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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

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SUMMARY OF ANNUAL MOUNTAINEERING REPORTS

from

Areas Administered by the National Park Service - 1966

Annual mountaineering reports were received from Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Chiricahua, Colorado, and Devils Tower National Monuments, and Crater Lake, Glacier, Grand Canyon, Grand Teton, Lassen Volcanic, Mount McKinley, Mount Rainier, Olympic, Rocky Mountain, Sequoia-Kings Canyon, Yosemite, and Zion National Parks.

Record of Ascents

Black Canyon reported one successful ascent in 1966. Another attempted climb of the North Chasm View Wall failed.

Chiricahua had no reported ascents in the monument during the year.

At Colorado National Monument, three parties with a total of nine persons made ascents of Independence Monument. One party of two persons made ascents of Squaw Fingers. Seven parties totaling about 35 persons made practice climbs in the monument.

Climbing activities declined for the second year at Devils Tower. In 1966, a total of 33 parties consisting of 100 climbers reached the summit of the Tower. No new routes were pioneered.

Crater Lake reported no technical climbs during the year.

Glacier reported 509 ascents of 38 different peaks within the park, an increase of 39 ascents over 1965.

There were no authorized technical climbs made in Grand Canyon; however, one unauthorized climb was reported. Several groups of spelunkers entered the Canyon to map and explore the cave systems. Back-country hiking was enjoyed by 749 persons in 1966 as compared to 649 recorded in 1965.

Grand Teton reported mountaineering parties successfully completed 962 of the 1,221 climbs attempted. Individuals in these successful parties totalled 2,792.

Mount McKinley reported three successful expeditions and two unsuccessful expeditions on Mount McKinley. "Red Suspenders" Expedition, sponsored by the Tacoma Firefighters Union reached the summit without incident. Fairbanks "66" McKinley Expedition reached the North Peak and was subsequently pinned down for 12 days by 80 mph winds and subzero temperatures, before eventually being forced to retreat. The Swarthmore Denali trip of college students reached both summits in good weather. The Japanese Alpine Club Expedition made successful ascents of Mount Hunter, via the West Ridge and Mount Foraker by a new route on the east side and northeast ridge. The Milton Mount Russell Expedition accomplished the second ascent of Mount Hunter, but was forced to retreat from an attempt on Mount Russell due to adverse weather conditions with winds estimated in excess of 100 mph.

At Mount Rainier, a total of 1,894 persons attempted the summit climb during 1966. Of these, 1,304 or 69 percent were successful. This represents a 38 percent increase in total registrations and a 50 percent increase in climbers reaching the summit.

Climbing activities on Mount Olympus in Olympic were relatively light with 310 attempts and 269 ascents as compared to 552 attempts and 497 ascents in 1965. However, there was more intensive mountaineering in the more remote sections of the park. A total of 472 attempts and 308 ascents were recorded on other peaks throughout the area.

Rocky Mountain recorded 847 technical climbing attempts compared with 762 the previous year. The Longs Peak and Wild Basin areas recorded 610 successful technical ascents while the Bear Lake area declined to 81. Climbing activity on Longs Peak experienced an all time record of 3,900 climbing ascents, with 590 via the East Face.

Major climbing activity in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park was confined to the back-country and is incidental to extended wilderness cross-country hiking. A total of 5,155 people signed the register on the summit of Mount Whitney this year.

Climbing at Yosemite continued to increase in 1966. There were 1,295 climbs registered with 3,376 climbers as compared to 1,191 climbs with 2,887 climbers in 1965.

At Zion, a party of three from the Wasatch Mountain Club made a successful ascent on the face of Bridge Mountain. A three member party of this Club also made a successful ascent of the Sentinel during the year.

#### Accident Data

At Glacier, two deaths occurred in mountainous off-trail areas. Neither accident was the result of climbing as generally defined.

Grand Canyon suffered a number of accidents resulting in two deaths and four serious injuries from off-trail activities. None were classified as mountaineering accidents, although one was classified as unauthorized climbing.

