

top of the “handle” of the Skillet, he lost his footing in a very soft section of snow and began sliding. He assumed a self-arrest position with his ice ax, but was unable to stop himself in the soft snow. When he slid into harder snow, feet first, he fractured his left ankle, but was able to self-arrest.

After the fall, he climbed across to a rock ledge on the edge of the handle around the 3700-meter elevation. He hung his cagoule on the rocks as a distress signal and bivouacked in his sleeping bag. Over the course of the next three nights, he used the flash of his camera to signal for help. The weather, which had been mostly sunny preceding the accident, now deteriorated to increasingly frequent rain and snow showers.

On June 3, when Eastham became overdue, the Jenny Lake climbing rangers glassed the east slopes of Mount Moran with a telescope in an attempt to locate Eastham, but because of the storm clouds, were unable to see him. Likewise, we were unable to observe his camera flashes at night.

On June 4, Rangers Burgette, Dorward, Johnson, Speckman, and Woodmency began searching the east side of Mount Moran on foot. At 1335, as they were ascending the Skillet Glacier, they met Eastham, who by then had managed to descend to the base of the handle. They lowered Eastham to a heliport which they had shoveled out of the snow at the base of the Skillet. He was flown by helicopter from there to Lupine Meadows at 1715. (Source: Craig Patterson, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

Analysis

Spring thaw in the Tetons results in the kind of soft snow condition not recommended for climbing—especially steep routes. With a partner, the section on which Eastham fell might have been belayed. At least the partner could have gone for help. (Source: Craig Patterson, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, FALLING ROCK

Wyoming, Tetons

On July 4, Greg Smith and Melissa Malm (28) were climbing a route on Prospectors' Mountain (3370 meters) named the “Upper Northeast Face” (II, F6).

Around 1430 at the 3150-meter level, Smith led a traversing pitch, and Malm was following. She fell and pendulumed into a sharp rock, breaking her right femur. A rock flake, around which Smith had placed a sling for protection, pulled loose and struck Malm on the top of her hard hat. Her hard hat fractured, causing a small laceration on her scalp.

Smith maneuvered Malm to a ledge, where he anchored her, attempted to splint her leg with a stick, and made her as comfortable as possible with extra clothing. He then downclimbed the route and went for help. At 1625 he reached a pay phone at Whitegrass Ranch and called the Jenny Lake Ranger Station. I mobilized the Jenny Lake rescue team and ordered our contract helicopter from Big Piney, Wyoming. The helicopter arrived at 1755, and by 1900 had airlifted four climbing rangers to the summit. During the next two hours, four more climbing rangers were airlifted to the top, and made their way through steep, loose, technical rock terrain to Malm's position.

By 1130, Malm was stabilized, using pain medication, Sager traction splint, and IV fluids. No evacuation operations were commenced because of darkness.

Beginning at 0430 on July 5, the rescue team lowered Malm in a Thompson litter down a 90-meter, partially overhanging cliff, and then down 300 meters of steep snow to a cirque near the 2880-meter level. They shoveled out a landing platform, and at 0920, the contract helicopter flew in, picked up Malm and Ranger—EMT Dorward, and flew them directly to St. John's Hospital in Jackson. (Source: Craig Patterson, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

Analysis

Malm's hard hat—a "Seda" Kelar kayaking helmet—probably saved her life. Details regarding Malm's level of ability, whether she was being belayed, and the reason for the kind of protection chosen are unknown. (Source: Craig Patterson, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

LOSS OF CONTROL—VOLUNTARY GLISSADE, FALL INTO MOAT, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

Wyoming, Tetons

Mark Anderson (29) arrived in Jackson on July 11 and met his friend Bob Johnson. They were planning to climb the Grand Teton. Anderson and Johnson had been climbing together for about five years. They had been taught climbing by friends and had taken no formal climbing classes. Johnson had only done rock climbing and had done very little of that since he moved to North Dakota four years ago. Anderson had lived in the state of Washington for four years and had climbed on both rock and snow for the last few summers. Anderson was capable of leading 5.7 rock and had quite a bit of snow experience in the Pacific Northwest.

At the Jenny Lake Ranger Station on July 13, Ranger Bob Irvine signed Anderson and Johnson out for climbing the Exum Ridge on the Grand Teton on July 14. Irvine told them the Grand was in bad condition due to recent storms and they should expect lots of snow and ice on their descent of the Owen—Spalding route. He told them they would need ice axes.

After leaving the station the pair talked about needing ice axes. Since Anderson had left his ice axes at home in Washington, they decided that they would just avoid the snow and ice. They hiked in and camped on the lower saddle the night of July 13.

At 0600 on July 14, the pair left the lower saddle to attempt the Exum Ridge. They went too high before they crossed over toward Wall Street. When they finally realized their mistake, they decided to continue up the Owen—Spalding Route. They found a lot of ice on the route, but since they were equipped to climb the Exum Ridge, they avoided the icy places by climbing the nearby rock. The climb went well and after going to the summit, they were back on the lower saddle by 1500. They rested for a couple of hours and started down to the valley.

On the way down they descended some of the snowfields below the lower saddle by plunge stepping and glissading. As they approached the lower headwall, they realized that they were too far south to go around Spalding Falls and down the trail. They decided to traverse north across the 25- to 30-degree snow. The snow