

Alaska

ALASKA RANGE

Geographical note: While the well-known peaks in Denali National Park are often called “The Alaska Range,” these peaks form just one part of the immense Alaska Range, which contains many significant subranges, including the Hayes and Delta ranges, and the Revelation, Kichatna, and Tordrillo Mountains.



HAYES RANGE

Mt. Moffit, Entropy Wall. In the Eastern Hayes Range, from July 10-13, Jed Brown and Colin Haley established the Entropy Wall (2,300m, VI 5.9 A2 WI4+) on Mt. Moffit (3,969m). Their route ascends Moffit’s north face, one of the largest faces in North America. See Brown’s feature earlier in this *Journal*.

DENALI NATIONAL PARK

Denali National Park and Preserve, summary. Our season was significantly impacted this year by the death of two friends, Karen McNeill and Sue Nott, who were lost on Mt. Foraker. Karen and Sue had both befriended many of the Talkeetna staff and were well known in the climbing world as accomplished alpinists. Both of their families flew to Alaska during the search effort, as did many of their friends. It was a trying time for all. We will probably never know what happened or where they are located on Mt. Foraker. We also lost Mr. Kim, a South Korean climber who died of a sudden medical illness while descending the fixed lines on Denali [Note: The official name of the mountain is Mt. McKinley, but most climbers and locals use the native name, Denali. The two names are often used interchangeably—Ed.]. The Kim family also came to Talkeetna to thank the guides, mountaineering rangers, volunteers, and the Talkeetna staff for their help.

Temperatures in the Alaska Range seemed closer to the norm in 2006, as the firn line did not reach as high as the 7,200' Kahiltna Basecamp. During the prior season, warm temperatures resulted in considerable snowmelt at these lower elevations.

The U.S. Army High Altitude Rescue Team (HART) was able to support our camp insertions this year (and end-of-season extractions) at 7,200' and 14,200'. We hope to work with this invaluable team next season, though in the event they are redeployed to Iraq we wish them a safe journey. (*The above paragraphs from South District Ranger Daryl Miller.*)

Overall, it was a quiet season, with lower than average numbers on Denali and only



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five notable new routes climbed. The age-old dilemma about what constitutes a new route is always an issue. Is it a new route if the climbers did not go to the summit? Climbers can decide for themselves.

In another noteworthy expedition, a three-member Russian party replicated the circuitous route Dr. Frederick Cook claimed to have taken to the top of Denali back in 1906. Commencing May 19 at the Don Sheldon Amphitheater on the east side of Denali, Oleg Banar, Victor Afanasiev, and Valery Bagov ascended Traleika Col, descended the Traleika Glacier to the West Fork, moved up the West Fork, then ascended a line on the south face of Mt. Carapé. The threesome then traversed the ridge crest from Mt. Carapé to Mt. Koven, and on to Karstens Ridge. Continuing to the summit via the Harper Glacier, the Russian team reached the top on June 2, 14 days later. (*The above two paragraphs from Mountaineering Ranger Joe Reichert.*)

As detailed in the Mountaineering Summary (available at the web address below), 46 patients/climbers received NPS medical assistance, including 17 evacuations. Cases ranged from serious falls, cardiac events, altitude illness (including HAPE and HACE) and cold injury, to a pulled hammy.

Likewise, NPS staff and volunteers performed a variety of other on-mountain duties, including search missions, rescues, patrols, and education, and even a call for assistance from a team with a panic-stricken member (followed, the next day, by a call from the same team, this time needing route-finding help).

Quick Statistics—Mt. McKinley:

- 1,154 climbers attempted Mt. McKinley, with 50% reaching the summit. 1,053 attempted via the West Buttress, with 52% summiting. (28 climbers attempted Mt. Foraker. None summited.)
- Average trip length: 17.8 days. Average trip length for groups that summited: 18.5 days.
- Busiest summit day: May 29, 50 summits. Summit breakdown by month: June (315), May (199), July (67).
- Average climber age: 37.
- Women constituted only 7.1% of climbers, down from 11% in 2005.
- 38 nations were represented on Mt. McKinley this season, including U.S. (719 climbers), Canada (67), Japan (60), U.K. (44), Spain (33).

For more information, go to: www.nps.gov/dena/planyourvisit/mountaineering.htm

Summarized from the DENALI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE ANNUAL MOUNTAINEERING SUMMARY