Mountaineering accidents at Grand Teton in 1966 were slightly above the ten-year average of 8.4, but the number of evacuations and fatalities were both below the ten-year average by 4.8% and 1.6%, respectively. There were nine mountaineering accidents, three evacuations and one fatality. Five off-trail hiking accidents and two on trail accidents were experienced, but not recorded as mountaineering accidents.

There were no significant mountaineering accidents in Mount McKinley this year.

At Mount Rainier there were two mountaineering accidents. On July 24, a climber sustained an ankle injury at about 12,500 feet elevation on the Emmons Glacier route. On July 31, a 19 year old girl was struck by a large rolling rock at about 12,500 feet elevation on the Fuhrers Finger route and suffered a fractured pelvis.

Five mountaineering accidents occurred at Rocky Mountain. Two of these resulted in fatalities. A 15 year old boy from Lincoln, Nebraska, was killed in a 350-foot fall above Mills Lake; and a man fell 1,000 feet to his death from a small chimney above Broadway Ledge on Longs Peak's east face. There were six non-climbing accidents, including one fatality in the back country.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon reported no mountaineering accidents in 1966. There were 15 incidents involving off-trail accidents, and other injuries occurring in back-country use.

Yosemite reported two accidents involving members of registered mountain climbing parties. There were 40 incidents resulting in injury to persons participating in rock scrambling, cross-country travel or hiking activities.

Three mountain climbing accidents were reported at Olympic and were attributed to improper snow climbing techniques used by the visitors.

There were no accidents resulting from climbing activities at Zion during the year.

### Concession Operations

The Exum Mountain Guide Service and School of American Mountaineering once again served visitors as a park concession operating at Jenny Lake in Teton National Park. Glenn Exum employed eight fulltime guides during the 1966 season and operated from June 13 through September 9. A total of 441 persons in 79 parties were guided on climbs of ten different peaks. Persons attending the mountaineering schools totalled 1,535 as compared to 1,180 for 1965.

The Rainier Guide and Ski Service enjoyed the most active season in the history of private guiding in the park. Total summit guide registrations nearly doubled that of 1965. Guide service also catered to a large number of people wanting guided trips to Nisqually Glacier and Paradise Ice Caves. Four climbing seminars were held with 43 people attending as compared to 72 people in five seminars during 1965.

The Rocky Mountain Guide Service had approximately 140 persons participating in guided climbs in the park in 1966. An equal number of people attended their schools which were held outside the park.

### Cooperation with Mountaineering Organizations

Excellent relations were maintained with search and rescue groups and other organizations concerned with mountaineering.

Ranger personnel at Mount McKinley received valuable help and suggestions from the American Alpine Club, the Alaska Rescue Group, the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, and several prominent individual mountaineers in revision of the park information and regulation forms. The American Alpine Club Medical Committee, local doctors and others involved in mountaineering, contributed appreciably in the revision of the Physician's Certificate used at Mount McKinley.

At Mount Rainier, leading members of recognized northwest climbing clubs, rescue organizations, and the American Alpine Club were contacted for their opinions on the revision of summer climbing regulations.

Rangers from Olympic attended several of the regular meetings of the Mountain Rescue Council, Olympic Unit, and the Regional Mountain Rescue Council meeting.

Glacier National Park is negotiating a cooperative agreement with Flathead County for the exchange of skilled manpower and equipment on joint rescue missions. The Flathead County Lifesaving and Rescue Association is active and includes a well organized scuba diving unit on which the park is dependent for underwater rescue and/or recovery activity. In exchange, the park provides mountain rescue assistance in emergency situations.

Rocky Mountain is now a member organization of the Mountain Rescue Association. This enables the park to obtain current information on mountaineering organizations and developments in the mountain rescue field. The semi-annual meeting of the Association is planned in the park April 28 through April 30, 1967, and interested Service employees are welcome to attend.

#### Equipment

Most areas reported adequate equipment on hand; however, several areas acquired limited additional climbing and rescue equipment, and some areas intend to purchase additional rescue equipment as funds become available.

Black Canyon acquired a Mini-Winch, complete with 1,000 feet of steel cable. Testing operations have indicated an appreciable potential benefit of this unit for specific rescue operations in this area.

