Drivin' Thunder

A Ritt Kellogg Fund Proposal By
Catherine Carter, Stephen Ullman, Liza McElroy, and Molly Perlman
To Travel on the Matanuska Glacier up Mt. Marcus Baker

Expedition Goal

When traveling in a wilderness environment, the effects of one's actions are experienced clearly and dramatically. The immediacy is part of the attraction, and the reason for our expedition is to experience this while making informed decisions and further developing skills in a spectacular alpine environment with good friends. Everyone on this expedition has learned the skills necessary to carry their weight in a safe and environmentally sound trip, but we all recognize that even the most well planned and safely executed trips are still subject to the mountain's objective hazards. The idea is to prepare as well as possible for these inevitable challenges, and to react to them in a sensible manner, keeping safety as the foremost concern.

A safe return has to be the ultimate goal of any expedition, but beyond that we'd really like to have a good time. We feel like we have the base of skills to tackle our first unguided expedition to a remote mountain and a good group to do it with. Everyone on the team is friends, and we all share a sense of gratitude for the availability of these wild places. Safety remains our priority, and we'd certainly like to have fun, maybe get a little fresh air, but we all share the view that the environment we're traveling through and the people to come after us shouldn't have to pay for it. Leave no trace ethics will be a constant concern in every aspect of our trip.

The summit of Mt. Marcus Baker is a goal to organize our efforts around, but the truth is that no one will consider this a failed expedition if we never stand on the top. This is a failed expedition if the safety of anyone in the group is endangered unnecessarily, if the next group up the North Ridge can follow our granola bar wrappers, if there are some ravens in Chugach National Forest with a free lunch in their bellies, or if we're not on speaking terms by the time we hitch the bus back to Anchorage. These are the things we value, and we are asking for help from the Ritt Kellogg Fund in hopes that we can build a good trip to a great place that we'd have a hard time getting to without a little support.

-This proposal is for a trip to climb Mt. Marcus Baker in the Chugach Range in Southern Alaska from May 21- June 4, 2005 as well as a training trip to Mt. Rainier in Washington State from April 20- 24, 2005.

Itinerary for Mount Marcus Baker

May 21- June 4, 2005

This itinerary has been developed with the calculation that while on the glacier we will be traveling three miles per day. In this way we are allotting time for bad weather days and extra cautious travel. It is very possible that we will cover more than three miles per day, but this itinerary will accommodate for bad weather and tough terrain. If we find ourselves with extra days, we will practice crevasse rescue, setting anchors, and mechanical advantage systems.

Day 1 (May 21):
Fly to Anchorage, Alaska
Pick up specially ordered food and fuel at Costco in Anchorage
Head to Hostel and get well rested for expedition

Day 2:
Catch 6am bus from hostel, drop off re-ration food with Mike Meekin when bus stops in Palmer, and finally get dropped off on mile 102 on the Glenn Highway
Hike short trail to glacier and begin glacier travel heading southeast along the Matanuska glacier. Hike approximately three miles to campsite deemed safe by probing or a moraine campsite.

Day 3 – Day 5:
Hike approximately three miles daily on glacier to campsite deemed safe by probing or a moraine campsite.

Day 6:
Hike approximately two miles until glacier forks at 5,000 feet. Bang a right heading southwest and travel about one more mile to campsite deemed safe by probing or a moraine campsite.

Day 7:
Hike approximately three miles on glacier to campsite deemed safe by probing or a moraine campsite. On this day we will be aware of the ice fall on the south facing ridge of the western fork. We will take great caution when traveling though this area, possibly hugging the east side of the glacier to avoid run out from the icefall.

Day 8:
Hike approximately three miles on glacier to a snow field near the base of the North Ridge at around 7,500 feet where we will receive our re-ration. We will then make a campsite deemed safe by probing or a moraine campsite.

