

waited on a ledge 125 metres below the summit for Kananaskis Country Public Safety Specialists. A top-down rope rescue was completed with a Public Safety Specialist being lowered from the top at 1816, reaching the climber at 1836, administering first aid, and then being lowered to the base at 1933. The total length of the lower was 270 metres.

Analysis

A handhold broke and the climber barn-doored off the face. He was caught by his belayer, but hit his foot on a small ledge in descent. (Source: M. Kopang, G. Field, B. Duncan, Kananaskis Country Public Safety Program) *(Canadian Editor's Note: Whenever possible, parties should attempt to complete a self-rescue.*

There were a total of 18 submitted accidents in Kananaskis Country for 2009. Several of the accidents involved hikers or scramblers in technical terrain, including one fatal fall.)

FALL ON ROCK – FOOTHOLD BROKE OFF, OFF ROUTE, PLACED NO PROTECTION

Alberta, Canadian Rockies, Phantom Tower

On April 11, a party of three were going to attempt the South Face of the Phantom Tower, a 5.8 gear route in the Ghost River. The leader (20) started up what he thought was the beginning pitch, but he was about 20m too far to the right. He ascended about ten meters from the ground without protection. A foothold broke off, and that resulted in a ground fall and a long tumble through the scree. His partners secured him with the rope and then activated the “911” button on their SPOT beacon. The Banff detachment of the Royal Canadian Mountain Police (RCMP) were eventually contacted by the SPOT dispatch, and they phoned Banff Public Safety dispatch to inform them that there was a PLB 911 signal coming from the east side of BNP. The RCMP had to place a call back to the International Emergency Response Coordination Centre (IERCC), in Houston, Texas, as they had not provided latitude and longitude with the initial call. RCMP called back with the coordinate, and the location was determined to be on the BNP east boundary, near Phantom Crag.

Meanwhile, a caller from the party eventually made it through to Banff dispatch on a cellphone, and confirmed that a 20-year-old male had fallen ten meters to the ground and had sustained serious injuries. Parks rescuers and EMS flew to the scene and heli-slung into the patient, who was then stabilized, packaged and slung down to a heli staging area. STARS air ambulance was notified and they flew directly to the scene. The patient was then transferred directly to Foothills Hospital in Calgary, where he was diagnosed with fractured vertebrae.

Analysis

SPOT beacons are becoming very popular. Unfortunately the details of the incident and sometimes the actual latitude and longitude of the incident are not properly communicated. This makes mounting an appropriate rescue response more difficult. Often the text message on the beacon has not been updated for the trip and is not appropriate. Placing no protection at the beginning of the climb guarantees that any fall will result in hitting the group and significantly increasing the potential for a serious injury. (Source: Brad White, Banff National Park Mountain Safety Specialist)

ROCK LEDGE BROKE OFF – FALLING ROCK HIT CLIMBING PARTNER **Alberta, Kananaskis Country, Mount Yamnуска**

On May 22, JK and A were climbing the Necromancer route (5.10a, eleven pitches) on Mount Yamnуска. JK was leading the second pitch and stepped on a ledge to start a traverse when the ledge broke off. A soccer ball-sized rock landed on A's foot breaking it. JK lowered off gear, tandem rappelled with A off the route, and splinted the foot and leg once at the base. A was heli-slung from the base by Kananaskis Country Public Safety Specialists. (Source: Kananaskis Country Public Safety Program)

(Canadian Editor's Note: Loose hand and footholds are not uncommon in the Canadian Rockies. This is a good example of the party being able to self-rescue and administer first aid while waiting for an organized evacuation.)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE COMMUNICATION, INADEQUATE BELAY – BELAYER NOT READY

Alberta, Canadian Rockies, Wicked Gravity Wall

On June 16, PH was sport climbing on the Wicked Gravity Wall at the Back of the Lake climbing area at Lake Louise, Banff National Park. He had done several routes and was climbing one last route to "cool down" before dark after a long afternoon/evening. After feeding the rope through the station, he neglected to inform his belayer that he was ready to be lowered and he just leaned back. The belayer was not holding the rope at the time and PH fell about 20-30 feet, striking a ledge with his feet on the way down. Eventually the Grigri belay device stopped him just before a ground fall, but he suffered a badly broken ankle. Rescuers responded in the dark and PH was lowered in a stretcher over the steep terrain and then wheeled to the ambulance in a stretcher.

FALL ON ROCK, OFF ROUTE, PROTECTION PULLED

Alberta, Kananaskis Country, Mount Yamnуска

On June 18, W and NB were climbing Grillmair's Chimney (5.6, 8 pitches)