



The East Ridge route on Nagishlamina in the Tordrillos. Rod Hancock

Nagishlamina, East Ridge. In May Brad Gessner, Doug Munoz, Stuart Parks, and I, all of Anchorage, completed a new route on, and made the second ascent of, 11,068' Nagishlamina, one of five peaks over 11,000' in the Tordrillo Range. Our line climbed the east ridge of Nagishlamina, which divides the east and southeast forks of the Capps Glacier. We rated the climb Alaska Grade II+, for sustained cornice and knife-edge ridge climbing, ice to 70°, and extreme remoteness. The climb took four days, including two storm days. The flight from Talkeetna took one hour, and our pilot was able to land at approximately 5,200' on the east fork of the Capps Glacier, adjacent to the east ridge. From base camp we traversed south onto the east ridge a few hundred feet above the ridge's heavily crevassed toe. We passed to the south side of the east ridge and gained the ridge proper a few hundred feet above. The rounded snow-dome summit was reached in good weather on day four, after which the ridge was descended to base camp.

The Tordrillos are located 80 miles west of Anchorage and are clearly visible from the city. Nagishlamina sits between its more famous neighbors Mt. Spur and Mt. Torbert and was first climbed from the southwest in 1989. Despite the area's proximity to Anchorage and the skyline views these peaks afford, the Tordrillos are rarely visited, offer difficult logistics, and big price tags. Although Anchorage is closer, Talkeetna seems to be the best flight base, due to the numerous skilled glacier pilots. Plan on spending \$600-\$1,000 per person to get in and out.

ROD HANCOCK

CHUGACH MOUNTAINS

Winter traverse of the range; Mt. Marcus Baker, South Ridge–Knik variation. During the summer of 2003 we started talking about a winter traverse of the Chugach Range, from Prince William Sound to the road system. If we encountered favorable conditions, an ascent of Mt. Marcus Baker would be attempted. We laid plans for a winter trip and reconvened in Talkeetna on January 21, 2004.

At noon on January 25 we beached in a small rocky cove about one-half mile from the face of the Harvard Glacier, on the western side of the fjord. After moving our gear above the high-tide mark, we started bushwhacking and found ourselves on the glacier in only three hours. On day two we continued beyond our previous day's cache and moved camp all the way to 1,700' on the direct south ridge. Negotiating the lower glacier in the winter proved easier than expected, since many of the slots were filled with water and frozen. High pressure remained, and the first five days saw some of the coldest temperatures of the trip, dropping to -20°F . We established camp three at 4,400' on the 28th, and the climbing began. Over the next two days we negotiated a beautiful ridge, never terribly exposed, and made camp four at 5,900'.

Spectacular ridge climbing connected this camp and the next, at 6,500', which we moved into on February 4, as it snowed. This was a decision point. The most direct line to the top of Marcus Baker continued up the south ridge over point 8,565' (which we dubbed "The Tooth") and then over a large snow dome at 10,300', en route to the 13,176' summit. Unfortunately, with the new snow we felt that the hazards were too high to continue ridge climbing. We left the ridge and decided to explore the upper Radcliffe Glacier and see if we could negotiate the icefalls and connect with the Knik Glacier.

We salvaged a half a day on the 6th, when the sun came out around 11 a.m., and wallowed down and out onto the Radcliffe. With the weather so unstable, we made a cache only two miles from camp five in hopes of reusing our trail, and were able to move and build camp six in a storm. As we sat out the 8th we studied the maps until our eyes hurt. Only 1.8 miles of broken glacier to go to the smoothness of the Knik and a known route up and down. One more day of good weather, and we would know if our route would go. We confirmed the route on the 9th, and we returned to camp in high spirits, knowing we could get to the Knik.

Following a storm day, more trail-breaking saw us on the Knik Glacier on February 10. For the first time we were able to call our families, and we requested a resupply so that we could wait for a summit bid. (A note about communication: We had a cell phone that did not connect to the local service, and the only call we could place was to an operator at Copper Valley Wireless. These operators were superhelpful in passing along messages. We believe a marine VHF would have worked well.) On the 12th we headed up with all remaining food. At 10,200' we built a bomber snow cave in a giant moat that became home for the next 60 hours. The 15th was worth the wait, calm and clear, one of the most spectacular days in the hills either of us has had. We fully enjoyed our climb to the summit and on the way down saw the grub arrive. The route from the water to the Knik at 8,400' was probably new, though the rest has been done many times. Also, we assume that the range has been crossed in winter before, but we never researched it.

On the 16th we descended from high camp all the way to the alder trees. The evening of the 17th found us near the toe of the Knik, sharing a campfire with moose. Mission accomplished mid-afternoon of the 18th at the Hunter Creek Bridge on the Knik River road.

JOHNNY SODERSTROM AND JOE REICHERT

Mt. Marcus Baker, attempt via Pi Ridge. In a Whittier, Alaska, warehouse of dry-docked boats we studied maps and photos of College Fjord. Rain drummed on the metal roof, and our breath spilled out in plumes of fog. Mik Shain and I were planning a trip that would fuse maritime adventure with climbing exploration and involve several climates. In an 18-day effort we hoped to pioneer a route from the sea to the summit of the highest point in the Chugach, Mt. Marcus