



## AAC Publications

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### **Stranded – Off-Route, Benighted**

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Mt. Moran

**On August 8, at approximately 2 a.m., ranger Chris Harder was notified that a climbing party was stuck on the CMC Route of Mt. Moran.** The two climbers (male, ages 58 and 35) had begun their climb from the CMC Camp (about 2,600 feet below the summit) at 5 a.m. Difficulty with route-finding and multiple episodes of stuck ropes and gear resulted in a late summit (4:30 p.m.). After a brief rest, the two began descending and encountered more route-finding difficulties, challenging downclimbing, and stuck rappel ropes. They continued to descend after dark and ultimately got off-route onto the lower portion of the Black Dike, skier's left of the proper route. After contacting the park and confirming that neither was injured, the two were advised that a rescue would be launched the following morning.

Early on August 9, a helicopter crew quickly found the pair on a large ledge on the Black Dike. Two rangers began climbing to their location, as weather prevented the helicopter from reaching the climbers. In the early afternoon, however, the weather cleared and ranger Phil Edmonds was short-hauled to the ledge. He placed both climbers in screamer suits, and all three were short-hauled to Lupine Meadows. (Source: National Park Service Search and Rescue Report.)

### **ANALYSIS**

Route-finding can be difficult in the Tetons due to the complex and sometimes amorphous terrain. However, detailed descriptions and photos of this route are available in print and online; consider carrying several versions to compare in case of difficulties. Climber comments in online route descriptions often provide more information.

Various difficulties caused this team to reach the summit very late in the day, and then further slowed them during the descent. Setting a turnaround time before starting for a summit—and sticking to it—will minimize exposure to environmental hazards (dangerously warm snow, lightning) and allow adequate time to descend before nightfall. (Source: The Editors.)

## Images



No-fall terrain and few landmarks make the upper CMC Route no place to be racing darkness. The Black Dike is at far left.

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