



AAC Publications

Rocky Mountain National Park Summary

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK SUMMARY: Two people died in climbing-related accidents in 2017, and another was very seriously injured.

On March 18, a 39-year-old man apparently died while descending from the Loft, a high saddle at about 13,500 feet, after abandoning an attempt on Longs Peak. His two companions continued with their attempt, and, after discovering the man's vehicle still in the parking area that evening, they reported him missing. His body was found halfway up the Loft route, which requires technical mountaineering in winter; the cause of death was not reported, but was likely a fall from snow or ice.

On September 30, a 66-year-old man died as a result of injuries from a fall reported to be 50 feet long at Batman Pinnacle on Lumpy Ridge. The climber was on Batman and Robin (5.6), whose first pitch does not follow an obvious well-protected line and has been the scene of a number of accidents.

At the end of October, a 31-year-old woman suffered life-threatening injuries from rockfall on Martha, a moderate mixed couloir on the south face of Mt. Lady Washington. She was lowered several hundred feet to the bottom of the climb and then down talus to a point where she could be hoisted into a helicopter. Martha is a very popular route, with both natural rockfall hazard and danger from other climbers; it generally has better snow and ice coverage later in the season.

In another incident, a 28-year-old man was injured in a ledge fall 700 feet up the Petit Grepon in August; climbers and rangers lowered him to the base of the spire, where he received advanced care from a park paramedic. The climber spent the night there with rescuers and then was lowered down 1,000 feet of talus to Sky Pond, where he could board a rescue helicopter. (Sources: Rocky Mountain National Park and the Editors.)

Images

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