



AAC Publications

Mt. Silverthrone to Mt. Brooks Traverse

Alaska, Central Alaska Range

From July 6 to July 12, Gabe Messercola and I completed the first known traverse from Mt. Silverthrone to Mt. Brooks, including the three Pyramid peaks (a.k.a. Tripyramid). We climbed the chain of peaks from south to north, and the traverse included the first ascent of East Pyramid's southwest ridge (from the col between Central Pyramid and East Pyramid). [Editor's note: This group of peaks is approximately 10 miles northeast of Denali. Though individual sections of the ridgeline had been completed before, as well as attempts of the full traverse, a complete traverse is not known to have been done before 2015. Wichelns and Messercola accessed the peaks by the Muldrow and Brooks glaciers, but the peaks can also be accessed via the Ruth Glacier.]

Gabe and I, along with friends Greg Zegas and Geoff Lyman, began hiking from the park road on the morning of June 27, bound for the Muldrow and Brooks glaciers via Glacier Creek. The eight-day approach required three campsites and multiple carries, but by July 4 we had established our base camp on the moraine at the confluence of the Brooks Glacier and Muldrow Glacier. A window of good weather allowed us to make an advanced base camp the next day, at ca 6,600', below Mt. Deception, where we would leave Greg and Geoff.

Gabe and I began climbing toward Silverthrone Col on July 6, slowed by thigh-deep slush. We completed the two days of glacier crossing and climbing early in the mornings to make camp by noon, just as the soupy wet snow turned even soggy, and giving us some time to dry out in the sun. On July 8 we were able to climb from a camp at Silverthrone Col to the summit of Mt. Silverthrone and back, following a depression west of its north ridge.

On July 9 we front-pointed directly up the east-facing snow slopes of West Pyramid's south ridge. From the summit of West Pyramid, the route to Central Pyramid was an easy ridge hike. We rested for most of the day on the central summit, waiting for the clouds to clear, and eventually spent the night on top.

The following morning, July 10, we downclimbed and rappelled with intimidating exposure to the col below East Pyramid, then began climbing the southwest ridge of East Pyramid. Though easy at first, the ridge presented a steep 20' ice bulge (60–70°) early on and then consistently steep snow climbing (30–40°), which we pitched out. Climbing on the left side of the corniced ridgeline, we found everything from soft powder to hard ice, which we protected with deeply placed snow pickets or ice screws. To reach the summit of East Pyramid, we first had to navigate a small bergschrund above a flatter section of ridge. We spent the afternoon climbing down to the col below Mt. Brooks, where we made our final camp.

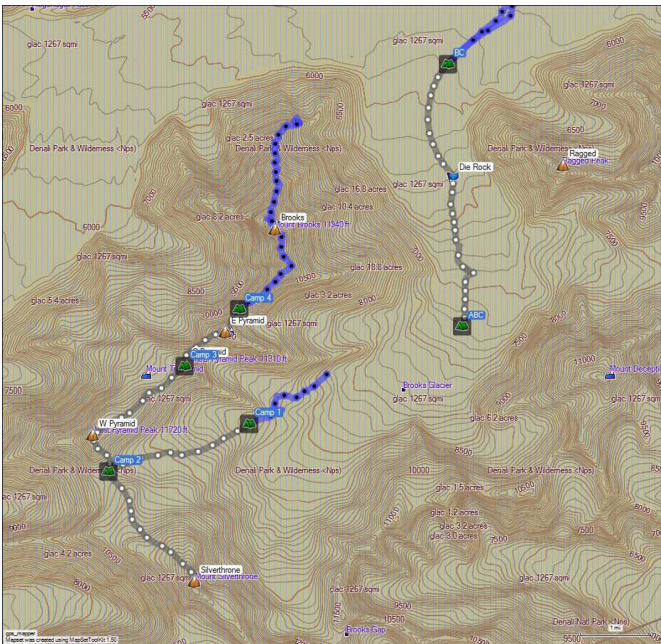
On July 11 we made our way up to the summit of Brooks and then down the majority of its north ridge in a whiteout. The route became slushy and even rocky in places, forcing us off route and into a basin on Brooks' north side, where we made a dozen rappels to reach the Muldrow Glacier. We were finally back at base camp around noon on July 12 and reached the park road again on July 18.

– Ryan Wichelns, with additional information from Mark Westman

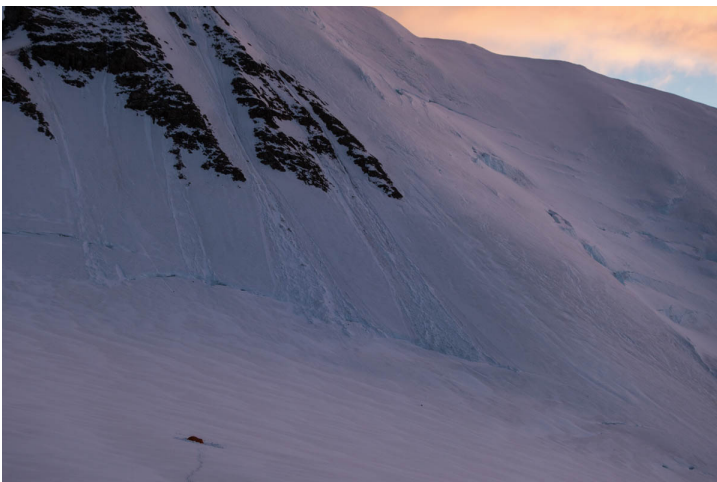
Images



An overview of the traverse from Mt. Silverthron, across the Pyramid peaks, and over Mt. Brooks.



GPS tracks from the approach and climb.



Camp below Mt. Silverthron at the Silverthron Col.



Camp on top of Central Pyramid.



East Pyramid's southwest ridge. This ridge proved to be the crux of the route and was previously unclimbed.



East Pyramid's southwest ridge from the col below.



Gabe Messercola approaching the summit of Mt. Silverthorne.



Ryan Wichelns on the summit of Mt. Silverthorne.

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