This season was not only another warm one, but also a record year for climbers. Attempts on Denali alone totaled a whopping 1,340, solidly breaking the former record of 1,305 climbers.

This year began with the tragic loss of mountain guide, former NPS volunteer, and good friend Johnny Soderstrom in early February. On a winter attempt of Mt. Huntington, Johnny was tragically swept away by an avalanche and buried in a crevasse. This was a huge loss for his family and friends, including the local Alaskan communities of Trapper Creek and Talkeetna. Later, in mid-May, twin brothers Jerry and Terry Humphrey of Nagley, Ohio were killed in a fatal fall while descending Denali Pass. This accident sent a chilling, early-season reminder to all climbers that the descent can be a very unforgiving and dangerous part of the climb. After these heartrending accidents, the remainder of climbing season seemed to proceed with caution. The mountain remained remarkably safe, with only a few rescues and no other fatalities in the Alaska Range.

Because of deployment to Iraq, the U.S. Army High Altitude Rescue Team (HART) was unable to support our camp insertions (and end-of-season extractions) at 7,200 feet and 14,200 feet for the first time since 1991. This loss required our Helicopter Manager Dave Kreutzer to bring together the local air taxi operators and plan a distribution of various sizes of cargo loads. The air taxis flew a total of 35 hours flight time in DeHavilland Beavers, Turbo Otters, and Cessna 185 and 206 aircraft to transport the camp infrastructure, supplies, and food in and out of the 7,200-foot Kahiltna Basecamp. The contracted NPS Lama helicopter subsequently flew 19 sling loads up to the 14,200-foot ranger camp, including one load to the 17,200-foot high camp on the West Buttress. An additional 14 Lama slingloads were required during the end-of-season camp removal process.

In other news, mountaineering rangers conducting a late summer aerial patrol on August 17th documented that the firnline on the Kahiltna Glacier had reached an unprecedented level of 7,200 feet. ‘Firn’ is snow partially consolidated by the freeze/thaw cycle, but not yet converted to glacial ice. The line that marks the limit on a mountain above which snow stays from one winter to the next is called the annual snowline; on a glacier, this demarcation is called the firnline. Historically, the firnline has been much lower in elevation, but the last two seasons have been noticeably warmer. In both years, the first two weeks of May recorded temperatures above freezing with numerous days of rain instead of snow. Digital photos were taken of the rising firnline, as well as the disturbing sight of solid human waste from the outhouses which melted on top of the glacier ice. We are currently considering how to deal with the outhouse melt-out in the future. One suggestion is to require all solid human waste at basecamp be carried out with Clean Mountain Cans (CMCs).

We are looking forward to the challenges of 2006!
2005 STATISTICAL YEAR IN REVIEW

- A record-breaking 1,340 climbers attempted Mt. McKinley, with 775 (58%) reaching the summit. These numbers eclipse the 2001 record of 1,305 attempts and 772 summits (59%).
- As per usual, June was the busiest summit month on Mt. McKinley with 515 summits recorded. One climber reached the top in April, 162 summited in May, and 95 in July.
- June 15th was the busiest day on Mt. McKinley’s summit (101 climbers), followed by June 5th (69 climbers), and June 17th (51 climbers).
- 32 climbers attempted Mt. Foraker; four reached the top, all via the Talkeetna Ridge. All four summits occurred in mid-May.
- Overall, the average trip length for an expedition on Mt. McKinley was 17.3 days.
- The average age of a Denali climber was 38 years old in 2005, a statistic that has inched upwards from an average age of 34 in 2000.
- The record for the oldest man to summit Mt. McKinley was broken for the second consecutive season. The current record is in the hands of Sadao Hoshiko of Oita-shi, Japan. Mr. Hoshiko summited Mt. McKinley on June 15, 2005, roughly one month after celebrating his 74th birthday!
- Women constituted 11% of the total climbers and recorded a summit percentage rate of 45%.
- Guided expeditions as a whole (including clients and guides) accounted for 37% of registered climbers in 2005. This percentage has increased annually since 2000, when guided expeditions accounted for 24% of all McKinley and Foraker climbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUTE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF EXPEDITIONS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF CLIMBERS</th>
<th>SUMMITS (EXPEDITIONS)</th>
<th>SUMMITS (CLIMBERS)</th>
<th>SUMMIT PERCENTAGE</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MT. MCKINLEY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassin Ridge</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>11</td>
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Climbing activity was scattered around the high peaks area in 2005. Several new routes in the Ruth Gorge, one on a sub-peak of Mt Huntington, one in the Kichatnas and a new variation on the southwest face of Denali accounted for the new terrain climbed. Notable ascents also occurred on Denali, Mt. Foraker and Mt. Bradley.

