



## AAC Publications

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### Free Solo Fall

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Ypsilon Mountain

Ypsilon Mountain, a 13,514-foot peak in northern Rocky Mountain National Park. The prominent ridge rising to the summit was the site of a free solo death in July 2023. Yellow circle marks the accident location. Photo: Christian Collins | Wikimedia

**On July 9, 26-year-old Bailee Mulholland fell approximately 500 feet while free soloing on the Blitzen Ridge (II 5.4) on Ypsilon Mountain. She did not survive the fall.**

At the time of the accident, Mulholland and her partner, a 27-year-old male, were traversing the Four Aces; climbing around and over these towers provides the technical cruxes of the route. At some point in this section, Mulholland slipped and fell.

Her partner called park rangers on his cell phone. He was rescued uninjured by a Colorado Air National Guard helicopter. Mulholland's body was located the next day by the Rocky Mountain National Park Search and Rescue Team.

### ANALYSIS

An ongoing trend has blurred the line between ultra-running and technical climbing, often involving large volumes of unroped scrambling over lower-5th-class terrain. Mulholland had significant scrambling and climbing experience, but, as always, exposure to risk grows the longer one is unroped. It's also important to know that an alpine environment, as found on Ypsilon Mountain—the summit is at 13,514 feet—has more loose, dirty, and wet rock than lower climbing venues. As always, climb with more caution in the mountains. (Source: National Park Service.)

## Images



Ypsilon Mountain, a 13,514-foot peak in northern Rocky Mountain National Park. The prominent ridge rising to the summit was the site of a free solo death in July 2023. Yellow circle marks the accident location.

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