Day 9:
Hike about three miles up the North Ridge and set up camp in a bowl at around 10,300 feet. On this day our steep climbing will begin and from here on we will seriously assess

- Pesto mix- 1.25 lbs $6.50
- Tomato base- 1.25 lbs $5.00
- Margarine- 4 lbs $10.49
- Dried Milk- 2 lbs $6.00
- Cocoa- 5.5 lbs $7.99
- Gorp- 7 lbs $18.00
- Dried fruit- 4lbs no cost, will be made with dehydrator
- Chex mix- 3 lbs $8.00
- Chocolate semi-sweet morsels- 1.5 lbs $6.49
- Yogurt pretzels/raisins- 3 lbs $12.99
- Nuts- 4 lbs $13.99
- Fig Newtons- 2 lbs $4.70
- Brewers Yeast- 1 lb $6.50
- Textured Vegetable Protein- 2 lbs $7.45
- Hummus- 1 lb $5.79
- Candy bars- 30 $12.00
- Veggie bouillon cubes- 5 cost is negligible
- Garlic bulbs- 2 cost is negligible
- Ramen- 16 $4.00
- Peanut butter jars- 2 $6.00
- Pepperoni- $6.50
- Nutella- $4.29
- Fruits and Vegetables to dry- $40.00
- Spice Kit- we got this one

Total- $323.83

Fuel

1 liter per stove per day
First Ration- 14 liters
Second Ration- 12 liters
Total 26 liters- $35

Group Gear

- 2 stove platforms (to prevent stove from melting into the snow)
- 2 whisperlite stoves
- white gas
- 3 fuel bottles
- 2 pots with 2 lids
- 1 fry pan
- 1 pair of pliers (used as pot-grips)

- 1 Sam Splint
- 1 Thermometer
- 1 EMT Shears and Splinter Forceps
- 1 Splinter Picker Forceps
- 1 Scalpel #11 Blade Sterile
- 1 Duct Tape
- 1 20cc. Irrigation Syringe
- 1 Surgical Scrub Brush
- 1 Iodine Solution
- 10 Wound Closure Strips
- 2 Tincture Benzoin
- 4 Double Antibiotic Ointment
- 6 Antiseptic Towlettes
- 3 Safety Pins
- Accident Report paper and pen
- 2 Second Skin
- 1 Non-woven adhesive knit
- 2 Moleskin
- 16 various sized bandages
- 4 Non- adherent sterile dressing
- 1 Stockinette Bandage
- 2 Conforming Gauze Bandage
- 1 Elastic Bandage with Velcro
- 1 Adhesive Tape
- 13 Strip and Knuckle Bandages
- 4 Q-tips
- 1 Aloe Vera Gel
- Tylenol, Advil, Motrin
- 4 Antihistamines
- 6 pairs of rubber gloves
- 1 infectious control bag
- 2 Inhalers

Personal Gear

- 1 Expedition backpack around 6,500 cubic inches
- 1 sleeping bag rated to at least -20° F
- 1 sleeping pad (full length)
- 1 half pad
- 1 compression stuff sack
- 1 pair of snowshoes
- 1 climbing helmet
- 1 pulley
- 3 non-locking carabiners

- 1 sunhat
- 2 bandanas
- 1 neck warmer

Minimizing Our Impacts

Plan Ahead and Prepare

The ability to minimize one's impact in the wilderness starts before you even hit the trail. We have gone to great lengths, contacting rangers, Alaska Mountaineering School, re-ration bush pilots, and reading accounts of past expeditions, in order to best prepare ourselves for this expedition. We have discovered areas of highly concentrated crevasses, ice fall, avalanche danger, possible weather extremes, and other dangers. In order to account for these known dangers we have decided to increase our experience traveling on glacier, testing crevasses, performing crevasse rescues, and taking avalanche courses. We are taking these measures in order to eradicate, or at least prevent, the need for a rescue, for the impact of a rescue on a wilderness environment and habitat is extensive and very avoidable if known dangers are respected and unknown dangers are expected.

In addition to planning out logistics for our expedition, we will prepare by discussing group goals, what kind of expedition behavior we will have, and gain awareness of each other's backcountry habits. We will compensate for each other's weaknesses, embrace each other's strengths and thus be fully prepared to make critical decisions in times of need. If we know what to expect with one another, these decision making processes will run more smoothly and solutions will be gathered more quickly. A stable group dynamic is a safe group dynamic.