Colorado National Monument has added a Sky Genie descender complete with 250 feet of nylon line, web harness and carrying bag.

Devils Tower purchased three sponge rubber lined hard hats, two 150-foot lengths of 7/16 inch nylon line and miscellaneous hardware.

Glacier acquired six additional plastic inflatable splint kits and other expendable items.

Rocky Mountain's concern for winter climbing resulted in the purchase of limited basic equipment. This winter gear included two mountain tents, four collapsible avalanche shovels, four collapsible avalanche probe poles, and four one-half length sleeping pads. The park is hopeful of acquiring standardized

weather data collecting equipment in order to be eligible and participate in the proposed U. S. Forest Service and Weather Bureau avalanche forecasting network.

Mount McKinley added two nylon ropes, carabiners, ice screws, four rescue pulleys, and a lightweight mountain tent to their rescue cache.

Mount Rainier acquired a new Akja litter by a donation from an accident victim.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon acquired six pairs of Jumar Ascenders and a line-throwing gun.

Olympic acquired an Austrian Akja litter with wheel attachment, rescue pulleys and tubular ice screws.

Yosemite purchased an 11 pound, 300-watt portable generator for rescue use.

#### Law Enforcement

Known climbing violations at Mount Rainier were again at a low level. Two warnings for minor infractions and several verbal reprimands for lack of discretion on the part of climbers constituted the extent of law enforcement. The influence of organized climbing and leader responsibility for action of his party is an appreciable deterrent in reducing the more obvious and previously frequent violations.

Several Service areas did not comment on adherence to climbing regulation measures; however, most reports reflect the problem of non-climbers involved in cross-country use, not recognizing the dangers encountered in negotiating near technical terrain.

#### Registration System

Black Canyon is reevaluating its registration procedure to improve screening methods in determining capabilities of climbing parties.

Devils Tower is strengthening the requirement for advance notification with qualifications for proposed climbs.

Registration for climbing in Glacier remains on a voluntary basis. Improvement has been noted in the Logan Pass area due to the availability of the new Visitor Center as a check out location.

Grand Teton reports no change in their mountaineering registration and climbing sign-out and check-in system.

Rocky Mountain's new registration log and qualified leader's list used this year proved to be more efficient as it provided better control as to the location of climbers in the park.

A hiking and climbing permit is issued at Grand Canyon when cross-country trips or climbing activities are planned. This registration gives issuing personnel the opportunity to check equipment, supplies and experience of the party.

All climbers are urged to register at the Chief Ranger's Office for climbs contemplated in Zion.

At Mount McKinley: No change in registration is reported; however, the "Application to Participate in Mountaineering Expedition" Form has been revised and considerably improved and simplified.

Registration of independent climbing parties at Mount Rainier is encouraged on a voluntary basis. Registration of guided climbers is accomplished by guide service personnel under National Park Service supervision. Revisions in the 1967 climbing regulations will provide more realistic control on roped glacier travel, party size, will tighten equipment requirements and the leader's responsibilities, and lend more flexibility in dealing with seasonal variations in climbing conditions.

Formal registration is not mandatory at Sequoia-Kings Canyon, as most climbing is done along the crest of the Sierra with access from the east side of the parks.

Registration is encouraged on a voluntary basis at Olympic.

Registration continues on a voluntary basis at Yosemite, with compliance between 80 and 90 percent by climbers during 1966.

### Safety

Black Canyon reports no change in safety policy, but a strong emphasis on safe climbing practices in pre-climbing contacts. Several campfire programs were devoted to mountain climbing this season in which safety as a requirement was stressed.

Colorado National Monument provides equipment inspection for climbing parties and refers inexperienced and/or lone potential climbers to local experienced individuals.

Devils Tower personnel inspects all climbing equipment and requires hard hats and piton protection for all climbs. New climbers are required to make their first ascent on the Durrance Route.

Mountain safety is stressed at all visitor contact points in Glacier. Excellent cooperation was received from the concession management at Lake McDonald Lodge. Each concession employee was required to confer with Park Rangers before making off-trail trips. Failure on the part of the employee to follow this procedure resulted in his dismissal.

