

With cold water lapping up to her waist, she soon lost strength and let go, falling into the creek. She floated down a short way, and was able to grab onto a sweeper, but again lost her grip, and was carried down stream. Meanwhile, S.K. attempted to help her, but eventually lost sight of her. She combed the shore for two hours, then proceeded to hike out for help. It took her two days to reach Mount Robson Park ranger station, (very good time) where she reported the incident. Park wardens from Jasper were notified at 1700 on July 14, and flew in to search the area for D.H. They were unable to find the body that night, but the following day, the body was located in a log jam about 70 meters downstream of the footbridge.

Analysis

Although not a climbing incident per se, this episode is included here because climbers often have to approach their objectives by crossing streams, and can treat these crossings as minor, rather than serious, obstacles. Although this creek in this incident is usually very benign, flooding from a month of heavy rain caused it to become a wild torrent. Even though it was late in the afternoon, D.H. and S.K. felt obliged to push on to the next campsite, as the upper campsite was flooded. Had they either made do in the wet campsite and tried crossing the bridge in the morning when the water level was lower, or at least undone the waist bands on their packs, this incident may have been avoided. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service)

FALL INTO MOAT, FALLING ROCK, WEATHER

British Columbia, Bugaboo Glacier Provincial Park, Bugaboo Spire

In August, S.A. and B.C. approached the east face of Bugaboo Spire, intending to climb the Left-Hand Herr route. They ascended a snow apron below the face, crossed a bergschrund, and reached a moat, which was the final obstacle before the actual rock climbing. They proceeded to cross the moat to a small ledge on the rock. B.C. stepped across and was moving up to the ledge when S.A. attempted to cross the moat. She stepped on a small snow bridge that was supporting a boulder, and the bridge collapsed, releasing the boulder. It slowly rolled onto her and pushed her some three meters down into the moat. S.A. managed to wriggle out from under the boulder and climb to the surface, but soon collapsed from massive internal injuries, and eventually required CPR. Other climbers in the area quickly responded to assist. The accident was reported to the Park Rangers, and S.A. was transported to Invermere Hospital via helicopter, but was pronounced dead upon arrival.

Analysis

This accident may have been avoided if the snow bridge had not been used; the day was extremely warm and all snow bridges should have been suspect. Warm weather throughout the previous week likely made snow support of all boulders suspect as well. (Source: Bugaboo Glacier Provincial Park Ranger)

FALLING ROCK, WEATHER

British Columbia, Bugaboo Glacier Provincial Park, Bugaboo—Snowpatch Col

A party of three, N.G., J.G., and G.W., was ascending to the Bugaboo-Snowpatch Col using a rope at 0800 on August 4. A boulder slid down the slope above them with almost no warning, glanced off G.W. and struck N.J. squarely.