

was wet, so he climbed on the rock just beside the well traveled route. A handhold pulled off, and he fell 15-20 meters. Natural Resource Services, Kananaskis Country, was called by a nearby mountain guide. D.W. was suffering from a sore lower back, but declined an ambulance ride. (Source: Ken Wiley)

Analysis

It is possible to view the third pitch from its base. When D.W. and his partner realized the pitch was wet and out of condition, it would have been wise to consider retreat. (Source: Nancy Hansen)

FAILURE TO FOLLOW ROUTE—STRANDED, Alberta, Banff National Park, Mount Haddo

On July 21, after completing the North Glacier Route on Mounts Haddo and Aberdeen, a party of four began descending the “easy” south face of Mount Haddo as described in a local climbing guidebook. After a couple of rappels and steepening terrain, they became stranded and called Warden Service dispatch with a cell phone. They were evacuated by heli-sling shortly after.

Analysis

The guidebook gives two options for descending from Mounts Haddo and Aberdeen. The option this party chose is described as “easy scrambling from almost anywhere on the Southwest Ridge.” In reality, the terrain is at best fifth class and exposed. The easy descent involves climbing up and over Mount Aberdeen. Many parties have experienced epics trying to descend the south face of Mount Haddo. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service, Editor)

FALL ON ROCK, HANDHOLD BROKE, SOLO HIKING/SCRAMBLING Alberta, Jasper National Park, Mount Woolley

Late in the afternoon on August 5, D.E. was approaching the col between Mounts Woolley and Cromwell, en route to the Lloyd MacKay—Mount Alberta Hut. D.E. pulled on what appeared to be a solid handhold, but it broke free. D.E. lost his balance and fell backward, tumbling head over heels, over a three meter high rock step, for a total distance of 20 meters. Aside from several cuts and bruises and spraining both hands, D.E. received a severe blow/puncture to his left knee. D.E. was able to get to the Mount Alberta hut by 2200.

On August 14, D.E.’s parents notified the Jasper Warden Service that their son was overdue. D.E. had left a detailed route description of his extensive hiking trip with his parents. The Mount Alberta Hut was the first place checked by a warden in a helicopter. D.E. was found at 1000 hours. Although his knee had been healing without infection, he was unable to fully weight bear on his leg.

Analysis

While this accident does not necessarily fit into the mountaineering category, it is included to indicate the seriousness of solo travel in the mountains. D.E. had planned to do a multi-day hike/scramble in a very remote area with no trail system and extremely few visitors. Had this accident occurred on a differ-

ent leg of his journey, further away from the hut, the search for him would have been more complex. D.E. was lucky his injuries were not more debilitating, as he would have had no one to care for him or activate rescue services sooner. Fortunately, D.E. left a detailed route plan with his parents and strict instructions for when to call for a rescue if he was not out. (Source: Jasper National Park Warden Service, L.P.)

EXHAUSTION, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Alberta, Banff National Park, Mount Temple, East Ridge

On August 10, a party of three was reported overdue to Warden Service dispatch. They had been about 30 hours on this alpine grade IV, 5.7 route when they were located at the start of the gullies that lead to the summit icecap. A Warden Service rescue crew was dropped off on the ridge and determined that the climbers were okay but exhausted and requesting evacuation. They were evacuated by heli-sling.

Analysis

The party underestimated the route finding and commitment factor on this moderately difficult alpine route. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service)

STRANDED, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Alberta, Banff National Park, Mount Lefroy, Lemire Route

After 32 hours on this alpine grade IV, 5.7 route a party of two was reported overdue to Warden Service dispatch. They were located near the top of a rock buttress below the summit ridge and evacuated by heli-sling at their request.

Analysis

This is a seldom-climbed route with only cursory route information available. The party encountered difficult route finding, poor rock quality, and difficult climbing. On such alpine routes, guidebook gradings cannot always be taken at face value. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service)

STRANDED, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

Alberta, Kananaskis Provincial Park, Mount Sir Douglas

On August 29, two climbers ascended Mount Sir Douglas via the East Ridge, alpine grade III, 5.6. Before beginning the route, they had decided they would descend the same way, instead of taking the longer but easier west ridge descent route. The climbers summited at a late hour, and decided to descend the west ridge after all. They bivouacked at a notch between the ridge and the glacier below and then attempted to descend the glacier the following day. The glacier was bare ice and steep enough to demand crampons, which the climbers did not have. They used their radio to call for a rescue. (Source: Kananaskis Country Alpine Specialists)

Analysis

It is important to minimize one's pack weight when attempting a big alpine route. However, one must not leave any essential items behind. These climbers took a big risk by leaving their crampons at home. (Source: Nancy Hansen)