Eamonn Walsh and Mark Westman flew into the Ruth Gorge on March 31st to explore the seldom visited Mt. Grosvenor. First they climbed the huge snow gully between Mt. Church and Mt. Grosvenor (the next two peaks south of Mt. Johnson) leading to a large col. From the col they ascended the upper south face of Mt. Grosvenor. This was probably the second ascent of Mt. Grosvenor. The team completed a traverse of the peak by descending Gary Bocarde's original ascent route from 1979. On April 6 they returned to the foot of Mr. Grosvenor and climbed a new line on the northeast face. Interesting mixed climbing led to a spectacular summit pitch, literally going from front points to standing on flat ground 100 feet away from the top on the plateau. The descent turned into a small epic as a snow storm rolled in, yet they arrived back at their base camp 18 hours after leaving it. They named their new route: "Once Were Warriors" (V, Grade 6 ice/mixed, 17 pitches total from the mid point of the couloir to the summit).

The upper Tokositna Glacier was an active spot for climbers in May. Will Mayo and Chris Thomas explored a sub peak of Mount Huntington on May 9. They dubbed the 10,700 foot summit "Idiot Peak" and approached via an eastward descending traverse from the Harvard route under the Phantom Wall and then climbing 1,800 feet to the summit. Later in the week Mayo made a solo ascent of "The Shining" on the north side of Peak 11,520. Back on Huntington, Eric Pallister and Nate Opp climbed the French Ridge in 26 hours round trip from basecamp during the third week of May.

Also in May, Louis-Philippe Menard and Maxine Turgeon climbed a new route on Mt. Bradley and made the 2nd ascent of "The Escalator" on Mt. Johnson. This new route on the north face of Mt. Bradley, "The Spice Factory", is a 1600m, WI5, M7, 5.10a route that they climbed over May 20 to 22.

The seldom visited Talkeetna Ridge on Mt. Foraker received two ascents within 2 weeks in May. Coincidently both parties, (Sue Knott & John Varko; and Dave Nettle & Aaron Zanto), had the Infinite Spur as their objective when they left the base camp on the Kahiltna Glacier. Upon reaching the base of the spur, independently, they both decided that the route looked out of condition, lacking the usual ice and opted for the Talkeetna Ridge which provided quality climbing. For Knott and Varko, it was one of three ascents in 2005, including Mt. McKinley, Mt. Hunter and Mt. Foraker. They are the 4th and 5th people to stand on all three summits in the same season.

There was one new route climbed on Denali this season. "Infinity Direct" ascends the South West Face between the West Rib and the West Rim. The high point for this route is where it joins with the Rib at 16,800’. On June 7, 2005, Valery Babanov (Russia – Canada) and Raphael Slawinski (Canada) completed this climb in fourteen hours finding some M4-M5 terrain; they gave it an Alaskan grade 5. Other interesting news on the High One is that the Cassin Ridge had 11 successful ascents this summer, more than double any of the past three seasons. The route was reported to be in good condition.

In July Joe Puryear and Chad Kellogg made the first ascent of the South Ridge on Kichatna Spire. This was the only summit visited in the Cathedral Spires this year.

