

left the Lupine Meadows Trailhead at 1300. He spent Friday night bivouacked on the hill above Amphitheatre Lake intending to climb Disappointment Peak the following day via the Lake Ledges route. Long said he scoped the route from the valley prior to his departure and, given the amount of snow observed on the peak, elected not to take an ice ax.

He left his camp at 0900 on July 10 and ascended the Lake Ledges route, arriving on the summit about 1300. Long said the snow on the way up was soft, providing good step kicking. He carried two ski poles with him. He started back down from the summit by 1315, retracing his route of ascent. Upon arriving at the top of the Lake Ledges route (1400 to 1430), the snow was still soft. He planned to traverse the top of the snow couloir from south to north and, as he did, he slipped, the snow being significantly harder as he traversed to the north, into the shade. Long described his subsequent fall as happening extremely fast, taking him (airborne at times) over snow and bands of rock. He finally shot off the snow and landed on the top edge of a large chockstone, preventing what may have been a fatal fall over a steeper cliff.

Long said he was wet (lying in running water), bleeding, and disoriented and unable to use his right leg. He moved up to the south side of the gully, seeking a drier location. He attempted to make voice contact with persons below who, having heard his cries for help, climbed to his location, arriving about one hour later. This group included a first-year physician and an EMT.

Having climbed for 25 years with numerous routes in the Teton Range (the complete Exum, East Ridge of the Grand Teton, and the East Ridge and Northeast Snow Fields of Owen), Long described himself as an experienced mountaineer. He said his principal mistake was not taking his ice ax, thinking that he could bypass the snow. He said he also failed to account for the snow being harder on the descent, the route being in early afternoon shadows with the setting sun. Long said he had not climbed the route before but had studied it in a guide book.

Long, an employee of the Bureau of Land Management, was warned regarding his failure to obtain the required overnight backcountry permit. (Source: Mark Magnuson, SAR Coordinator)

## **FALL ON ROCK—PROBABLY LOOSE ROCKS**

### **Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Baxter's Pinnacle**

On August 14 around 1745, Jason Coles reported an injured climber near the base of the rappel at Baxter's Pinnacle. He stated the victim fell 120 feet and sustained a head injury and numerous other injuries. Rangers conducted a 2,000 foot technical lowering to the Cascade Canyon horse trail. He was placed on the wheel litter and taken to the Jenny Lake west shore boat dock, placed on the concessions boat and taken across to the east shore boat dock. Medic I picked him up and took him to Lupine Meadows where he was airlifted by helicopter to the Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center.

The victim, Larry Kruse (40), sustained numerous fractures and abrasions.

He sustained a concussion, but no serious head injury. He is unable to recall any of the events before or after the accident.

### **Analysis**

Jeff Steinmetz, Kruse's partner, stated the following. We reached the top of Baxter's Pinnacle, and Larry rappelled off first. Kruse called up that he was off rappel and as I started clipping in, I heard him yell, "Rock." About four seconds later I heard what sounded like rockfall. I called to Larry but he didn't answer. I rappelled down to the notch and didn't see Larry. I called but received no reply. I pulled the rappel rope and started to down climb the descent gully. After climbing down about 80 feet I heard him moaning. I climbed to a tree about 30 feet above him and set up an anchor. I rappelled down to him and clipped him into the rope due to his precarious position. I started yelling for help, and two climbers rappelled down from Baxter's to help. I didn't see Larry fall and think he may have rappelled into the gully to the west of the notch instead of stopping at the notch.

Steinmetz stated that Larry had been climbing for 12–15 years. He is a solid 5.10 leader. He has climbed in Yosemite, Red Rocks, and many other places but never in Grand Teton National Park. (Source: Mark Magnuson, SAR Coordinator)

*(Editor's Note: Though we don't know the exact cause of Kruse's fall, this accident is worth noting to provide a warning for even the most experienced who climb and descend Baxter's Pinnacle. Loose rock, especially on the descent, is a known hazard here, and has caused many injuries or near misses.)*

## **FALLING/DISLODGED ROCK**

### **Wyoming, Wind River Range, Easy Day Peak**

On August , 9 at 1100, while following the first Pitch of the North Face route on Easy Day Peak (11,660 feet), Mark Gallagher pulled a large block off onto himself, and sustained injuries to both of his lower legs. His climbing partner, David Oka, lowered Gallagher to a ledge, fixed him to an anchor, and then rappelled to provide assistance. Two of Gallagher's companions, who were at the group's campsite at Shadow Lake, came up with first aid and other equipment to help with the rescue effort. Together they managed to splint one of Gallagher's legs and lower him off the technical portion of the climb. At this point Oka ran out to Big Sandy trailhead and then drove to Big Sandy Lodge and reported the accident via cellular telephone to Sublette County Sheriff Hank Ruland. Sheriff Ruland, IC for the incident, then requested the assistance of Grand Teton National Park SAR personnel from the Jenny Lake sub-district about 1800. The initial report of the accident indicated that the injured party was 500–1,000 vertical feet above Shadow Lake and at least one technical climbing pitch up on the route. Three Jenny Lake rangers (Larson, Byerly, and Guenther) along with the Bridger/Teton helitack foreman (Stailey) were flown to Shadow Lake, where the injured climber and his party were spotted during an aerial reconnaissance. All of the equipment required to accomplish both technical and non-technical lowerings as well as the emergency medical