip at the last minute to hike with us after Dahr and I climbed Mount Griggs, so he slept in a couple more hours.

The route up Griggs was generally a mellow scree and talus hike, the crux of which was finding the most

competent ground to walk on without spinning our feet too much. We made generally quick time through the foggy terrain, occasionally checking our GPS to make sure we were heading in the right direction. We didn't see much for the first few hours as we ascended. As good fortune would have it, Dahr and I broke out of the clouds around 4000 feet, with clear sunshine above. The other big peaks surrounding the Valley rose prominently above the clouds. It was a wonderful sight.

We spent the rest of the day in sunshine while the Valley clouds dissipated slowly below us. We donned our crampons and ice axes around 6000 feet for the upper bullet-proof hard-packed snow slopes. It would not have been possible to ascend these steep upper slopes without them, which was surprising for a nice July day.

Easy hiking led us to the summit crater just above 7000 feet, where we could finally see across the final half-mile-wide plateau glacier to the summit. As noted in other accounts, the true summit is a rocky fin known as Knife Peak, on the eastern crater rim, a quarter mile southeast of the high point shown on the USGS topographic map. Unsure of crevasses, we roped up, traversed the plateau glacier to its left margin and crossed the filled in bergschrund below the summit ridge. We gained the eastern crater rim ridge near its lowest northern point. We easily walked the quarter-mile south to the true summit. The last rope length was a bit narrower and somewhat exposed to the east, but afforded easy step kicking to the



**Dahr Jamail nearing the blocky summit of Knife Peak atop Mount Griggs. Mount Mageik (7150 feet) and Mount Martin (6150 feet) visible to the right of Katmai Pass**





### Looking southeast to the lower slope of Mount Katmai and the Knife Creek Glacier, Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes

final 10-foot blocky scramble to the summit.

We arrived at noon after a five-hour hike from our camp. We relished the sunny eastern views to the coast with Iliamna Volcano (10016 feet) barely visible 100 miles north, and Mount Douglas (7064 feet) closer on the coast



**Dahr Jamail descending the upper western slopes of Mount Griggs around 7000 feet**

and the Mount Katmai (6715 feet) massif impressively rugged. Looking through Katmai Pass, we could see Shelikof Strait and Kodiak Island beyond, and Mount Mageik (7150 feet) rising impressively to the right of the Pass. Mount Martin (6150 feet) was steaming actively all day long to the south. Barren brown colors from the Valley floor were visible intermittently through the low clouds.

After 45 minutes on top, we headed back down at 12:45 p.m., stopping for 30 minutes at the fumaroles on the inner crater rim on the way down. The descent was uneventful, as we simply retraced our route, careful not to slip on the still-frozen steep upper snow slopes. Ted spent the day hiking on the lower slopes and we met him as we descended back into the clouds below at 5400 feet. The three of us continued together, arriving back at camp at 5 p.m. after an enjoyable 11-mile, nine-hour day in a surreal landscape.

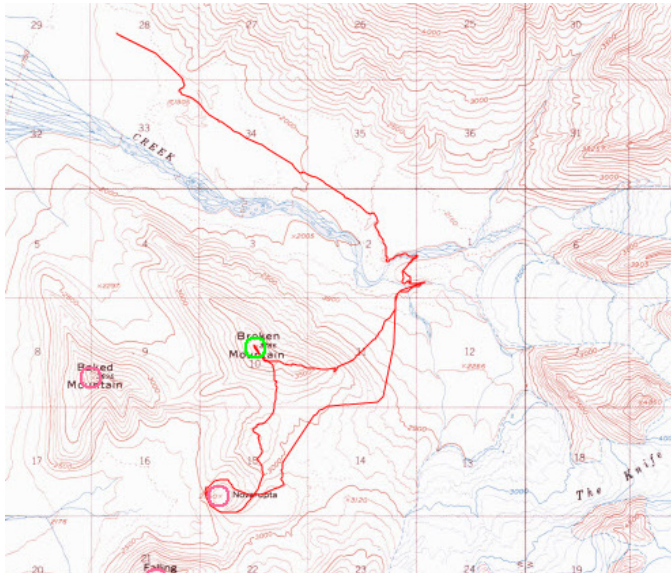
The next day we wanted to explore the upper Valley, and hopefully make it to the Novarupta volcano. We left camp at 8 a.m., anxious to see if we could actually safely cross Knife Creek that stood between us and Novarupta. We had a copy of Gerry Roach's 2004 trip report in which he described crossing Knife Creek by three smaller braids at the head of the Valley. We hiked 3-1/2 miles upriver and managed to cross the first braid at a reasonable ford site. The second was also manageable, but the third looked a little spooky as the water was chocolate brown emanating straight from the Knife Creek Glacier. We used our ski poles to probe each footstep in front of us in the murky water. Once across, another 2-1/2 miles of undulating lunar landscape led up to the eastern slopes of Novarupta volcano. We met a few other parties at the volcano, both hikers and a group of researchers staying at the nearby Baked Mountain Huts.

After lunch, Dahr and I decided to hike back over Broken Mountain while Ted retraced our tracks. We found some recent Super Cub tire tracks on the summit of Broken Mountain, visible in the soft volcanic ash. Soon enough, we rejoined Ted at the first of our upcoming three stream crossings. While we had only been gone a few hours,



**Dahr Jamail and Ted Cahalane hiking towards Falling Mountain while approaching Novarupta, off to the right**





**Our GPS track from base camp below Mount Griggs to Novarupta and Broken Mountain. Note the river crossings of the three braids of Knife Creek**

the day was sunny and warm. The river had swollen and looked even more intimidating than before. The few visible rocks were now hidden under deeper water. We knew the bottom was competent, though the increased flow did give us pause. Swimming in this section would flush us into the start of the deadly Knife Creek canyon several hundred yards downstream. We linked arms and used ski poles to brace against the current. It wasn't as bad as we feared, and a minute later we were across. The final two crossings were a little deeper than the morning, but not bad.

After the third crossing we trudged down-valley for the final 3-1/2 miles to camp, arriving in time for dinner at 6 p.m. Our 18-mile hike took 10 hours of casual travel.

We spent our third day exploring downriver from our camp, occasionally peering down into the northern canyon walls of Knife Creek, spooked at the thought of falling into the boiling cauldron.

Our fourth and final day was spent breaking camp and getting picked up by Egli Air Haul and returning to Anchorage that evening. Note that Egli's Cessna 206 has plenty of capacity for three climbers and gear when taking off from the paved runway of King Salmon. However, the soft ash of the Valley meant that our pilot would only take our three bodies on our first flight out. He had to make a second flight back for our gear, adding an unexpected additional \$700 trip to get our gear. The total cost of our

Egli flights were \$2,100, split three ways.

We made it back to Anchorage on the evening flight from King Salmon bringing a fun five-day adventure to a close. 📍

*[Editor's note: Wayne Todd explored the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes with Tom Choate and James Larabee in 1995. Wayne hopped across Knife Creek to complete a solo climb of Mount Griggs from a camp near the Baked Mountain Huts, commenting that he used up one of his nine lives each way during the jumps. Reference the September 1995 Scree.]*

**GPS track for Mount Griggs:** <http://peakbagger.com/climber/ascent.aspx?aid=686758>.

**GPS track for Broken Mountain:** <http://www.peakbagger.com/climber/ascent.aspx?aid=686760>.

**Gerry Roach's trip report and photos from August 11, 2004:** [http://www.climb.mountains.com/Classic\\_Peaks\\_files/National\\_Park\\_Classics\\_files/Griggs\\_Climb.shtml](http://www.climb.mountains.com/Classic_Peaks_files/National_Park_Classics_files/Griggs_Climb.shtml) and [http://www.cohp.org/natl\\_parks/Katmai\\_1.html](http://www.cohp.org/natl_parks/Katmai_1.html).

**Luc Mehl's trip report and video of a tremendous 15-day ski mountaineering traverse of Katmai National Park from March 20 to April 4, 2017:** <https://thingstolucat.com/katmai-traverse/>.