Climbers came from 37 nations in 2005, here’s a look at both ends of the distribution list:

United States 783
Canada 77
Japan 69
Spain 53
United Kingdom 52

... Uzbekistan 1
Romania 1
Ecuador 1

Most U.S. climbers came from the following four states: Alaska (139), Colorado (104), Washington (104), or California (85). The only seven U.S. states without climber representation in 2005 were Arkansas, Delaware, Louisiana, Nebraska, Mississippi, Rhode Island, and South Dakota.

Climbers Rusty Willis and Daniel Burson (pictured) discovered a moose antler on the summit of the Moose’s Tooth. The antler was not likely left by a wayward moose, but by climbers on the first ascent of the southwest summit in 1974, known as the "Moose Antler Ascent". (Photo: R. Willis)
Denali National Park & Preserve, in partnership with climbing equipment manufacturer Pigeon Mountain Industries (PMI), are pleased to announce that the 2005 Denali Pro Award goes to Clark Fyans, a lead guide with Mountain Trip, for his selfless assistance to other climbers and for his efforts at keeping Denali clean.

Since its inception in 1998, the Denali Pro program has recognized members of the climbing community for exhibiting high standards for safety, self-sufficiency, Leave No Trace ethics, and assisting fellow mountaineers. Throughout each climbing season, rangers award worthy individuals with a Denali Pro lapel pin, the design of which changes from year to year. At the end of each season, rangers collectively select a Denali Pro Award winner from the list of pin recipients. The winner (or winners, in the event a team is selected) receive a specialized trophy, and their name is added to the Denali Pro Award plaque on display at the Talkeetna Ranger Station.

This season, Clark Fyans was instrumental in helping locate two missing climbers that were overdue after summiting the previous day. Fyans had taken his team to the summit on May 10th, and while descending he passed a total of five climbers who were still on their way up. Due to the ice conditions on the route, he left some pickets between Denali Pass and high camp for the descending climbers to use for their safety. While in his descent to high camp, Fyans encountered two brothers Terry and Jerry Humphrey who were still ascending very slowly. Fyans was concerned about their slow pace and the late time of day. Once back to their camp at 17,200 feet, Fyans left his handheld radio on all that night just in case the brothers needed assistance. He heard no calls over the night. The next morning, Fyans checked the brother’s snow cave to see if they had returned, but he found the cave empty. Fyans immediately contacted the Park Service at the 14,200-foot camp and notified them of the overdue climbers. Fyans then spotted what he believed to be the missing party at the base of Denali Pass. After consulting with the Park Service, he assembled emergency gear, hot liquids and first aid supplies before proceeding with another member in his party to their location. He found the brothers deceased and confirmed their identity with the NPS.

Additionally, on another guided trip late in the season, Fyans and members of his party cleaned up an abandoned climber’s cache at 8,500 feet and brought the contents back to basecamp.

Thank you to Clark, and to all 2005 Denali Pro pin recipients!

Talkeetna Ranger Station’s longtime helicopter manager Dave Kreutzer was honored at the onset of the 2005 climbing season with the National Park Service Alaska Region Safety Award, and was a finalist in the NPS service-wide award competition.

Dave has worked 13 seasons supervising the highly specialized, multifaceted high altitude Lama helicopter operation at Denali National Park & Preserve. Since 1993, Dave has put into place innumerable safety improvements that have kept the highest altitude shorthaul operation in the world accident-free in the course of over 600 hours of helicopter flight time.

Among his many safety contributions, Kreutzer was instrumental in designing a Bauman bag that transports both patient and attendant safely on a shorthaul line at 50 knots; devising the three-ring backup system for the shorthaul line; and was the leading force in recommending the ‘God Ring” for the hook-up attached to the short-haul rope. His attention to detail during safety “buddy checks” has kept over 450 staff and volunteers accident-free during rescue training and missions up to 20,320 feet on Denali.

