



AAC Publications

Yentna Glacier, Four Ascents

Alaska, Central Alaska Range

From June 4–14, our group, which included Elliot Gaddy, James Kesterson, Paul Muscat, Matt Sanborn, Glenn Wilson, and myself, climbed four peaks on the upper west lobe of the Yentna Glacier in Denali National Park. Three of them are believed to be first ascents.

We had planned on climbing in the Wrangell Mountains, but, just as we like it, plans changed at the last minute. Paul Roderick flew us from Talkeetna to our 7,700-foot base camp on the glacier northeast of Mt. Russell (11,670'). This was the popular landing zone for climbers attempting Mt. Russell before conditions changed on the north ridge. [Editor's note: Formerly the standard route up the peak, the north ridge has in recent years seen large crevasses open up and make the route more difficult. In the future it seems the most popular way up the peak will be the recently discovered South Ridge (Drummond-Wilkinson 2017, see AAJ 2018), accessed via the east fork of the Dall Glacier.]

Our camp was surrounded by several 8,000' to 10,000' peaks with no record of ascents. We climbed four of peaks to the north and west of our camp, which we named Wandering Spirit Peak (9,200'+), the three summits of The Boys (9,200'+), Terrapin Peak (9,300'+), and Our Man Steve (10,100'+). We initially thought all four to be unclimbed, but after more research it was discovered that Our Man Steve, which is a satellite peak of Mt. Russell along its northeast ridge, had been climbed at least twice previously (both unreported) by parties climbing Russell. [Editor's note: Peter Brown, John Hauck, Dick Jablonowski, Thomas Kensler, and Dan Osbourne likely made this peak's first ascent en route to the first ascent of Russell's northeast ridge in 1972 (see AAJ 1973).]

We also attempted two other summits on the south side of the glacier. The September 2019 issue of *Scree* from the Mountaineering Club of Alaska has a more detailed account of these climbs.

– Joe Stock

Images



Elliot Gaddy, James Kesterson, and Paul Muscat below Our Man Steve (10,100'+) above the west lobe of the Yentna Glacier. This was one of four peaks this group climbed in June 2019.



From left to right, Elliot Gaddy, James Kesterson, Matt Sanborn, Paul Muscat, Glenn Wilson, and Joe Stock on the summit of Wandering Spirit Peak (9,200'+) after making the peak's likely first ascent. Mt. Russell (11,670') is in the background.



Glenn Wilson, Paul Muscat, Elliot Gaddy, James Kesterson, and Matt Sanborn climbing Wandering Spirit Peak (9,200'+) with the mountain they called "The Boys" (9,200'+) in the background.



Elliot Gaddy, James Kesterson, and Matt Sanborn on one of the three summits of The Boys (9,200'+), above the west lobe of the Yentna Glacier in the Alaska Range.

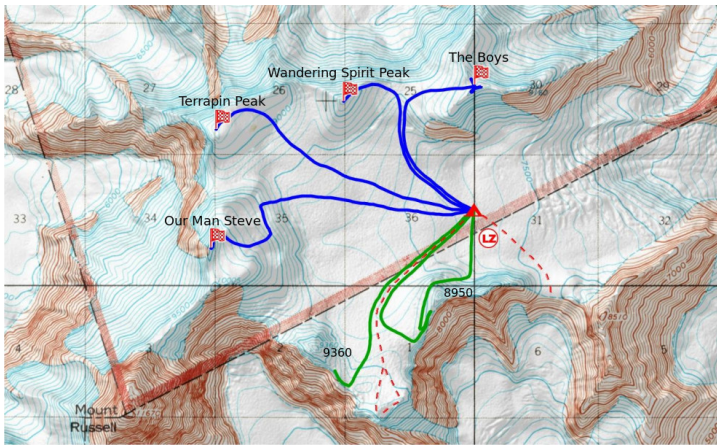


Elliot Gaddy and Glenn Wilson at base camp on the west lobe of the Yentna Glacier, with Mt. Foraker (17,402') behind.



Glenn Wilson and Paul Muscat climbing Our Man Steve (10,100'+) above the west lobe of the Yentna

Glacier in the Alaska Range.



Map showing the June 2019 team's activity above the upper west lobe of the Yentna Glacier. Successful ascents are marked in blue, attempts are in green, and the dotted red lines indicated recon hikes.



Elliot Gaddy, James Kesterson, and Matt Sanborn during the ascent of the peak they called Our Man Steve (10,100'+) above the Yentna Glacier in the Alaska Range. Mt. Foraker (17,402') is in the background.

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