**2012 Alaska Dispatch News article on 1912 Novarupta-Katmai eruption.** <https://www.adn.com/science/article/alaskas-novarupta-volcanic-eruption-remembered-100-years-later/2012/06/02/?page=0,0>



**Ted Cahalane and Dahr Jamail returning to camp from Novarupta with the south side of Mount Griggs towering 6000 feet above. Our ascent route followed the left skyline**

# Better Red and P4550 than Flatlence\*

## Red Mountain (4410 feet) and Peak 4550, Talkeetna Mountains

Text and photos by Wayne L. Todd

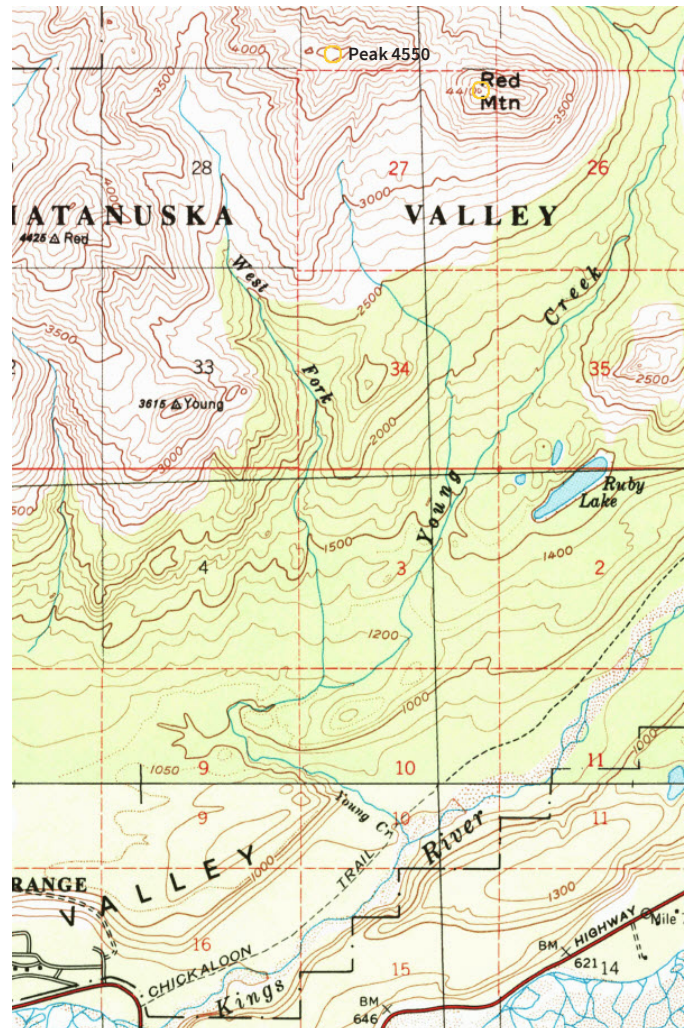
There are no signs at the Kings River trailhead. I initially drive the road adjacent to the river thinking, “Sweet, this will take miles off my approach,” until I see private property signs for both roads at a Y (and misinterpret one of them). I return to the campground, drive a road that just parallels the highway, then go back to the campground. I know there’s a legitimate trail that travels east, so I park and “bike-up.” Heading below the power line, I soon make a hard right, fairly sure I’m on track. I’m having fun and making good time as this trail merges with the road I’d first driven. Continuing on past the private property sign to the right this time, I realize it’s legal access.

It’s a typical cool, cloudy July 2017 day, which is appreciated as I take the left trail at Mile 2.5, and immediately head steeply upslope (steep for my biking, anyway). As I’m pumping along, two Jeeps pass me. Would I have taken a ride if offered?

The all-terrain vehicle trails are great access, but it’s a shame no planning went into their routes, which lead to elevation undulations and more problematic, serious mud/water holes, which typically get bypassed causing another mud/water hole, and again ... I soon become accustomed to biking through some of them with the slap, slap sound of my shoes pedaling in water. In deeper sections I implement skateboard style (pushing on the high side with a dry leg while the other gets soaked). A



Biking through one of the many mud holes on the approach



couple places carrying the bike around works. Infrequent stream crossings give me a slight rinse.

With the myriad trails I mistakenly go slightly right by a few small lakes, a lush, green area backed by a rock ridge, but marred by significant off-road vehicle erosion. Above this, sporadic serious bolder sections force me to walk my bike. I’m impressed the Jeeps made it up.

The trail levels out and Red Mountain is on my left, so it’s a matter of how far up the trail I want to go vs. how far down I want to drop to cross the East Fork of Young Creek. Stashing my bike well off trail with my wet socks and shoes wrung and hung to dry, I drop to the creek with judicious use of bear bell ringing. It’s tempting to cross the





**Red Mountain from the East Fork of Young Creek**

creek with boots on, but too early to wet out the nice dry boot/sock combination. On the other side the greenery is only waist high and soon I'm on the flanks of Red. I cross a couple good trails which I presume are animal-made.

Red is steep and rocky on this side. I rock-walk up hundreds of feet, start a scramble section, but venture off right for more rock hiking. The weather is threatening, but I have good views below 6000 feet. During this climb I hear engines occasionally and can usually spot the two Jeeps below in the intensely green valley.

Walking is more pleasant on the upper ridge, which has organic material with alpine flowers about. I don't see a cairn on the summits of Red Mountain and keep moving westward. The descent west toward Peak 4550 is rather steep, but manageable with poles. The varying rock colors and shapes are much more interesting here in the Talkeetna Mountains than in the Chugach Mountains. Up the east ridge to Peak 4550, a couple ptarmigan chortle their presence.

On the broad top of Peak 4550, a walkabout for a panoramic picture gleans poor results with visibility now only below 5000 feet.

I'm not so keen on retracing my route back, so at the saddle I drop north and then traverse right across large boulders that transition to alpine turfed boulders. My initial thought of accessing the ATV trail is dismissed, as I'd have to drop, bushwhack, creek cross, and climb up to it on the flanks of Lava Mountain. I gradually angle downward, avoiding major brush until encountering one of the animal trails. Jangling away, I encounter a cow

moose and calf, which luckily don't like bells and bolt away. Unfortunately, I don't see which direction, so start even faster bell ringing.

Soon I'm back to my creek crossing, up to the bike, and redressed in still-wet shoes and socks. The debate about whether it was worth riding in or how far is quickly dismissed even with the brief walking sections, numerous tip-overs (usually on inclines), and still-full mud holes. I have a bizarre paranoia of falling over in one of the big mud holes, unable to clip out, and drowning.

Judicious brake use, with squealing, gets more pronounced as the trail improves for speed. It's impressive the abuse mountain bikes can handle and keep working well (hopefully no silt damage).

My only motorized encounter is a two-stroke motorcycle that zips past at a muddy rocky section. Back to the flats, I pedal for home (truck) at full speed.

The bugs weren't bad enough to don a head net and I never got rained on (key for speed on the bike descent).

Utilizing a bicycle is probably two hours faster than straight hiking (and more fun). One might be able to park somewhere along the river a mile or two up the trail from the campground, but parking is quite limited, and not allowed on the private property access section. The endowed/lazy/smart could make this an easy few-hour outing by ORV-ing almost to the base of Red Mountain.

