

apparently unclipped the wrong figure-8 on a bight loop from her harness and then failed to check that she was indeed on belay to be lowered off using a sling-shot belay. Tying in directly to the harness avoids this kind of problem. (Source: Leo Paik and Bill May)

(Editor's Note: There was another fatality at this area earlier in the year. The little information we have suggests that, as in the above case, the climber was being lowered and the system didn't work, because he dropped 60 feet. Unfortunately, lowering incidents like this are on the increase. See the next one!)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE ANCHOR ON TOP ROPE SET UP

Colorado, Boulder Canyon, Happy Hour Crag

On April 20, a climber fell to his death while being lowered, due to the webbing on one of the anchor's parting and not being properly clipped in to the equalizing anchor. In the case of the webbing, it was only masking tape that connected (and hid!) the ends of one of two webbing anchor slings. This accident was particularly noteworthy because the climber had purchased the webbing the day before and did not realize that masking tape joined two pieces of webbing. The webbing came off the spool that did not have one continuous length. (Source: Bill May)

(Editor's Note: This kind of mistake has only been reported once before to ANAM—many years ago. It is—or should be—fairly common knowledge that webbing, unlike rope, comes packaged in this manner.)

SNOW BLINDNESS—INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Longs Peak

On June 11, Michael William Pope (45) lost his sight while descending from a successful off-season ascent of the Keyhole Route on Longs Peak. It was a particularly bright and sunny day on the snow-covered route, but Pope had forgotten to pack his sunglasses. His eyes began to burn with intense pain, and he could not see farther than 10 feet. What he could see was blurred with a milky haze to it. Pope called for assistance through his family band radio. Park rangers responded and assisted him to the trailhead.

Analysis

Losing one's sight on a mountain can result in additional accidents! Remember your sunglasses or turn around before the damage to your eyes becomes severe. In an emergency, one can manufacture an improvised pair of sunglasses from cardboard and/or tape with just small slits for viewing. (Source: Jim Dettlerline and Mark Magnuson, NPS Rangers, RMNP)

FALL OR SLIP ON ROCK—TWO INCIDENTS

Colorado, Black Canyon of the Gunnison

On June 17, Zach Alberts (20) fell while leading a climb of the 5.10+ Cruise route. Alberts was climbing about 10 feet above his last piece of protection when he lost his footing, slipped and fell, sustaining possible fractures to both ankles. Alberts' climbing partner contacted North Rim Ranger Ed Delmolino at 9:30 p.m. Delmolino treated Alberts' injuries and monitored his condition

through the night until rescue operations could begin the following morning. Park and local rescue teams raised Alberts up the North Chasm wall over 1,500 feet to the rim of the canyon. The mission took about five hours and over 25 rescuers to complete. Marion Parker was IC.

On July 9, Martha Moses (41) fell while lead-climbing Cruise Gully after she and her partner abandoned a climb on the Leisure route. Moses was climbing 50 feet above her first protection in intermittent rain when she apparently lost her footing, fell and tumbled about 80 feet, sustaining severe head injuries. Her partner contacted ranger Ed Delmolino, who responded along with a paramedic from a local EMS squad.

The nighttime litter evacuation involved lowering her down the remainder of the gully in rain, lightning, and continuous rock falls. Moses was then raised over 1,500 feet up the North Chasm wall to the rim and flown by helicopter to St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction, where she underwent surgery for a skull fracture.

The entire operation took 12 hours and involved 50 rescuers and support personnel, including a number of local, county, and volunteer rescue squads. These two operations constitute the most significant technical raises to date in the park. (Source: Linda Alick, Black Canyon of the Gunnison)

(Editor's Note: These are the first reports from Black Canyon in a long time. It is interesting to note their final comment, which might explain this.)

FALLING ICE

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Longs Peak

On June 25, Jesse Woods (20) and Scott Kastengren were preparing to climb the third pitch of the Casual Route (IV 5.10) on the Diamond of Longs Peak when Woods was struck in the face by falling ice. He sustained lacerations to the forehead (requiring 22 sutures), a concussion, fractured nose, and hematomas surrounding both eyes. Kastengren lowered Woods back down to Broadway Ledge where they were assisted by two other climbers known as Al and Craig. At Mills Glacier they were joined by park rescue for a helicopter evacuation.

Analysis

Late spring and early summer bring the highest incidence of falling ice with the advent of longer days and warmer temperatures. However, it is possible to encounter falling ice and falling rock (due to freeze/thaw cycles) at any other time of year on Longs Peak depending on conditions. While it is sometimes possible to gauge the hazard by inspecting the upper face with binoculars, there is no certain way to predict the risk of falling ice here.

Woods was wearing his helmet and was clipped into the belay anchors at the time of the accident, preventing more serious consequences. Woods and Kastengren, with the assistance of fellow climbers who kindly assisted in the spirit of true mountaineers, did an excellent job in evacuating from the Diamond and Lower East Face. (Source: Jim Detterline and Mark Magnuson, NPS Rangers, RMNP)