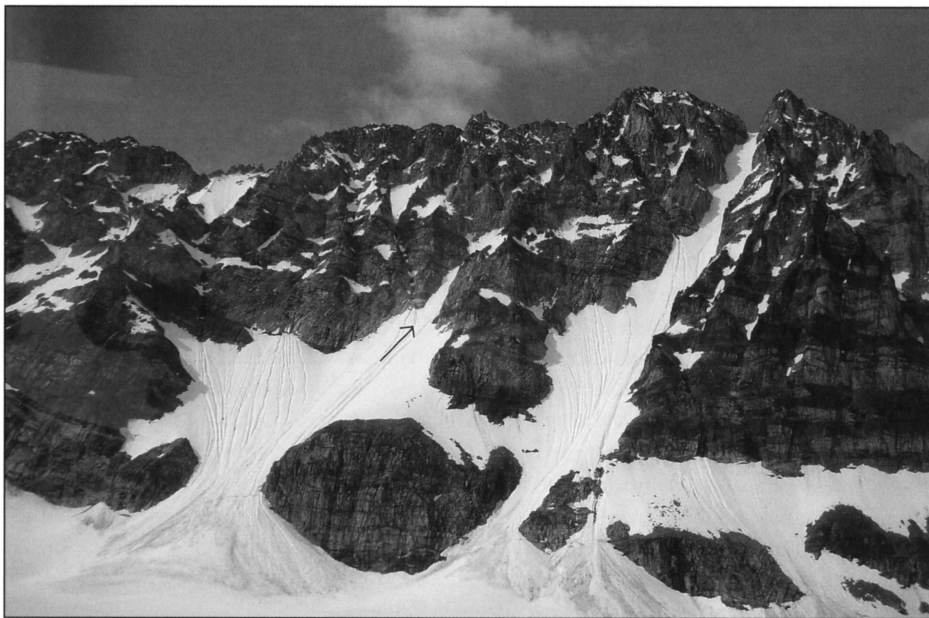


NEACOLA MOUNTAINS

Chakachamna Peak, south face to near summit. Fred Beckey had his eye on a prominent 7,530' peak in the Neacola Mountains for many years, but it remained entombed in his infamous "Black Book." The peak is located three miles south of Lake Chakachamna and is visible on a clear day, 90 miles to the west, from Anchorage and Turnagin Arm. The USGS Board on Geographic Names has just recently officially accepted Fred's name of Chakachamna Peak. (Map: USGS Tyonek (A-7), Alaska; Approximate coordinates: 61°09'N, 152°26'W)

A few years ago Fred and two partners flew onto the glacier on the south side of the mountain. It was late in the day and the snow soft and unstable; Fred felt it was not a safe time for a climb. But his partners felt otherwise and got two-thirds of the way up the couloir, till a wet-snow avalanche swept one of them 1,000' down the couloir. The climber escaped with only minor injuries, but the event marked the end of the attempt.

On the evening of June 12, after waiting out several stormy days in Anchorage, Brook Alongi, Fred, and I were flown by helicopter onto an unnamed glacier on the south side of the peak, under clear blue skies. Since weather windows tend to be short and far between in the Neacola Mountains, we set up our tents and immediately started climbing the left-hand (western) of the two broad, 3,000' couloirs on the peak's south side. We had breathtaking views of immense glaciers, the active volcanoes Spurr and Redoubt, and dozens of unclimbed peaks. We climbed through the night using pickets for running belays up the 40-50° snow, arriving at the col atop the couloir at 2:00 a.m. Fred was exhausted and waited there. I led a ropelength of snowy mixed ground and belayed Brook up to me. We could see the summit 100' higher and a few hundred yards away, but descended due to deteriorating weather and concern for our cold



The arrow points to the couloir climbed on the south face of Chakachamna Peak. Eric "Pax" Fox

and tired partner back at the col. We descended without incident and arrived at our tents late the next morning. More information about the climb, as well as a few pictures can be found at: www.cascadeclimbers.com/threadz/showflat.php/Cat/0/Number/371540/an//page/0/vc/1

Brook and I had hoped to sample some other climbing opportunities in the area, but the weather did not cooperate. We spent the next five days in the tents while rain, snow, and strong winds made even the most mundane outdoor activities unpleasant. When the weather finally broke, we called in our helicopter and flew back to Anchorage. I thought that after this trip there might be one less page in the Black Book, but on the flight out Fred was snapping pictures and saying, “*That looks like a nice peak.*”

ERIC “PAX” FOX

CHUGACH AND WRANGELL MOUNTAINS

Heritage Point and Mt. Yukla. After five failed attempts with several partners, I joined with Dan Petrus to complete the first ascent of the north face of Heritage Point (3,600', VI M6 WI6 A2) in the Chugach Mountains. We took the most obvious ice smear in the center of the face for 14 long pitches. This put us on top of the big snow ledge at mid-height. We then traversed right for 400' to the large dihedral that splits the upper wall and followed it up and left to the top of the wall. Very sustained climbing! Out of 29 total pitches, 25 were M5 or harder. Over a dozen pitches were hard, runout M6. From the top of the face we traversed up left to the couloir separating Heritage Point from Little Bear. We descended this couloir on the last day of calendar winter of 2005. No summit.

In early April of this year, 2005, Dan Petrus and I climbed a line on the north face of Yukla in the Chugach Mountains. It's the obvious couloir that tops out on the northeast ridge to the left of the summit. This may have been the line taken previously by Richard Baranow. If so, I think Dan and I made the second ascent of both the face and the line. Anyway, it goes at V WI5, 3,600'.

JOHN KELLEY

Chugach Mountains, ski traverse. In April we skied from Valdez, Alaska, to the Glenn Highway by way of Mt. Thor and the Matanuska Glacier. We parked at the Valdez airport and slogged up the Valdez Glacier, over the steep Cashman Col, across the Tazlina and Science glaciers to the intimidating precipitation vortex of the Columbia Glacier. A corridor between Mt. Elusive and Mt. Valhalla offered a low-angle route up the east shoulder of Mt. Thor (12, 251'), the second highest peak in the Chugach. Wearing crampons we double-carried our kit down the aesthetic north ridge of Mt. Thor to the Sylvester Glacier. An easy 7,200' col linked us to the Powell Glacier and high glacial benches for 15 miles to the west branch of the Matanuska Glacier and out to the Glenn Highway. Our route gained about 19,000' over 98 miles. We talked with every Chugach climber and tourer we could, and they were all certain that our traverse had not been done before. But it's Alaska, and many trips don't get reported.

JOE STOCK AND DYLAN TAYLOR, AAC