At Rocky Mountain, the registration system, personal contacts and mountaineering safety displays are the chief means of providing mountaineering safety information to park visitors. There have been no accidents to Park employees on search and rescue activities in the past ten years, however, three accidents occurred in rescue training during the same period which were attributed to inexperience in using unfamiliar equipment without waiting for adequate instruction.

An outstanding safety record was set by expeditions in Mount McKinley this year. In spite of violent windstorms which destroyed the finest tents and turned back several expeditions, the only physical problems reported were the inevitable minor altitude sickness and two superficial cases of frostbite, both of which were adequately treated by field first aid. The efforts of mountaineering organizations and the Service to impress upon climbers the importance of proper equipment and clothing has met with considerable favorable response. All climbers this year wore either the military Korean boot or the Lowa Everest double mountaineering boot; both recommended footwear. This is the second consecutive year in which there has been no significant cold injury on Mount McKinley. Ground-to-air emergency signal cards were obtained from the U. S. Air Force and are now given to all applicants for mountaineering within the park. Cards are also supplied to the Alaska Rescue Group and bush pilots commonly concerned with expeditions to assure a universal signal system.

Mount Rainier is making distribution of a series of safety pamphlets written and published by the Tacoma unit of the Mountain Rescue Council. The Washington State Safety Council has provided financial assistance in distribution of the publications which encourage outdoor safety on the part of hikers, climbers and other outdoorsmen.

Most unsafe climbing practices at Sequoia and Kings Canyon occurred near the developed areas by inexperienced visitors. Signs

indicating climbing restrictions have been erected at locations where accidents have been most frequent.

At Olympic, acquisition of better equipment for climbing and rescue work and increased training of employees has been attributed to an improved employee safety record. The Washington State Safety Council is providing the pamphlet "High Country Safety" at no cost to persons interested in mountaineering.

#### Search and Rescue Operations

The cost of mountain rescue operations at Grand Teton amounted to \$1,360.51 for the 1966 season. Three major rescue and evacuation operations required 365 man-hours for completion by Park Rescue Teams.

There were two high altitude rescue operations involving summit climbers carried out by personnel at Mount Rainier. Several other situations developed in Alpine terrain and required prolonged and difficult search and rescue operations. A park team evacuated two bodies from the wreckage of a light aircraft near Grand Park and extinguished a forest fire started by the crash. There was a total of 13 searches and rescue operations having a combined cost in excess of \$4,000, not including contributed time by U. S. Air Force helicopters.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon reported a total of 15 search and rescue situations, 10 of which were concluded by search and/or evacuation by helicopter. Helicopter costs to National Park Service accounted for 25.3 flight time hours and amounted to \$2,006.94.

On June 25, an Air Force plane crashed in Center Basin; a Navy helicopter, attempting rescue crashed also. The National Park Service helicopter located the Navy helicopter wreckage and removed the bodies from the Air Force plane.

At Olympic, two rescues from Lake Constance were accomplished with the aid of a U. S. Coast Guard helicopter. One of these rescues required a two mile descent to the Lake employing technical snow lowering operations.

There were six incidents at Rocky Mountain requiring rescue and evacuation by park rescue teams during the summer season. Three other search and rescue operations were completed on Longs Peak in the early winter months.

There were two climbing and six rock scrambling incidents at Yosemite which required search and rescue or evacuation by park rescue teams and/or helicopter operations. Additionally, four drownings, an airplane crash, and 34 hiking incidents necessitated search, first aid, evacuation, or other assistance by park personnel.

Grace M. Donnelly, age 39, fell on her ice axe while climbing Lyell Glacier and suffered a severe laceration of the right breast. She was transported to Tuolumne Meadows Ranger Station by helicopter. Allan Ruskin fell while practicing rappelling and received a fractured vertebra.

A massive search was conducted, without success, for Charles Frizzell, age 31, of Livermore, California, who disappeared while hiking from Mirror Lake to Tenaya Lake by way of Tenaya Canyon. The contract helicopter at Yosemite spent 13.1 hours in search operations and accomplished 21 medical evacuations requiring a total of 21.4 hours of flight operations.