Eight hours, 18 miles (14 bicycling), 5000 feet elevation gain. ①

*\*Flatlence is what I called Peak 4550 20 years ago, after climbing Lava Mountain.*



**Looking back to Red Mountain from Peak 4550**

# The Softer Side of Baneful Peak (5495 feet), West Face

## Western Chugach Mountains

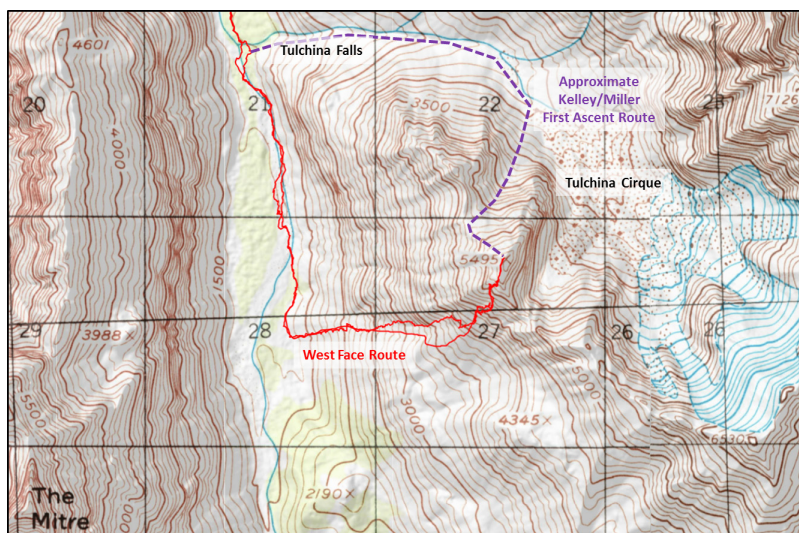
**Text and photos by Gerrit Verbeek**

There's not much beta on Baneful Peak. Most documented ascents have been done via the Tulchina Cirque to the northeast. Billy Finley has one of the more detailed accounts, an entertaining blog post with plenty of photos describing an ascent "with big air beneath" up the northwest ridge with Eric Parsons and a sufferfest getting cliffed out on a "shortcut" down (<http://www.akmountain.com/index.cfm/2015/05/29/Baneful-Peak>). Even though it's a middle-of-the-pack 5495-foot peak, the wild route descriptions and the name Baneful make you picture a short, feisty Rocky Balboa of a mountain jutting its chin at The Mitres and Bashful Peaks of the Eklutna neighborhood.

Tim Kelley and Tim Miller made the first recorded ascent of the mountain on September 6, 1993, as part of a campaign tagging and naming unclimbed Western Chugach peaks that were passed over while the first wave of mountaineering exploration in the '50s to the '80s scouted the area and went after even larger objectives. Tim Kelley was especially prolific while leading this self-titled "first ascent clean-up crew." His first ascent report of Baneful (November 1993 *Scree*) didn't mention route details, but as luck would have it, Tim Miller works in the same office building as I do. Both Tims are friendly and approachable with questions. Kelley's and Miller's first ascent route entered Tulchina Cirque from the East Fork of the Eklutna River, then, as described by Kelley: "[j]ust before reaching the glacial debris (as marked on the topo [...]), we took the gully leading south, up the NW ridge just to the west of the summit. From the 4750-foot point on the NW ridge we went to the summit." Kelley later proposed the name Baneful to fit with the "B\_\_\_ful" pattern of Bashful and Baleful Peaks. As a sidenote,

"Tulchina" is a Dena'ina clan name meaning "Those Born of Water." Tulchina Falls (Tulchina Nudghilent) is the name a local resident provided to Chugach State Park staff in the 1990s (see James Kari's *Shem Pete's Alaska*).

I summited Baneful as a one-day trip on August 5, 2017, via a surprisingly easy scree slope straight up the west face from the East Fork of the Eklutna River valley floor, connecting to the ridge about 500 feet south of the summit. If you do not have an appetite for the exposed scrambling described on the northwest ridge, or the notoriously tough bushwhack above Tulchina Falls, this route is for you! It might also be a fantastic ski descent as long as you can trust the snowpack: 3000 vertical feet of wide, unbroken 35-degree slope with great views and several convenient benches for rest breaks or doing laps. I have no doubt this route has been done before, especially considering the East Fork Trail seems to dead-end at the base of the route. (*Editor's note: The trail continues relatively prominently another mile south to the top of Point 2190, and then much less prominently another mile upvalley beyond that.*) But I have not seen an account of previous ascents of this route anywhere. At the very least, it's only a hair to the north of the route Frank Baker described taking to near the summit of what is now Baneful Peak in 1963 (February 2007 *Scree*), although he later corrected himself that he had not actually reached Baneful's summit (July 2009 *Scree*). Rest assured: the route goes!



**West face route and Tim Kelley's and Tim Miller's approximate first ascent route. USGS topographical maps with relief shading via caltopo.com.**



A note of caution: the East Fork Trail is bear-central in late summer. For two miles I passed bear scat literally every 100 to 200 feet, some of it so fresh it had flies on it. At one point I even walked into the smell of a bear, which is instantly identifiable even if you've never smelled it before and makes a deep corner of your lizard brain stop you dead in your tracks. The area belongs to them and I'm sure they were within spitting distance, but with one hand on the bear spray I didn't actually see one all day thanks to constant, loud karaoke and announcements that a human was coming through and they could have the trail back as soon as I was done with it. Running water mutes sounds, so after every stream crossing the bears got an update.

The East Fork Trail can be hard to find, especially the initial section. After you cross on a makeshift log bridge downstream of Tulchina Falls, head straight across the gravel bar, looking for cairns that lead you to a small clearing with a board randomly nailed between two trees. The trail is very faint for the next hundred yards, crossing through swamp, but then becomes clear again. Expect multiple sections of good trail divided by 20 to 50 yards of head-scratching. When in doubt, going straight usually works. It took three or four passes for me to get the full picture, and I put my time in on an earlier scouting trip on July 4th. On that first trip I tried to fight a jungle gym of alder and devil's club up to exposed rock closer to the cliffs. I learned my lesson after a few hours, but spotted the slide path I would take on this trip. The summit had to wait that day because I had told one group of friends to expect a call by 9 p.m., and I had loaned my 406-megahertz beacon to another group of friends who were tackling a burlier adventure.

Assuming the bears stay lost and the trail stays found, the final section of the approach turns onto a long gravel bar out of the trees and marked with several cairns, then dips back through the trees for a bit and finally seems to end at a clearing. The clearing is past Baneful's west face cliffs; if you see cliffs to your right while looking towards the summit you have not gone far enough. The far end of the clearing intersects with the path of an old avalanche, which helpfully bulldozed its way straight to the valley floor. Plants are fighting to take back the first couple hundred vertical feet, but it's nothing heinous yet and it's open scree above that.

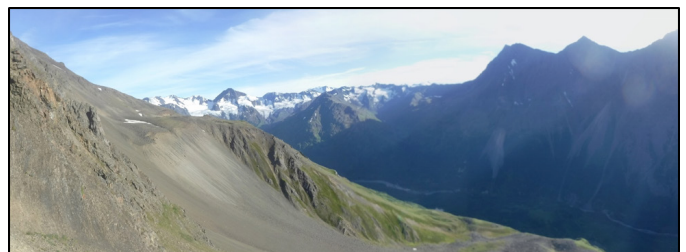


**West face of Baneful Peak: the ticket to the top. The avalanche path runs up the center of the photo to the bottom of the scree.**

Pick the weakness in the regrowing vegetation that connects to a scree slope running to the skyline, make sure again that all cliffs are well to climber's left, and start chugging uphill. The scree is a Stairmaster on the way up, but on the way down, it's the best surfing scree I've ever treaded in the Chugach Mountains. Midway up the slope, you skirt a large bench at about 3200 feet, and another bench at 4345 feet might be the campsite and sheep hunting grounds to which Frank Baker referred.

As you're approaching the col after several thousand vertical feet of scree treadmill, a more direct line toward the summit to climber's left up some rock gullies might seem more appealing than continuing straight to the saddle. I headed up the gullies with the Ascending Routefinder's Prayer: "Dear Chugach, lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from Screeville!" And deliver it did, with excellent rock quality that levels out into large, stable blocks I walked across to get to a grassy summit.

The way out was pure Level 1 Fun: that phenomenal scree surf straight down while enjoying the sunset against the imposing cliffs of The Mitre's east face, an encore performance of bearaoke with no witnesses of any species, and clear skies all the way home. With luck Baneful can be baneless. Get out there! 📍



**Panorama looking south from Baneful Peak's upper west face.**

# Cooper: We Did

## Cooper Mountain (5270 feet), Kenai Mountains

Text and photos by Wayne L. Todd

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**D**uring July 2017 a friend emails me that she has a friend in town who is experienced and looking for an outdoor adventure. Yahoo!

