

(Editor's Note: There were a few other reports from NH, but none involving serious injury. Two of them were simply stranded climbers.)

VARIOUS FALLS ON ROCK (17), RAPPEL ERRORS (5), INADEQUATE BELAYS (5), INADEQUATE PROTECTION (5), PROTECTION PULLED (2), DISLODGED ROCKS (2)

New York, Shawangunks

There were 24 accidents reported from the Shawangunks this year, of which 18 happened while ascending. There was one fatality, occurring in March when an experienced 44 year-old climber fell while leading Strictly from Nowhere (5.7). He did not protect the traversing moves out to the end of the overhang. His fall was backwards—about ten or twelve feet—and he struck his head. He was not wearing a helmet.

There were five rappelling incidents, three of which were the result of going off the end of the rope. One involved four climbers, because when the rappel rope jammed, several rocks were dislodged in trying to free up the rope. The average age of the climbers directly involved was 33, the youngest being 16, the oldest being 51. Most of the routes were of modest difficulty. One accident involved Mike Cimino (32), a guide, who fell while leading Transcontinental Nailway, a 5.10 route. A piece of protection pulled, so he fell 20 feet to the ground on his back, resulting in "...six fused vertebrae, a couple of broken ribs, and a renewed sense of enthusiasm." His own analysis, for which we thank him, is as follows:

"Hubris got me hurt. I've climbed the route lord knows how many times... I was working a 'rope-gun' day (meaning nothing but single pitch 5.10 and 5.11 lines) with one of my regulars. ...I made poor decisions: no helmet (thankfully not a major factor) and I chose a tiny blue alien rather than a larger yellow one with a nut back-up as my first piece. When the unlikely fall happened, my gear was simply inadequate. As a guide, it's all too easy to slip into thinking of the gear as only being there as directionals for the clients' protection."

The Mohonk Preserve Ranger Team comprised of seven individuals has now completed about 500 rescues. They are trained in pre-hospital care and engage in weekly drills. Their ability to respond to a range of accident types has resulted in reducing morbidity and fatality, and in being asked to train military, police, and other rescue personnel. (Sources: Hank Alicandri –Director of Land Stewardship/Head Ranger, and Mike Cimino.)

STRANDED, WEATHER, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT—NO STOVE

Oregon, Mount Hood, Reid Glacier Headwall

This incident involved a climbing team that was part of a Portland-area climbing club. The following description of the events leading to the incident on January 11 and 12 was derived from an explanation provided by the climbing team.