Although Grand Canyon had no search and rescue operations attributed to mountaineering, six other incidents required search and evacuation by park rescue teams.

An extended search was conducted for the body of Peter LeBrun who drowned while swimming in the Colorado River near Phantom Ranch on November 5. Total costs amounted to \$600.00 for personal services and helicopter rental.

There were 16 incidents of a non-climbing nature in which a helicopter was used in evacuation. In retrospect had the use of helicopters not been available, many costly man-hours of human exertion would have been expended in the evacuation and/or rescue of these people. In 1966, a total of \$830.00 was spent for helicopter rescue activities.

### Training Activities

Spring and Fall exercises in conjunction with the training sessions at the Albright Training Center in Grand Canyon provided basic training in rescue activities.

Three days of mountaineering and rescue training were given at Camp Muir in Mount Rainier for permanent and seasonal personnel in early July. Four Park Rangers from Olympic National Park were in attendance.

A three day technical mountain rescue school was held for 33 trainees at Sequoia and Kings Canyon.

Park Rangers at Olympic attended several mountaineering training sessions presented by outside organizations. Included were the Basic Mountaineering Course at Peninsula College, Olympic College mountaineering field trips and lectures, King County search and rescue training, and the Mountain Rescue Council meeting at Bremerton.

Park Rangers from Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, attended the Mountain Rescue Seminar at Idyllwild, California, sponsored by the Southern California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association.

Grand Teton held a technical mountain rescue training session for 19 trainees on June 17 and 18.

Other areas held regular mountain rescue training in basic rescue techniques, use of specialized equipment, organization and safety, for employees.

The 1966 Regional Climbing and Rescue School at Yoho National Park, Alberta, Canada, was attended by three National Park Service employees on September 19 through 24. In attendance were Park Rangers Wayne P. Merry, Mount McKinley, Frederick T. Anderson, Yosemite, and John Morehead, Grand Teton. The training sessions proved most interesting and valuable in exchanging climbing information relating to equipment, safety, techniques and operating procedures. The school was conducted in a very professional manner and the Service is grateful to the Canadian authorities for extending an invitation to the National Park Service to be represented at this climbing and rescue school.

A Task Force was appointed during the year to prepare a slide-tape-script training series on mountaineering and mountain safety techniques, and mountain rescue techniques. Supervisory Park Ranger Merry is Chairman of the Task Force, and Rangers Anderson and Morehead are members. The series will encourage uniformity of techniques and equipment in National Park Service field areas and will be available to other agencies and organizations concerned with mountaineering safety and mountain rescue training.

Comments received from Grand Teton and Rocky Mountain indicate a lack of mountaineering talents, skill, aptitude and experience in the seasonal employee force. Where serious mountain rescue organizational problems are imminent, a limited number of seasonal positions may require justification and exception from the referral system to overcome this manpower deficiency.

## Weather Conditions

Ideal climbing conditions prevailed at Devils Tower during most of the winter season. Strong winds, affected all but one of the expeditions on the higher peaks in Mount McKinley. The 1966 climbing season at Mount Rainier was characterized by generally good weather. Ironically, in the case of the White River District, 75 percent of the failures were attributed to adverse weather due to local weather variations and rapidly changing conditions. At Olympic, good mountaineering weather was the rule.

## Winter Climbing

Devils Tower experienced an appreciable decline in winter climbing. Winter mountaineering is on the increase at Glacier and is primarily attributed to the increasing popularity of oversnow vehicles. At Grand Teton, four groups of climbers requested permission for winter ascents, with only two of the groups being given permission to climb. One group of ten climbers made two successful ascents of Mount Moran on December 19 and 20. A second party of ten climbers failed to reach the summit of the Grand Teton because of adverse weather and climbing conditions. Winter mountaineering at Rocky Mountain showed 105 parties or trips this year as compared to 142 in 1965. At Mount Rainier, there were four winter climbing parties with 21 of 28 climbers in three parties being successful.

## Conclusion

The time and effort spent in preparing the detailed information in the mountain climbing reports for 1966 is most appreciated and we wish all areas a successful year in 1967.



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