

Canada

ST. ELIAS RANGE

Kluane National Park Reserve, mountaineering summary and statistics. During the 2005 climbing season 86 persons participated in 29 mountaineering expeditions, accounting for 1,535 person-days in the icefields of Kluane National Park.

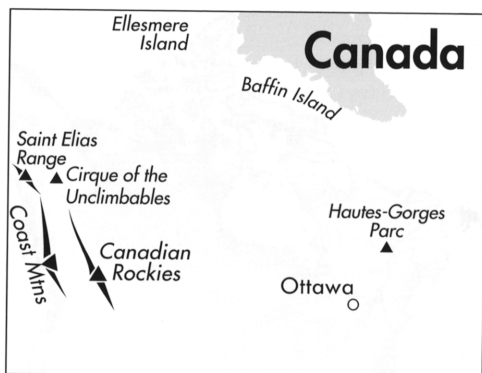
As usual most expeditions were concentrated in the Mt. Logan area, with 17 parties attempting various routes on the mountain. Twelve expeditions attempted the King Trench route, while five attempted the East Ridge route. The mountain allowed only four expeditions to successfully reach either the main or east summit, with weather and time being the main obstacles. A huge storm, with over a meter of snow, and then extreme winds stranded climbing groups on the summit plateau during the latter part of May. A number of people came back with a new respect for the forces of nature in the St. Elias Ranges.

Other mountains that witnessed climbing this year were Mt. Vancouver (twice), Mt. Kennedy, Mt. Hubbard, Mt. Alverstone, Mt. Wood, Mt. McArthur, Mt. Badham, Mt. Queen Mary, Mt. Saskatchewan, and the Donjek Ranges. There were four ski-touring-specific expeditions into the icefields. Ski-touring is a wonderful lower-risk option for experiencing the Icefield Ranges of Kluane National Park.

Of note this year was the first ascent of the west face of Mt. Alverstone, by a pair of British climbers (one from the now-famous *Touching the Void* book and movie). Also, an American crew scaled a new route on the north face of Mt. McArthur. A couple of Czech climbers scaled Mt. Logan by the East Ridge route to the main peak, traversed the summit plateau, and descended the King Trench route, all in 11 days. A crew of skiers did a north-south traverse of the icefields from Kluane Lake to Yakutat, AK, and another couple of Swiss mountaineers/kayakers did a 41-day unsupported west-east traverse of the icefields from Cordova, AK, to the Alsek River and Dry Bay, AK. The latter crew failed to register for their trip and were dealt with accordingly by park officials. (Registration is mandatory for all overnight activity in Kluane National Park.)

One major search-and-rescue operation occurred during the climbing season. A group of climbers on Mt. Logan's summit plateau lost much of their camp gear in a fierce storm. They were forced to huddle in a small snow hole and were saved from certain death when other members of their party were able to reach them and render assistance. Satellite phones carried by both groups allowed this to take place. The three men were evacuated from their location near Prospector Col (5,500m) by an international rescue operation consisting of personnel of the U.S. National Guard and Wrangell-St. Elias, Denali, and Kluane national parks. A high-altitude helicopter brought from Denali National Park facilitated the highly technical heli-sling operation. The three men suffered severe frostbite and have subsequently spent much time in hospitals.

On a sad note, a young Canadian woman was killed in an avalanche/fall on the East Ridge of Mt. Logan. The young woman had five years earlier been the youngest person to successfully climb Mt. Logan and was climbing it for her third time when the accident occurred.



Mountaineering in the Icefield Ranges of Kluane National Park is an inherently dangerous activity but with proper preparation and planning, most groups have positive experiences and return with memories that last a lifetime.

Anyone interested in mountaineering in Kluane National Park should contact:

Mountaineering Warden, Kluane National Park, Box 5495, Haines Jct. Yukon, Y0B 1L0, CANADA. Phone 867 634 7279; Fax 867 634 7277; e-mail Kluane_info@pch.gc.ca and ask for the "mountaineering package"; or visit the Parks Canada web site: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/kluane>

RICK STALEY, *Mountaineering Warden, Kluane National Park*

South Walsh, attempt. Our flight in was delayed for five days due to poor weather, and we left three days early due to the high probability of further poor flying conditions. Paul Geddes, Willa Haraysm, Dave McCormick, Ted Rosen, and I were on the Donjek Glacier from June 16-26. Iso-thermic snow provided many opportunities for post-holing, and very warm afternoons resulted in rock and serac falls and running water, which persisted through the night. We made a route on the northwest side of the lower icefall in order to reach the main hidden cirque. The cirque appeared to provide access to the col lying below Pt. 4,050m. However, at the 3,400-3,600m elevation there is a complex crevasse system traversing the entire cirque, immediately below the shelf leading to the col. This was as far as we reached. On June 21 Geddes and Haraysm climbed Pt. 3,450m (GR544590) in order to view the upper part of the proposed route. South Walsh (4,223m), if considered an independent summit, is the highest unclimbed peak in North America—see CAJ vol. 75, 1992, p.8, for more information. [Just as we went to press, we received word that Paul Knott and Graham Rowbotham climbed South Walsh, summiting on May 28, 2006, via the southwest ridge and upper south face. Details will appear in the 2007 AAJ—Ed.]

ROGER WALLIS, *Toronto Section, Alpine Club of Canada, AAC*



Skiing on the Donjek Glacier, with South Walsh in upper left. The line shows the upper portions of the peak's May 28, 2006, first ascent, which will be reported in the 2007 AAJ. *Roger Wallis*