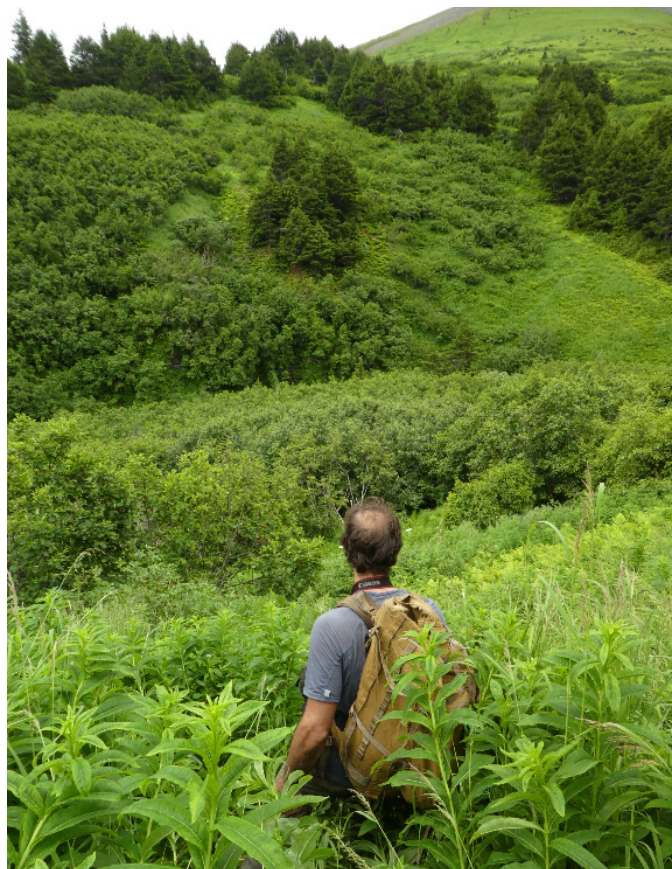
Ethan Welty and I connect. He tells me he's "open for whatever." (I feel slightly guilty about the trip choice, though weather forecast is a factor as to location).

We park roadside at Stetson Creek Campground, not seeing the trail by Sackett's Kenai Grill (an excellent place to eat). The actual trailhead with parking is just west of Sackett's Kenai Grill, although we leave from the campground and soon cross Cooper Creek to the left (east). "That's not right." I know there's a trail to the right somewhere, as I've hiked it before. We deviate off trail while I worry, "This is not a good beginning" to what is already known to be a long day. Less than a half hour later, we intersect the obvious wide trail. Sweet!

Now on track, we make good time, except for occasional photography stops. Ethan is a professional photographer and carries ten pounds of camera gear up front, in addition to his pack. I find the interest in photography refreshing. Our first subject is a recent burn, inhabited by twisted and stark, charcoal-black trees. There's also myriad flowering plants to shoot along the trail.

It's effortless getting to know an interesting person such as Ethan. He's working on a Ph.D. in glaciology at the University of Colorado in Boulder, grew up in France, and travels often to Switzerland with his Swiss partner.

As the trail splits and dwindles, we decide to drop into Stetson Creek to gain the more direct ridge above. A glimpse left down a trail to a mining claim reveals a well-scoured creek bed (perhaps from the recent dam work). Just beyond, we spy a reasonable route, so we plunge into dense thickets of head-high ferns (my least favorite biome



**Ethan Welty and black flies in the lush vegetation approaching Cooper Mountain**

this summer with the accompanying biting black flies).

Swarms of black flies discover us as we prepare to cross the creek (although mild, it is worthy of de-booting). Once on the far side, the flies turn vicious, landing on our faces and biting seconds later. Enough! We thrust on our head nets for a brief respite. The black flies follow us for an hour before passing us off to the smaller and less vicious (but still biting) red flies. Eating is a bit comical while wearing head nets.

Above brush line, alpine flowers abound, their colors accented by the diffuse lighting of the overcast sky. On a less-vegetated slope below a snowfield, the ground (saturated by snowmelt) softens as we scamper across to avoid muddy legs. Our steps trigger numerous small "debris flows." We watch these slow slurries of mud and rock and glean an understanding of how some of the neighboring landscape is formed.

Ethan and I top out on the low ridge and debate whether to continue: our ridge route looks fairly steep as it disappears into the clouds, and we're already five and a



half hours in. We decide to go for it, and as is often the case, discover that the route is not as steep as anticipated. The angle soon tapers off, but the visibility is only a quarter mile, hiding the summit, which is still over two miles away. The ridge offers dramatic close-up views of clinging cornices on the very steep west side. One cornice even features a “sitting hole” for those inclined to dangerous stunts. Rock ptarmigan, out strolling with their chicks, fly away as we approach. Numerous bumps later, in even less visibility, we finally top out on Cooper Mountain, and it



**Ethan Welty on the alpine upper slopes of Cooper Mountain**

begins to drizzle. We don't linger long.


We're eager to try a different exit route that we had spotted earlier - a promising route down the ridge just east of our ascent ridge, with a hike to the Cooper Lake Dam and out a road. Where the ridge splits, the visibility improves, confirming the descent ridge looks great. Down we go on a loop instead of an out 'n' back. One option is to drop right, off the ridge, to a creek and directly travel to Cooper Lake and then around the shore of the lake. This looks easy from our position, as the water level is rather low.

However, the ridge is so pleasant we continue on until brush/tree line and then drop right, donning head nets again. The brush is BW3 (a challenging bushwhacking rating), but it's all downhill and we don't have far to go. Shortly after reaching the flats, we intersect an old overgrown road with a usable (animal?) trail. We're soon to the new Cooper Lake Dam, then marching down the road (easily drivable, were it not for the ever-closed gate). Biking out would be fast.

One of the few un-pleasantries of the day is walking the very busy Seward Highway back to the

campground in near darkness.

At the stroke of midnight we finally reach our truck, 14 hours after starting out. We covered 19 miles and 6,500 feet of elevation gain.

I'm glad to hear Ethan later gets out on a sunny weekend for the very scenic Bomber Glacier traverse. 

#### *Author's Note:*

*The most efficient way to climb Cooper Mountain is probably to bike in/out the Cooper Lake Dam road (a couple hills are quite steep), and either walk the lake perpendicular to the easternmost north ridge, or walk the old road trail to the closest point on the same ridge. A dam work road to the west probably ties into the mining claim area and might also provide reasonable access. The two lower peaks adjacent to Cooper Mountain could easily be tacked on. Biking from Snug Harbor on the Russian Lakes trail is another reasonable option. If you want to climb all five peaks on that plateau (the ambitious original plan), the most efficient way is probably to start from the dam road and drop to the Stetson Creek Trail after peak completions, via a clockwise loop.*

*I tried our ingress route a few years back with Carrie Wang, but we turned about due to late season impending darkness. On that trip, I lost a nice Casio altimeter watch somewhere. Perhaps someday it will be found and thought to be old mining equipment.*

*Additional photos from Ben Still's similar September 14, 2014, ascent of Cooper Mountain are available at: [https://www.facebook.com/ben.still.92/media\\_set?set=a.7077777105943691.1073741897.100001342252087&type=1&l=c771c97a9f](https://www.facebook.com/ben.still.92/media_set?set=a.7077777105943691.1073741897.100001342252087&type=1&l=c771c97a9f).*