Dave has written and/or updated all of the Park’s helicopter policies, operational and training manuals, risk assessment checklists, and mission forms. He also wrote, designed, and taught winching protocols to the U.S. Army High Altitude Rescue Team for hoisting victims and NPS ranger attendants in the CH-47 Chinook helicopters. He has taught helicopter safety classes to rangers, volunteers, mountain guides, EMS personnel, and the military every year.

Kreutzer’s extensive experience in SAR-related activities, as well as his professional commitment to safety awareness, makes him an incredibly valuable member of the South District staff and credit to his occupation. Congratulations, Dave!
Magnificent Desolation. Thirty one years ago, in 1974, we saw possibly fifteen people the entire expedition on the Kahiltna- Muldrow Traverse. The West Buttress of Denali was as a vast desert; quiet, lonely, awesome.

"The Mountain" is still awesome and vast beyond comprehension, but, it is not lonely or quiet on the West Buttress.

Great contrasts confronted and sometimes overwhelmed me as I returned to the route after an absence of twenty six years. I had led nine expeditions on Denali in the 70’s, ending in 1979. Returning was like coming back to a childhood home that has, since then, been purchased by someone else and remodeled!

In 1979, 533 climbers attempted Denali by all routes through the whole season. This year we had that many people on the same route at one time in early June! Over 1,300 would attempt the climb in 2005.

We enjoyed a bit of the old, "White Loneliness," by camping at out of the way places on the lower mountain. But, at 14,200’, we entered, "McKinley City." At any one time, from 80 - 100 climbers camped there as they ascended or descended the mountain. It was surreal. One afternoon, as many climbers descended from a successful summit, the camp was filled with the amazing sound of happy voices of a dozen languages celebrating their success.

The "crowd" was unavoidable. Though most people moved fairly well, traffic "bottlenecks" developed on the fixed lines and on the ridge itself. Weather kept us grouped together as we waited at the 14,200’ and 17,200’ camps. Our summit day was shared with as many as 80 others. We waited long minutes on the summit headwall and ridge as other, less acclimatized climbers would stop to breathe and rest ahead of us.

In contrast, these same "crowds" provided rich fellowship as we talked, laughed and played together in the camps. Irish, Spanish, Chinese, Basque, English, Canadian, Mexican, Russian, Georgian, Japanese and Americans from many states shared stories, songs and games as we waited out the weather. We celebrated on the summit together and congratulated each other as we passed on the trail. These rich relationships added greatly to the climbing experience.

Before the Park Service began to monitor and regulate trash and human waste on the mountain burnt garbage and feces were a common sight, especially on the upper mountain above 14,000’. After a storm, dozens of piles of human waste would be exposed by the wind, which also blew the debris around in such a way as to make it difficult to find clean snow to melt.

Today, the mountain is much cleaner and safer than it was in the 70’s. Clean conditions and well maintained fixed lines and protection are a great improvement.

Changes have occurred in the natural environment as well as the social. Rockfall at Windy Corner is a genuine hazard where it never was before. Glaciers have changed and the routes are different as crevasses open up in new areas. The weather seems warmer at times. Our summit temperature was a tropical +10 degrees and thunder rolled below us in a way I have never experienced in nine other ascents.

"The Mountain" is still vast and incomparably magnificent. The experience has changed, much of it for the better. And, it is still possible to touch a little of that "Magnificent Desolation" with some flexibility in camp site choice.

The West Buttress of Denali was, and still is, a wonderful place!
Detailed below are thirteen search and rescue missions performed by Denali National Park and Preserve rangers in 2005. For more detailed information on the missions listed below and information on the other missions performed in 2005 refer to Accidents in North American Mountaineering-2006, published by the American Alpine Club.

