

a climbing partner ill-suited for Denali created a compromising situation for the climbing rangers, the National Park Service, June Braugham, and Matt Sachs himself in deciding the safest means of descent for Braugham. (Source: Ranger Karen Hilton)

HAPE

Alaska, Mount McKinley, West Buttress

On June 1, Peter Staples (48) of the "OSAT,03" expedition, suffered from High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE) while camping at the 17,200-foot camp on Mt. McKinley's West Buttress route. Staples was assisted by his team and National Park Service (NPS) Ranger Gordy Kito and NPS Volunteer In Park (VIP) Ryan Davis from the 17,200-foot camp to the 14,200-foot Ranger camp, where he was monitored and released. Staples was able to continue with his team down to the 7,200-foot Kahiltna base camp under his own power and without further incident.

Analysis

The amount of time that the "OSAT,03" expedition took to get to high camp was within the timeframe recommended by the NPS. Mr. Staples may have been able to increase his chances of acclimatizing well by taking even more time getting to the 17,200-foot camp. However, this technique may or may not have reduced the likelihood of his being stricken with HAPE. Like most cases of HAPE, Mr. Staples presented with only very mild symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) the first night at the 17,200-foot camp. Only after spending two nights at 17,200 feet did Mr. Staples present with audible rales and a debilitating shortness of breath. The quick actions of Mr. Staples and his team members in recognizing his condition as life threatening and rapid notification of the NPS staff, as well as the fortuitous placement of the Rangers contributed to the positive outcome of this incident.

It is worth noting that Mr. Staples fellow team members contacted the NPS Rangers with the intention of locating oxygen and descending with their ill teammate without assistance from NPS personnel. This self sufficient and responsible behavior that some teams display on Mount McKinley may be the result of the information and education program initiated by the NPS some years ago. This program focuses on informing climbers about the risks associated with high altitude mountaineering and the things they can do to help reduce their exposure to some of those risks and the possible result of these inherent dangers, up to and including death. (Source: Ranger Gordy Kito)

DEHYDRATION-EXHAUSTION, MINOR FROSTBITE, CLIMBING TOO SLOWLY-FAILURE TO TURN BACK

Alaska, Mount McKinley, Messner Couloir

At 0500 on June 3, Jan Markup (27), Petr Hoffman (27) from the Czech Republic, and Camelo Lopez from a Colombian-American expedition, who