**Cooper Lake from the upper slopes of Cooper Mountain**

# The Beak (4730 feet)

## South Ridge, Western Chugach Mountains

By Marcin Ksok

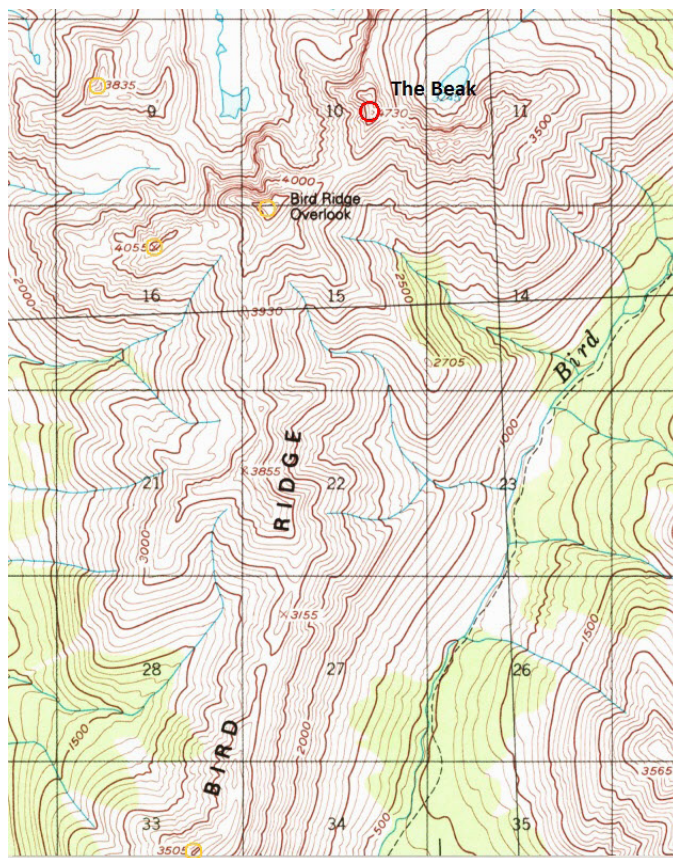
**B**ird Ridge is quite a popular hiking destination, and a great training hike with even greater views. Most hikers turn around at Race Point, snap some glory photos, and head back down the knee-busting trail. Others continue a bit farther, to sit at the highest flat spot on top of Bird Ridge Point (3505 feet) and take in the panoramic landscape. Fewer continue on in search of higher elevation, by briskly walking another couple miles on the increasingly steep ridge to gain the top of Bird Ridge Overlook (4625 feet). Judging from the condition of the trail, those hikers are quite few, and it would be interesting to know how many.

But the adventure does not have to end there. Even fewer descend the south slopes of Bird Ridge Overlook, bypassing some gendarmes and heading for the next summit along the ridge, The Beak. In my opinion, this marks the endpoint of the ridge, though some might argue differently. *(Editor's note: There are five 500-foot prominent true summits along Bird Ridge proper: Bird Ridge Point, Bird Ridge Overlook, The Beak, The Wing, and Tail Feather Peak. In addition, Bird's Eye Peak is relatively easily accessed from the north end of the ridge, off to the east. Bidarka Peak, Shaman Dome, and The Sail are west of and loosely affiliated with Bird Ridge, but not easily accessed from the ridge itself.)*

Greg Encelewski and I found ourselves in just that situation of heading beyond Bird Ridge Overlook toward The Beak. It was mid-May, and the snow had mostly melted away, except for a select few spots. The ridge walking was fast and light, wind-driven snow was pelting our backsides from the south, just to make things interesting, of course. At the saddle between Bird Ridge Overlook and The Beak, precipitation ceased and so did the wind, obviously an invitation from the mountain gods

for a visit to the top. The final south ridge started out pleasantly, offering many options to bypass steeper rocks, but about two-thirds of the way up, the angle increased. There was some scrambling on all fours and a stemming move or two, leaving us wondering if the route could be repeated on the way down. Toward the top, the ridge mellowed out nicely and we reached a high point. Then we looked beyond and saw another one. We scrambled a bit again, and Greg actually straddled the ridge in one spot. It was all quite scenic, as the clouds were then parting. We confirmed by a GPS reading that we stood on the summit proper of The Beak, a very narrow summit indeed.

Our return down the steep sections was mellower than feared, once the unknown was not a factor. Surprisingly, we heard voices from below and eventually ran into another party going for the same objective. What were the odds? The Beak was more popular than I had imagined, though it lacked signs of passage: no cairns, no disturbed grass, and not even a faint trail on its lower slopes. Yet there we were, two groups on the same day. The return trip offered much-improved weather and proper views of Turnagain Arm and surrounding landscapes. ①





# Hidden Peak (5105 feet) to The Ramp (5240 feet)

## Ridge Traverse Attempt, Western Chugach Mountains – Twelve Miles, Six Hours, and One Giant Boulder Fall

Text and photos by Nathaniel Bannish

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I woke up Saturday morning not knowing that I was going to go scrambling, much less on Hidden Peak, much less try to connect the ridge between Hidden Peak and The Ramp. Interesting how plans for the day evolve, eh?

Like 80% of my days off this year, the forecast called for rain showers. That meant I woke up, made coffee, went back and forth from the computer to the window, and waited for the sky to reveal itself. It didn't look so bad!

Since it didn't look SO bad, meaning that it still looked SORT of bad, I decided to stay close to home and climb a peak that had so far slipped underneath the radar – Hidden Peak.

Hidden Peak is connected to O'Malley Peak via a ridgeline, and many a time at the O'Malley summit I have entertained the thought of continuing toward Hidden. But every time, it just looked too dang far to be bothered. Hmmph! So today I reasoned I would cut O'Malley out of the picture, and go straight up to Hidden Peak from the aptly named Hidden Lake just below.

The trail to Hidden Lake was several miles from the Glen Alps parking lot, and as I left the car and started walking, I knew it was gonna be a windy one. And indeed it was proving to be! I donned wind pants and a shell after the first few minutes, and kept them on all the way to Hidden Lake.

The wind was in fact so fearsome that it was stirring up white-capped waves on Hidden Lake, and threatening to blow me over and rip the phone from my hand as I snapped



The trail toward Hidden Lake

some obligatory fall alpine shots. This was going to be interesting. Bracing against the wind and few errant raindrops, I started climbing up the soggy scree.

I had slightly miscalculated my ascent, so instead of getting straight to the summit, I was deposited on the ridge. It was a very windy traverse toward Hidden! As I got closer, the rock got steadily steeper, until it forced me to go below the ridgeline and claw my way up a hideously manky mess of a chute. Eww.

At the summit the wind was actually starting to calm down a bit, but that's a relative term and it was still quite strong. In the distance, I saw fresh snow on both Mount Williwaw and The Ramp, as well as a few rays of sun! That got my attention, and then I had an idea – I'll go get some sun, and finally connect to The Ramp on this ridge!

I knew that this ridge was serious. I just didn't



Traveling on the ridge to The Ramp, looking back to O'Malley Peak  
and Hidden Peak

know HOW serious. There was little intel to be found on it, at least none that I could ever find, and the one attempt I had made on it two years ago made me hesitate. Surely, it couldn't be that bad? Could it?

The wind was considerably calmer by that point, but the rock was still quite wet and horrendously mossy. Not confidence inspiring at all, especially while wearing wind shells on my gloves. Despite that, the ridge crest seemed to have go-arounds for all the sketchiest parts, for which I was grateful.

As it continued, these go-arounds got gnarlier and gnarlier, until it was difficult to tell if it would be better to stay on the ridge and contend with steep rock, or step off the ridge and deal with near vertical moss chutes. It was at about that point, even though I was going slow and carefully, that I had a confidence shattering mishap.

I was starting up one of many mossy go-arounds, and decided I didn't like the route I was on, so I opted to try and head to the neighboring one. No problem – step to the side, get a hold on this large boulder, and the...

The boulder moved.

I felt a heart stopping moment as it moved, and continued to move, coming toward me, barely touching my shoe and wind pants, and then continuing down on its chaotic path of moss destruction, plummeting a thousand feet or more below. It must've weighed at least 300 pounds.

That shook me. My foot was scratched a bit and my wind pants were torn, but it was nothing compared to what could have been. I felt like it was a sign that maybe that wasn't the day to be there. I was very close to the end of that nasty part of the ridge, but unfortunately that last bit was also the worst bit. I decided to call it, and made a painstaking descent down toward Hidden Lake.

