

Traverse of the Lisburne Peninsula. In June, 1995, the traverse of the Lisburne Peninsula was accomplished across the spine of the western Brooks Range descending the Ipewik River to Point Hope. This is the westernmost reach of the American Arctic. The Ipewik descent was plagued by high winds and pack ice along the arctic coast. For the mountaineering portion, 12 passes were crossed from the Wulik Peaks to Nunavikeak. This is not good Dahl sheep habitat, but grizzly and wolf populations are very high here along with the half million caribou of the western arctic herd. Musk ox are thriving and expanding toward the headwaters of the Colville. Following a class four ascent in the DeLong Mountains, a lost lake was noted and mapped at the base of a limestone rampart, as were various stone age hunting camps. Twelve persons crossed the DeLong Mountains, four the Wulik Peaks and two the Ipewik. Paul Lencioni persevered valiantly throughout.

DENNIS SCHMITT

ALASKA RANGE

Denali National Park and Preserve Mountaineering Summary, 1996. High winds, wide crevasses and a record low snowfall set the scene for the 1996 climbing season in the Alaska Range. Extreme winds during the month of May caught many climbers by surprise, inflicting severe cases of frostbite and thwarting summit bids. Lack of snowfall from the preceding winter was noticeable in larger crevasses and exposed debris piles. In addition, unconsolidated snow resulted in high avalanche danger for most of the peaks in the Alaska Range.

During 1996, the National Park Service incurred \$143,943 in search and rescue costs for missions on Mount McKinley, Mount Foraker and Mount Hunter. Costs incurred by the military for their assistance with these missions were \$38,500. Total cost for search and rescue for 1996 was \$232,443.

In 1997 a new mountaineering center will greet climbers when they arrive in Talkeetna. The 5,300 square foot facility will be ready for occupancy in January 1997, and will replace the formerly occupied log cabin.

A lenient transition was undertaken during the 1995 and 1996 seasons to fully implement the \$150 per climber special use fee and the 60-day preregistration regulation. The National Park Service wishes to notify climbers and mountaineers that they should expect that these regulations will be strictly enforced starting in the 1997 season. Climbers who are not preregistered a minimum of 60 days in advance will be denied permission to climb Mount McKinley or Mount Foraker.

Travel during marginal weather played a major role in accidents that led to injuries and deaths this season. Expeditions need to be prepared to wait out unstable weather. Schedules, deadlines and impatience are factors in making wrong decisions. The present day climbing style is much faster paced than the early expeditions on Mount McKinley. In 1996, the average round-trip ascent took 19 days.

Statistics. Mount McKinley saw a slight decline (6%) in the number of climbers attempting routes this year. A total of 1,148 climbers, representing 305 expeditions, attempted 14 different routes on Mount McKinley in 1996. 474 (41%) were international climbers representing 36 countries. The United States had the highest number of climbers (674), followed by Korea (74), Japan (61), England (47), Germany (40) and Spain (33).

The season total of 1,148 climbers was a decrease from a two-year average of 1,220 climbers. 489 climbers (43%) successfully reached the summit. Of the 235 guided climbers on Mount