**RESCUE SUMMARY - 2005**

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**Fatal Avalanche, Mt. Huntington**
On February 15th, two climbers were approaching the base of the West Face Couloir route on Mt. Huntington when the lead climber left his partner’s view. When the second climber reached the location where he last observed his partner, he instead saw avalanche debris, the majority of which had entered into a crevasse. After searching the immediate area and probing the debris inside the crevasse, he was unable to locate his partner and subsequently returned to the party’s basecamp and phoned the Talkeetna Ranger Station for assistance. When weather permitted, a military Pavehawk helicopter picked up the remaining climber and did an initial aerial reconnaissance of the accident site. Interagency aerial search operations and an avalanche hazard site assessment were conducted by the NPS, the Alaska State Trooper SAR Coordinator, and an avalanche expert from the Alaska Mountain Safety Center. The victim’s most likely location was determined to be under heavy debris inside the crevasse, resulting in a negligible possibility of survival. Search operations were suspended at the conclusion of flight operations on February 17th.

**Aircraft Mishap, Ruth Amphitheater**
On April 15th, during a post-landing taxi in the Ruth Amphitheater, a Talkeetna-based commercial aircraft sustained substantial damage to the landing gear and structure after launching over an open crevasse and landing hard on the downhill side. A minor injury was reported by one of the two passengers, both of whom were NPS rangers.

**HACE, Mt. McKinley**
On May 6th, a climber reported to NPS staff at the 17,200-foot camp that his partner had “lost his mind”. The patient’s chief complaint was ataxia and an altered mental status while on the summit ridge. Most of these symptoms had resolved themselves by descending to the 17,200-foot camp, however the patient still exhibited signs of altitude illness and some memory loss. The patient was treated for high altitude cerebral edema (HACE) and was released after 10 hours of care and rest. The patient still exhibited signs of altitude illness and some memory loss. The patient was treated for high altitude cerebral edema (HACE) and was released after 10 hours of care and rest. The patients were assisted down to the 14,200 foot camp by another team of four without incident.

**Fatal Climbing Fall, Mt. McKinley**
On May 11th, twin brothers were killed in a fall while descending Denali Pass at 18,200 feet on Mt. McKinley. The fall was unwitnessed, although fatigue and icy conditions likely contributed to the fall. Their bodies were recovered the same day and flown out to Talkeetna. (for more information, see Denali Pro article, page 4)

**HACE, Mt. McKinley**
On May 16th, a client was brought to the 14,200-foot ranger camp by his mountaineering guide with signs and symptoms of high altitude cerebral edema. The client was treated with oxygen and altitude medications and remained under NPS care until May 18th, when he was evacuated from the 14,200-foot camp by the Lama helicopter.

**Exhaustion, Mt. McKinley**
On May 20th, an expedition contacted the base camp manager via CB radio reporting that they were at approximately 19,600 feet on the West Buttress route and one of their members was suffering from exhaustion. No immediate aid was requested, however they did request assistance at high camp upon their return. At 5:00 a.m. when the team finally arrived at camp, a volunteer ranger physician examined the exhausted climber while a climbing ranger assisted the group. The party was able to descend the next day without assistance.

**Frostbite, Mt. McKinley**
On May 28th, a climber reported to NPS staff at the 17,200-foot camp that his partner had frostbitten his hands. A private party of two assisted the injured climber down to the 14,200-foot camp where NPS staff re-warmed and treated the frostbite. The patient was air evacuated from the mountain on May 30th.

**HAPE, Mt. McKinley**
On June 18th, a climber was brought to the 14,200-foot camp by his companion (after a too rapid ascent) suffering from signs and symptoms of high altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE). The sick climber was treated with oxygen and altitude medications and remained under NPS care until on June 20th, when he was evacuated to Talkeetna from the 14,200-foot camp by the Lama helicopter.

**Respiratory Distress; Lower Leg Injury, Mt. McKinley**
An expedition’s lead guide brought a client to the 14,200-foot camp who was in some respiratory distress. The day before, this client was turned around short of the summit while on a summit bid (approximately 19,700’). The guides subsequently brought her down to the 14,200’ camp for medical evaluation. While this patient was being treated, a lead guide from a different guided expedition asked the ranger staff to examine a client that had sustained a lower leg injury while descending the fixed lines. Both of these patients were treated for their injuries/illnesses and together were flown off the mountain via the Lama helicopter three days later.
Respiratory Distress, Mt. McKinley
On July 2, NPS rangers at the 17,200 foot camp were alerted that a climber was found lying in the snow in severe respiratory distress. Subsequent to the administration of emergency medical care, the climber recovered and eventually regained a normal state of consciousness. NPS rangers short-roped the climber from the 17,200 foot camp to the 14,200 foot camp for further medical attention. The climber was later identified as a member of a guided climb. The guides of the climb were both cited for creating a hazardous condition.