Even though I was bailing off the ridge, it still wasn't easy getting down. The line of sight was deceptive, and there were many drop-offs that looked fine until I was right upon them. That slowed me up quite a bit, but I heaved a sigh of relief once I was off the super crud.

Things were certainly a bit more pleasant down there, so I decided to have a nice leisurely walk back to the car, snapping photos as I went, reflecting on my incident. I felt pretty lucky to have escaped as neatly as I did, with hardly a scratch. I supposed that that is what happens

when you mess around in loose rock, time and time again – eventually you would make one fall. Maybe a big one. I knew it, but now I'd seen it demonstrated right in front of me.

The parking lots were fairly empty for a Glen Alps Saturday afternoon, and that probably should have been expected due to the weather. I started on my way home, happy to have finally made it up Hidden, but knowing there's still a looming asterisk on the ridge. I'll be back. Just not in the wet! ①



**Southern aspect of Hidden Peak from GoogleEarth. Descent to Hidden Lake facing viewer, The Ramp off to the right**

- (1) The manky gully up to the summit.
- (2) Realizing that I needed to duck below the ridge crest to avoid the worst exposure.
- (3) The first crux – I came to a steep overlook, carefully peeked over, and realized I needed to go around. Even so, there was an unavoidable knife edge for about 30 to 50 feet.
- (4) Massive crud block. I went around it on the southwest side and took a scree-filled gully to finish getting past.
- (5) This is where the rock fell. I was being forced into worse and worse situations, and although I don't think the other side of the ridge would be any better, I was not certain. That took away all my confidence, and I slowly started making my way down and around.
- (6) I was faced with several incredibly slippery blocks of rock, and had to keep looking for a way around them. Luckily, there were some moderately inclined dirt/moss ramps that were viable go-arounds.
- (7) I made it to some far less perilous scree, and my GPS had a significant data recording hiccup!



# You Know, the Peak at the Y in the Road?

## Peak 1675, Northeast Slopes, Kenai Mountains

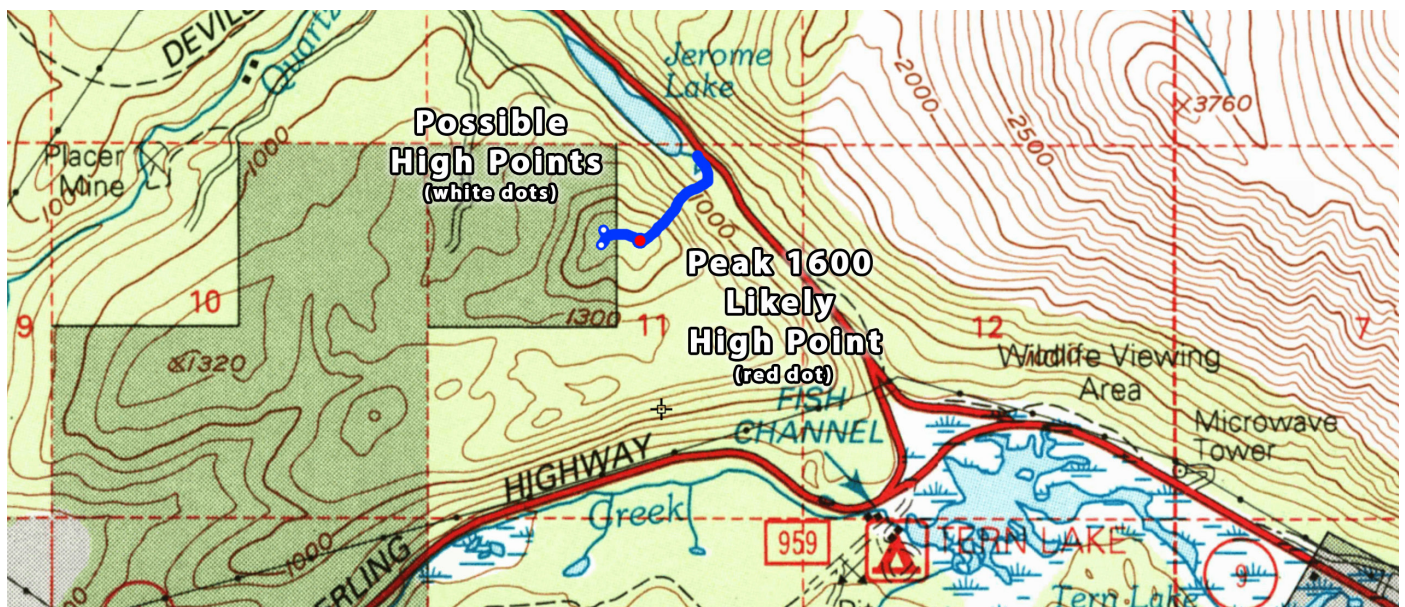
Text and map by Lee Helzer

I don't know how many times I've driven by it. You know, Peak 1675 just north of the Y in the road where the Sterling highway branches west off the Seward Highway toward Kenai? On June 10th, 2017, my wife, son, and I were heading south for a relaxing weekend packrafting the Swan Lake Canoe Trail System. I love the canoe trail, but it has a critical flaw: no mountains. Eager to get in some hiking elevation, I looked at the clock on the dashboard; I had plenty of time. I turned into the large pull-off at the south end of Jerome Lake and looked for a route up the peak. I choose to walk south, down the road about 20 yards before crossing the small marshy creek. I then brute-forced my way straight up the northeast hillside through the thick alders and devil's club. Just about the time I was second guessing my choice, the thick underbrush gave way to a soft blanket of moss and sparse hemlock. A short time later I was on top of what appeared to be the



Summit register indicating 1675-foot GPS reading at the summit

high point. I looked northwest. There were two points shrouded by hemlock trees that had the potential to be higher, so I noted the elevation of my GPS and I walked over to investigate. On the way, I passed a U.S. Forest Service Boundary sign. When I arrived at each point, I set my GPS on the ground and waited for the numbers to stabilize. Both points were just 5 to 10 feet lower than the first point. That was not enough to definitively say the first point was the highest, but good enough for me until a real surveyor can make the final call. I returned to the first point, signed the register, and retraced my tracks back to the car. The little side trip ended up being right at a mile distance, 800 vertical feet of elevation gain, and an hour in round-trip duration. I would recommend leather gloves to guard against devil's club for anyone wishing to repeat the ascent. ①



# Mount Adams (12276 feet)

## Suksdorf (South) Ridge,

## Cascade Mountains, Washington

**Text by Greg Higgins**

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When Gary Hull and I cramponed onto the summit of Mount Rainier in the early morning light of July 10, 1996, I was struck by a mountain to the south that seemed covered in endless glaciers and snowfields. I thought that one day I would like to see what the view was from its summit. But time got away from us and these thoughts were banished somewhere to the back recesses of my mind. 12276-foot Mount Adams was that mountain. Like many stratovolcanoes, it rises majestically above its surroundings, dominating the skyline in its immediate area. It is one of a number of volcanoes that dot the Pacific Northwest region like stones dropped randomly by some giant who once walked the land.

In Washington only Mount Rainier (14410 feet) to the north is higher. Adams is also overshadowed in recognition by its more famous cousin to the west, Mount Saint Helens (7152 feet). It was named for President John Adams in a once ambitious plan to name all of the high peaks of that region after presidents. The project failed, which many feel was not a bad thing. As the late Vin Hoeman claimed: "Men should be named for mountains and not vice versa."

When I contracted myasthenia gravis late in 2016, I thought that my time in the mountains was probably at its end. But one should never say never. With the right combination of drugs and some tenacity at the gym, I was surprised to see how much I had recovered by the time summer rolled along. Trips to Alaska in July, where I was able to test my limits with friends in assistance hiking first the Chilkoot Trail and then kayaking in the West Arm of Glacier Bay National Park, made me realize that perhaps I had a few trips left

to do. So, when the opportunity arose, I packed my overnight kit and set out prepared to bivouac halfway up the mountain to break up the 6000-foot vertical gain needed to make the summit.

