

from our skis. Four rappels (three on single-picket anchors) brought us to the Big River Glacier in a whiteout. We stumbled to find our skis, but in our base camp an hour later we enjoyed the best Cinco de Mayo fiesta ever. Southwest Ridge of Ice Pyramid, AK Grade IV+, 2,800'.

After several days rest, we further explored around the three main forks of the Big River Glacier and climbed a gigantic couloir on the west face of the Ice Pyramid. We climbed snow and ice up to 70° to the top of the couloir, which we called Cataclysmic Couloir, at about 9,000'. A gendarme-like ice feature blocked easy access to the upper ridge and without adequate ice protection we bailed.

Two days later we hiked 22 miles down the Big River to Rob Jones' lodge and flew out from there.

SETH HOLDEN

*Snowcap Mountain, first ascent and clarification.* A prominent rock peak with an unusual summit icecap, located between the upper forks of the Stony River, southeast of the nearby Revelation Mountains, is identified incorrectly on current topographic maps. The true Snowcap Mountain (ca 8,350') is unquestionably about three miles southwest of the summit, which has no permanent summit snow or ice, so named on these maps.

In 1928 geologist and topographer Stephen R. Capps completed the difficult wilderness trek from Cook Inlet across Merrill Pass to the Stony River. His precise report of this unexplored region clearly indicates the mountain's correct position, verified by my two expeditions to the region. The true Snowcap Mountain, its name and position marked on his map about 20 miles north-northeast of Two Lakes, is clearly visible from Capps' route along the river, while the summit named on the newer maps is not in sight.

May 21, 2008, dawned a glorious morning. Pilot Rob Jones had already landed Zach Shlosar, Richard Baranow, and me on a narrow, tumbling glacier to the east of true Snowcap. I



An aerial view of the true Snowcap Mountain, from the northeast. The route ascends the glacier tongue starting in the lower-right corner, and continuing near the peak's right skyline to the summit. Fred Beckey

had suffered a mysterious leg cramp and was resigned to remaining in camp, but my partners headed upslope, skiing near the right flank of the glacier until it was necessary to make a steep boot pack. Zach then led a section of vertical ice above a gaping bergschrund. The last portion of the glacier route involved cramponing a steep section, with the exposure of blue ice walls underneath. They navigated around two more 'schrunds, then completed the route to the virgin summit. The route climbs a strange corkscrew-shaped glacier that, from the summit, flows briefly northwest, then curves north, then broadens to the northeast down to our camp. After absorbing the spellbinding views of this remote portion of the range, one that included numerous difficult-appearing unclimbed peaks, they skied back to camp, sometimes roped while jumping impasses. Richard punched through a crevasse and somersaulted onto a steep slope, to highlight the descent.

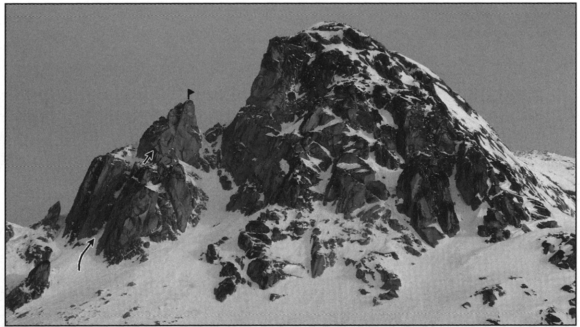
FRED BECKEY, AAC

## NEACOLA MOUNTAINS

*First ascents and descents.* In late April 2006 Dustin Schaad and I were dropped by ski plane near Glacier Fork [a.k.a. The Pitchfork Glacier, which drains to the Glacier Fork of the Tlikakila River]. Our pilot, Doug Brewer, knew of no one being flown into this spot before. Over two weeks in late April and early May, we explored ridges and couloirs surrounding our base camp. Although we weren't there to peak-bag, we topped out some impressive couloirs, ticking off a handful of 3,000–4,000' first ascents (climbed with crampons and axes) and descents (on skis). [Maps and photos at [aaj.americanalpineclub.org](http://aaj.americanalpineclub.org)]

DARON HUCK

*First ascents and exploration.* On April 21 Gerard van den Berg and I installed camp at the top of the Pitchfork glacial cirque [They initially reported being on the North Fork Glacier, but their maps and coordinates show the Pitchfork, which drains to the Glacier Fork of the Tlikakila River. The North Fork is a few miles southwest of the Pitchfork—Ed.], near Neacola Mountain (2,873m). The next day we prepared to explore the endless spectacular climbing and skiing, but a storm dropped two meters of snow, trapping us for six days. When the sun timidly emerged, the mountains were heavily loaded, so we headed toward summits that we felt were safer and had five good days. Peak and route names are ours, as we believe our ascents were all firsts:



Pacific Warrior, on Aguja Ulysses. Curro González

Day 1. We climbed Pacific Warrior (360m, 6b [French] A2 M6 WI4) on the southwest face of Aguja Ulysses (2,150m, section 22 on Lake Clark (D1) map, N60°51'042/W153°20'846). From the Hill of Geese (so called for the constant migration of these birds, even in bad weath-