



AAC Publications

Denali National Park and Preserve summary.

Alaska, Central Alaska Range

The 2012 climbing season marked the 20,000th time Denali's summit was reached. The number of climbers has increased from less than 500 per year prior to 1980 to about 1,200 a year today. This year on Denali, 498 climbers out of 1,223 reached the summit. (In 2011, 687 reached the summit.) Foraker saw a summit-less season, with only six total climbers making attempts.

Sadly, there were six climber fatalities within park boundaries, in addition to numerous other injuries or illnesses that required intervention by NPS rangers and volunteers. Four of the deaths occurred in June from a fatal avalanche on Motorcycle Hill (ca 11,200') on Denali's West Buttress route. Meanwhile, the Mislow-Swanson Denali Pro Award was given to climbers Ben Smith and Bernie Babcock for facilitating the potentially life-saving rescue of a climber injured on the route Shaken, Not Stirred (Mooses Tooth) when a rappel anchor failed.

In 2013, Denali National Park and Preserve will be commemorating the centennial anniversary of the first ascent of Denali via the Muldrow Glacier route. In mid-September, a "Sustainable Summits" conference will be held in Talkeetna, planned and organized by the American Alpine Club and Denali National Park, with help from other organizations. We hope that, working together, we can find long-term solutions to help secure another 100 years of climbing on Denali and other mountains around the world. The complete Mountaineering Summary can be found at www.nps.gov/dena/planyourvisit/summaryreports.htm. More information about Sustainable Summits can be found at www.americanalpineclub.org/p/sustainable_summits. [Editor's note: Just before press time, this Sustainable Summits conference was postponed until July 21-24, 2014.]

Images

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