The first day was hot and slow as I picked my way through first the old burned-out stumps from a relatively recent huge forest fire on the south side of the mountain. The trail took me into a lovely foxtail pine forest. At the apex of those trees were many campsites claimed from the rocky soil with much effort by previous visitors, who had moved large numbers of stones and created protective walls. Then I finally moved onto the snow above that area, which led to the usual bivouac site called Lunch Counter. Hiking in the glare and heat of the late afternoon sun was very tiring. I was most likely the last person to lay claim to a place to sleep in one of the dearly-purchased camping spots that mirrored the work seen below above the foxtail pine forest.

My remaining time before dark was spent in creating water from snow, eating, and getting my gear pared down for my plan to climb early in the morning. My sleeping bag was just a bit too light, so I had to add clothing for the night. The Milky Way above with no moon at first was so bright that once I awoke, dreaming that I had asked someone to turn out the lights! A few vigorous early souls nearby

stirred me at 3:00 a.m., and I got up to attend to breakfast and to the process of setting out. Putting on my rented crampons, I made the startling discovery that my boots were falling apart! I decided not to worry because I concluded that strapping the crampons to the boots would hold them together for the time that I needed them. There were only three headlights above me as I made my way up the seemingly-eternal snowfield that took me to the false



**Greg Higgins near the summit shelter on Mount Adams. Photo by Chad Janis**



summit called Pikers Peak (11657 feet). Halfway up, the sun rose over my right shoulder and the headlamp became a dead weight stored in a pocket. On reaching Pikers Peak, a wicked wind from the north greeted me and pushed me quickly around the corner to the remaining south slopes leading to the true summit.

The summit itself was lovely, and I walked onto it a little after 8:00 a.m. The winds had abated. There was a ramshackle hut on the top, built many years ago and once used as a watchtower. I met several other climbers on the top, and we traded stories. Two of them were high school boys about to go off to college. That was their first summit ever. Another was a man in his mid-fifties, who had nearly died from a heart attack the previous year. After having a stent placed he had been training and doing endurance work so that he could enjoy moments like that. More climbers hiked up while we visited. Descending the upper slopes was shockingly easy, as there were deep glissade channels cut into the snowfields. One only needed to sit down and let gravity work to go down those slopes in 1/10 the time it took to come up them. An ice axe was essential, though, because I tended to gain too much speed at times. On one sharp turn I missed the cut and found myself sliding out of control beyond the track, so having ice-axe arrest skill was useful.

At my bivouac site I gathered my cached gear and then made my way downward, repeating the route I had ascended the day before. That put me under the hot sun in that last snowfield, which was as unpleasant as the first time! My myasthenia still did not like heat! Nevertheless, I still made it back to the trailhead with no problems. The lesson that I learned in Alaska in July was useful. That lesson was that I have to go at the new pace that I can manage and not be discouraged by how weak I feel or how tired I might think I am. If I am able to do the things I need to do, those feelings are simply my new reality and there is not much I can do to change them. I was quite happy to have made a trip to over 12000 feet and to find that the ability to do so was still an integral part of my body memory. I am not foolish enough to make plans for a trip to the Himalaya Mountains, but it is nice to know that the mountains that I still love are not out of bounds. 🏔️

## Amulet Peak (8290 feet) Chugach Mountains

**Text and photo by Frank E. Baker**



**A** mulet Peak, 8290 feet, looking southeast from Wiener Lake at Mile 87.5 of the Glenn Highway. The peak is located in the central Chugach Mountains. Vin Hoeman described the first ascent as follows: “This beautiful mountain ... rises only six miles from mile 94 on the Glenn Highway, but the Matanuska River was a formidable barrier until winter climbing began in this area. In early 1967 none of three attempts on the northeast ridge and east face got higher than 6100 feet. Finally Bill Babcock, my wife Grace and I packed across the frozen river and up the ice of Gravel Creek on March 9, 1968 with three days at our disposal to reach the easier south side. We snowshoed up an unexplored valley to camp behind our peak at 5000 feet. The next morning was clear and cold. We had excellent conditions on the steep snow to the southwest ridge and around the gendarmes on the ridge to the room-sized summit.” Source: pages 376 and 377 of the 1969 *American Alpine Journal*.

[http://aac-publications.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/aaj/1969/PDF/AAJ\\_1969\\_16\\_2\\_376b.pdf](http://aac-publications.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/aaj/1969/PDF/AAJ_1969_16_2_376b.pdf).

# Peak of the Month: Peak 6339

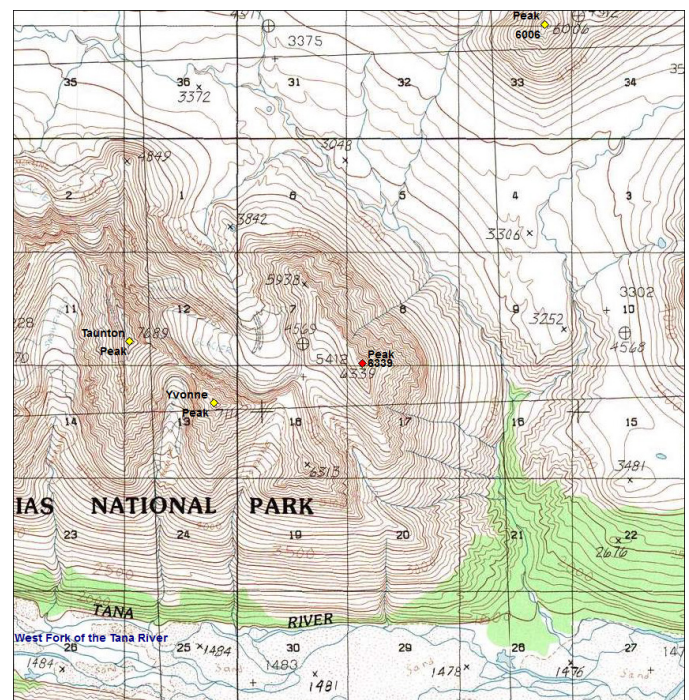
By Steve Gruhn

<b>Mountain Range</b>	Eastern Chugach Mountains
<b>Borough</b>	Unorganized Borough
<b>Drainage</b>	West Fork of the Tana River
<b>Latitude/Longitude</b>	60° 55' 22" North, 142° 58' 27" West
<b>Elevation</b>	6339 feet
<b>Prominence</b>	927 feet from Yvonne Peak (7111)
<b>Adjacent Peak</b>	Yvonne Peak
<b>Distinctness</b>	927 feet from Yvonne Peak
<b>USGS Map</b>	1:63,360: Bering Glacier (D-6), or 1:25,000: Bering Glacier D-6 NE
<b>First Recorded Ascent</b>	July 27, 1985, by Danny Kost
<b>Route of First Recorded Ascent</b>	Southwest spur to the northwest ridge
<b>Access Point</b>	Tana River Landing Strip

On July 16, 1985, Bob Jacobs flew Danny Kost in his Stinson from McCarthy to the Tana River Landing Strip on the west side of the Tana River near the eastern edge of the Eastern Chugach Mountains. Kost then bushwhacked, at times on all fours, along the west bank of the Tana River through what he described as “treacherous country” to eventually set up a base camp on July 21 at about 3400 feet in a valley about two miles north of the West Fork of the Tana River and about five miles west of the Tana River. He had traveled about 13 miles over six days to reach that base camp. On July 22 he climbed Peak 6148 north of the West Fork of the Tana River. The following day he moved his camp to an elevation of about 4000 feet and southeast of Boone Peak (7327), which he climbed on July 25. (He called Peak 7327 Kristin Peak after his niece and goddaughter Kristin Boyd. However, Kost never publicized that name and bivouac.com now calls Peak 7327 Boone Peak.) On July 26 Kost moved his camp north of Peak 7111 at an elevation of about 3800 feet.

On July 27 he moved his camp to the 5412-foot col between Peak 7111 and Peak 6339 overlooking the West Fork of the Tana River to the south and climbed northeast up the spur to the northwest ridge of Peak 6339. He then followed the ridge southeast to the summit.

