



AAC Publications

Fatal Fall

California, Mt. Shasta, Clear Creek Route / Wintun Glacier

In September, a climber slipped and fell nearly 2,000 feet after getting off their route in poor visibility.

Photo: Mt. Shasta Climbing Rangers

On September 12 at approximately 3:45 p.m., USFS Climbing Rangers were notified of a slip-and-fall on the Clear Creek route at 13,300 feet. A witness reported seeing a solo climber slide approximately 200 feet, rise slowly, then fall again out of sight into the Wintun Glacier drainage.

CHP helicopter H-14 surveyed the area but the initial flyover was unsuccessful. After a refuel at Mercy Medical, Rangers Clairmont and MacArthur joined the crew for a second pass. A blue pack spotted on a rocky outcrop led searchers to a slide path in the snow and, at approximately 11,200 feet, the climber—deceased. Recovery was completed the following morning.

The climber was identified as Matías Travizano, 45, of the San Francisco Bay Area, an Argentinian-born tech entrepreneur. It was his first time on Mt. Shasta. Witnesses reported he had lost the route in poor visibility and fallen while glissading on the Wintun Glacier.

ANALYSIS

The Wintun Glacier presents serious objective hazard to any climber who descends it unintentionally or without crampons and axe. The transition from Clear Creek to the Wintun drainage is abrupt; in flat light or poor visibility it can occur without warning. This accident, like several others on Clear Creek in recent seasons, underscores the importance of careful route-finding on descent, knowing when to stop and reassess, and carrying the gear to arrest a fall on steep snow. Never initiate a glissade without a clear view of the runoff. (Sources: Mt. Shasta Climbing Rangers and the San Francisco Chronicle.)

Images



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