



AAC Publications

Boulder Rolled Onto Leg

California, Mt. Shasta, Clear Creek Route

The east side of Mt. Shasta in September 2012 (left) and September 2021 (right). Exceptionally dry conditions in 2021 contributed to a number of accidents on the mountain. Photo by Phil Rhodes

On June 23, a lone male (31) was climbing the Clear Creek route. This moderate climb steepens to 3rd class near the “headwall” section at 13,000 feet. This portion scrambles through a relatively short section of steeper rock and talus to gain the summit area. The solo climber reported “accidentally pulling a 200-pound boulder onto his foot/ankle.” He was unable to descend on his own and called 911.

U.S. Forest Service climbing ranger Nick Meyers was inserted by helicopter near 12,600 feet and ascended on foot to the injured climber’s location. Meyers rigged the climber for evacuation, and California Highway Patrol Helicopter H-14 hoisted the patient to safety. The climber had torn ankle ligaments and suffered a knee injury.

ANALYSIS

The Clear Creek route is a strenuous 12-mile round trip with 7,800 feet of elevation gain. While nontechnical, the climb requires being attentive to usual mountain hazards, in this case large loose rocks. (Source: Mt. Shasta Climbing Rangers.)

Editor’s Note: Mt. Shasta experienced an exceptionally dry and windy winter in 2020-21, leaving very little snow on the mountain by spring and possibly contributing to rockfall and loose-rock incidents. Perhaps fortunately, rangers issued fewer than half as many summit passes in 2021 as usual and conducted about half as many search and rescue missions.

Images



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