On July 28 Kost left his camp at the col and climbed Peak 7111 and Taunton Peak (7689). (He named Peak 7111 Yvonne Peak in honor of his mother, Yvonne Knasel, and Peak 7689 Arlis Peak to commemorate his father, Arlis Daniel Kost, who had died in 1978. However, Danny Kost did not publicize those names and Peak 7689 is now called







**Danny Kost on the north side of Peak 6339 (left), Yvonne Peak (center), and Taunton Peak (right). Photo by Danny Kost**

Fork of the Tana River drainages. On August 6 he climbed Peak 6650 in the Willow Creek and West Fork of the Tana River drainages. Kost then descended to Willow Creek, crossed a narrow pass south of Peak 5465, and, avoiding bushwhacking except for the last few hundred feet of descent, returned to the Tana River Landing Strip, where he was picked up by Jacobs on August 8 and flown to McCarthy, completing his 24-day solo excursion into the Wrangell-Saint Elias Wilderness.

Taunton Peak on bivouac.com.) On July 29 he moved camp down to the toe of the glacier north of the saddle. The following day he moved his camp to about the 4200-foot level southeast of Peak 6119. On July 31 Danny Kost continued his exploration by climbing both Peak 7080 in the Granitic Creek, East Fork of the Chakina River, and West Fork of the Tana River drainages and Acton Peak (7550) in the Granitic Creek and East Fork of the Chakina River drainages. (Kost called Peak 7550 Knasel Peak after his mother. However, Kost never publicized that name and bivouac.com now calls Peak 7550 Acton Peak.) On August 3 Kost climbed Peak 101 (7234) in the West Fork of the Tana River drainage. (Kost called Peak 7234 Sandra Peak in honor of his younger sister Sandra Kost Stepro, although he never publicized that name. In 1984 the USGS published an updated Bering Glacier (D-6) map that noted a bench mark on the summit of Peak 7234 with the name Peak 101, which had been assigned by a U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey party in 1953. However, Kost didn't have access to this updated map at the time of his trip.) On August 4 Kost climbed Peak 6985 in the Granitic Creek and West

Because of their wider use than Danny Kost's unpublicized names for the peaks, I have opted to use the published bivouac.com and USC&GS names in this column.

I don't know of a second ascent of Peak 6339.

The information for this column came from Danny Kost's report titled "P 6148, P 6206, P 6313, P 6339, P 6650, P 6985, P 7080, P 7111, P 7234, P7327, P 7500, P 7689, Chugach Mountains," which appeared on pages 148 and 149 of the 1986 American Alpine Journal; and from my correspondence with Danny Kost. 📍



**Peak 6339 from the northwest. Kost's route of ascent followed the skyline leftward from the col. Photo by Danny Kost**

# 2017 MCA Elections

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2017 MCA Elections were held October 17, 2017, at the BP Energy Center. The results are here:

**President:** **Charlie Sink**, second consecutive term

**Vice President:** **Mike Meyers**, first term, phone number 907-202-1640, mcmeyers24@msn.com

**Treasurer:** **Mark Smith**, first term, phone number 907-717-9501, markfsmith@hotmail.com

**Secretary:** **Jen Aschoff**, first term, phone number 512-944-7530, jlaschoff@gmail.com

**Director:** **Max Neale**, first term, expires 2019

**Director:** **Ralph Baldwin**, first term

**Director:** **Jennifer DuFord**, second consecutive term

**Director:** **Tom Meacham**, first term, phone number 907-346-1077, tmeacham@gci.net, expires 2019

**Director:** **Marcin Ksok**, first term, phone number 928-380-2995, marcinkso@netscape.net, expires 2018

## Meeting Minutes

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Board of Directors  
Mountaineering Club of Alaska  
10/9/2017  
6 PM  
BP Energy Center

### Roll Call

Stephen Austria (Director) - *Not Present*  
Ralph Baldwin (Director) - *Present*  
Jennifer Duford (Director) - *Not Present*  
Nathan Hebda (Director) - *Present*  
Cory Hinds (Past President) - *Present*  
Brian Miller (Treasurer) - *Not Present*  
Max Neale (Secretary) - *Present*  
Charlie Sink (President) - *Present*  
Katie Strong (Vice President) - *Present*

### Scribe

Max Neale

### President's Report

Nothing new to report.

### Committee Reports

Vice President (Katie)

- Nathan Hebda is presenting next week at the general meeting
- We'll likely do the Backcountry Film Festival in February and another fundraising event over the winter
- Katie will coordinate presentations on the Eklutna and Bomber traverses

Treasurer (Brian Miller)

- Board has agreed to give members the option to select one-time annual memberships or recurring annual memberships.

The objective with recurring memberships is to simplify the renewal process.

- Board has agreed to raise the family membership dues by \$5 (from \$25 to \$30). This will generate approximately \$1200 in additional revenue and help to increase equity among individual memberships (currently \$20 per year) and family memberships (currently \$25 per year).

Secretary (Max)

- Max volunteered to create new welcome signs for all huts
- Max will plan an event at the rock gym

Huts (Cory)

- Board will consider creating a hut maintenance schedule and taking steps that foster a culture of caretaking at the huts

Training

- Nathan will step down from the Board but will continue to assist with training and mentorship

Parks Advisory (Jennifer + Ralph)

- Ralph will host an MCA booth at an outdoor event in Palmer, Saturday 10/14/2017

Hiking and Climbing (Ed Smith)

- Nothing new to report

Library (Charlotte Foley)

- Nothing new to report

### New Business

Awards

- The Awards Committee is considering giving a Lifetime Member Award to someone. Details to come in the coming months.

Election Nominating Committee

- The Nominating Committee has requested nominations and identified individuals who are interested in running for various positions.

### Time and location of next board meeting

11/13/2017, 6 PM, BP Energy Center, ask the front desk for the room location



## Mountaineering Club of Alaska

President	Charlie Sink	258-8770	Director (term expires in 2019)	Max Neale	207-712-1355
Vice-President	Mike Meyers	202-1640	Director (term expires in 2018)	Ralph Baldwin	232-0897
Secretary	Jen Aschoff	512-944-7530	Director (term expires in 2018)	Jennifer DuFord	227-6995
Treasurer	Mark Smith	717-9501	Director (term expires in 2019)	Tom Meacham	346-1077
			Director (term expires in 2018)	Marcin Ksok	928-380-2995

### Annual membership dues: Single \$20, Family \$30

Dues can be paid at any meeting or mailed to the Treasurer at the MCA address below. 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 Membership Committee at [membership@mtnclubak.org](mailto:membership@mtnclubak.org).

The *Scree* is a monthly publication of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska. Articles, notes, and letters submitted for publication in the newsletter should be emailed to [MCAScree@gmail.com](mailto:MCAScree@gmail.com). Articles should be submitted by the 24th of the month to appear in the next month's *Scree*.

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. Ads can be emailed to [vicepresident@mtnclubak.org](mailto:vicepresident@mtnclubak.org).

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:	Mark Smith - <a href="mailto:membership@mtnclubak.org">membership@mtnclubak.org</a>
Hiking and Climbing Committee:	Ed Smith - 854-5702 or <a href="mailto:hcc@mtnclubak.org">hcc@mtnclubak.org</a>
Huts:	Greg Bragiel - 569-3008 or <a href="mailto:huts@mtnclubak.org">huts@mtnclubak.org</a>
Calendar:	Stuart Grenier - 337-5127 or <a href="mailto:stugrenier@gmail.com">stugrenier@gmail.com</a>
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Scree Layout/Design:	Paxson Woelber - 347-971-1518 or <a href="mailto:pwoelber@gmail.com">pwoelber@gmail.com</a>

Hidden Creek approach to  
Hidden Peak. Photo by  
Nathaniel Bannish

**Web:** [www.mtnclubak.org](http://www.mtnclubak.org)

Find MCAK listserv at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/MCAK/info>.

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