



AAC Publications

Fall on Rock, Solo Bouldering, Inexperience

Maine, Acadia National Park, Monument Cove

Rangers rescued two people seriously injured in separate falling accidents in early June. The first one (not a climbing accident), on June 8, involved a 19-year old Massachusetts man who was jumping around on the rocks near the summit of Acadia Mountain with friends when he slipped and fell approximately 10 feet off a boulder, then rolled down the steep mountainside for an additional 75 feet. Rangers and the Mount Desert Island SAR team set up a series of low-angle raises and lowers to get him back onto the trail and then down the steep trail to the road. He sustained head trauma, facial injuries, and a broken neck in the fall. Two days later, on the afternoon of June 10, rangers received a 911 call reporting that a 23-year-old woman had fallen approximately 30 to 35 feet. Upon arrival, they found that the Montana woman had been bouldering the sea stack at Monument Cove, located along the park's rocky shoreline. It was her first time climbing. At a distance of 30 to 35 feet above the ground, she fell from the rock face and landed on the cobblestone beach below. After a technical rope rescue by park rangers and Mount Desert Island SAR, she was flown from the scene by a Life Flight helicopter. The woman sustained extensive injuries, including a broken neck, a basal skull fracture, a broken collarbone, bilateral ankle fractures, and thoracic bleeding. (Source: Acadia National Park press release, June 14, 2012.)

Analysis

Acadia is a popular climbing area and now sees many visitors in the summer. The young man "jumping around on the rocks" is typical behavior, but is not considered climbing. The young woman clearly got in for more than she bargained. No bouldering pad, no spotters, no experience, but probably lots of exuberance contributed to serious injuries. We have to include it in our data, even though it was her first time climbing. (Source: Jed Williamson.)

Images

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