Dislocated Shoulder, Mt. McKinley
On July 5, while descending from the 16,200-foot camp on the West Buttress of Denali, a member of a guided expedition dislocated his shoulder on two different occasions. Due to the unstable nature of the injury, the climber was evacuated from the 14,200-foot camp via the Lama Helicopter.

High Water River Crossing, McKinley River
At midnight on July 11th, an NPS mountaineering patrol that was traversing to Wonder Lake on the north side of the Alaska Range, discovered two individuals trapped on a very small gravel bar in the middle of the McKinley River due to high water levels. The patrol attempted to reach the two climbers, who were just beginning a Mt. McKinley ascent via the Muldrow Glacier route. At midday, the Lama helicopter was launched from Talkeetna, and ultimately both climbers were evacuated via helicopter to the Wonder Lake Ranger Station.

Climbers treated by NPS patrols for medical conditions on Denali.

Medical Summary

Altitude Illness, 18
Frostbite, 7
Trauma, 5
Other, 25

Exposure, Altitude Sickness, and Frostbite on Mt. Logan, Kluane National Park, Parks Canada; May 27, 2005
Denali National Park & Preserve’s high altitude Lama helicopter crew and one climbing ranger were called across the Canadian border to assist in an interagency evacuation of three men stranded high on Mt. Logan in Kluane National Park. The three climbers, all suffering to varying degrees from exposure, altitude sickness, and frostbite, were caught in a sudden and severe storm at 18,000 feet near the mountain’s summit. Lama pilot Jim Hood conducted three back-to-back high altitude shorthauls, ferrying the injured men to a lower elevation for an immediate military evacuation to an Anchorage hospital.
SOUTH DISTRICT STAFF

2005 South District Staff

South District Ranger
Lead Mountaineering Ranger
Mountaineering Rangers

Daryl Miller
Roger Robinson
John Evans
Karen Hilton
Gordy Kito
John Leonard
John Loomis
Meg Perdue
Joe Reichert
Mik Shaín

Helicopter Manager
Helicopter Pilots
Helicopter Mechanic
Administrative Assistant
Lead Visitor Use Assistant
Visitor Use Assistants

Dave Kreutzer
Jim Hood
Ray Touzeau
Francisco Orlaineta
Maureen McLaughlin
Missy Smothers
Al Gallo
Pam Robinson

Park Planner, South Side
Park Planner, BCMP*
Interpretive Ranger
Janitor

Miriam Valentine
Charlie Loeb
Laura Wright
Jack Fickel

Medical Directors

Jennifer Dow, M.D.
Peter Hackett, M.D.

*BCMP—Backcountry Management Plan

Mountaineering Volunteers 2005

Dorothy Adler
Brigit Borg
Adam Brown
Tucker Chenoweth
Colin Davis
Jennifer Dow
Leighan Failey
James Freeman
Wayne Fuller
Paul Gould
Terri Griffen
Dexter Hale
Stefanie Kerr
Rebecca King
Richard Konopka*
Doug Krause
Scott McIntosh
Brian Napier
Carl Oswald
Craig Patterson
Kelsey Ripple
Chris Robertson*
Bill Rodwell
John Romsbert*
Mike Ross
John Sasser
Dave Shuman*
Erica Skopac
Jim Sprott
Heather Sullivan
Matt Szundy
Heather Szundy
Daniel VanDerMuelen
Sandra White
Doug Widener*
Steve Wolfe*
Laura Wright
Jared Zimmerman

*Denotes Alaska Air National Guard 212th Pararescuemen