Every ounce counts. Every piece of gear, item of clothing, and pound of food we bring is due to its sheer necessity. We are planning on minimizing our waste by properly and efficiently bagging our food. The clothing we bring will be warm and waterproof. The gear we use will be safe and reliable. By following through with these actions, we will reduce our impact and increase our performance.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

For the majority of our expedition we will be traveling and camping on glacier. Thus we will be traveling on snow, rock, and ice, three extremely durable surfaces. For the two miles we are on trail leading to the glacier we will be sure to walk in the middle of the trail and when stepping off trail (to let other hikers through) look for rocks or other durable surfaces to tread on. We will concentrate out impact by staying on pre-existing trail and travel impact will be minimal while on the glacier.

Dispose of Waste properly

and State Park, but the best person to contact in case of emergency will be our pilot Mike Meekin.

Mount Marcus Baker Contacts:

Chugach National Forest- 907-743-9500
Chugach State Park- 907 345-5014
Mike Meekin- 907 745 6159
Anchorage Hospital 907-276-1131

Hazards

Hazards on the Matanuska Glacier and Mt. Marcus Baker are very real and we are very aware of them. We are doing everything possible to prevent accidents from happening. In all of the areas of danger we have identified, we are taking precautions to avoid disastrous situations. In the event of an accident we have two possible evacuation sites: a hut at 5,000 feet and a snowfield at 7,500 feet. We will have a Satellite phone which will give us the capability to call Mike Meekin or nearby emergency contacts.

Weather – The key to preventing weather related disasters is being aware of changes in weather, and our response to those changes. We are going to study clouds and weather before we go so that we have a solid foundation of what to base these decisions on. If we do encounter bad weather, our barometer will help us recognize changes in pressure and incoming storms, our GPS will help us pinpoint our location in the event of a whiteout, and wands will make route finding easier if bad weather hits.
When deciding the best location for our expedition, we determined that a mountain with a lower elevation would have less objective hazards than a high mountain. As a thirteener Mount Marcus Baker can still have dangerous weather, but warmer temperatures and less extreme weather will allow us to focus on improving our skills.

Avalanches - As avalanches are one of the biggest objective hazards likely to be encountered on a glacier, constant evaluation of temperatures, snow conditions, and slope angles is a necessity. The majority of the route involves fairly gentle grades until the final portion of the mountain, so the main worry in terms of avalanches up to this point will be the slopes bordering the glacier. These can be avoided by keeping clear of any cliffs with suspicious looking snow formations and remaining vigilant and testing snow conditions on any slopes around 40 degrees. From the map however, the majority of these slopes bordering the glacier look too steep to be very avalanche prone. The main areas of concern in terms of avalanches will be the slope starting at around 7000 feet, until gaining the ridge at 10,900 feet, the slope past 'Peak 12,800' one mile northeast of the summit, and the final slope leading up to the summit. Before heading up these slopes, we will need to test the stability of the snow pack. The most reliable way to do this is the Rutschblock test. All members of the team have performed this test before, and are able to do so when necessary. Three members of our team are taking avalanche 1 training and

Mount Rainier Training Trip

April 20- April 24, 2005

Itinerary for Mount Rainer

April 20- Immediately upon finishing exams fly to Seattle. Spend the night in Seattle.

April 21- Leave Seattle at around 7:00 am and drive to Rainier National Park. Check in with Ranger Station and drive to the Paradise trailhead. Hike skyline trail to Camp Muir at 10,000 (Approximately 4 miles and 4,400 feet of elevation gain). Continue on if weather looks good and energy and time remains to the Ingraham flats across the Cowlitz Glacier and through either the Cadaver Gap or Cathedral Gap depending on snow conditions. (Approximately three quarters of a mile and 1,200 feet of elevation gain from Camp Muir)

April 22- Summit attempt. From the Ingraham flats head to the west up a steep slope being cautious of ice fall and crevasses. The condition of these crevasses and ice fall varies week to week so we will obtain the current conditions of this area from the rangers before we go. At about 13,200 feet the slope angle decreases for the rest of the climb. We will obtain the rim at 14,100 feet and cautiously skip to the summit. We will then descend to Ingraham flats or Camp Muir.

April 23- Another summit attempt if previous day was a failure. If not, practice crevasse rescues and ice climbing, camping at Camp Muir or Ingraham flats.

April 24- Hike down mountain and travel back to Seattle to fly back to Colorado Springs.

Group Gear

We will bring all of the same group gear on Mt. Rainier as we have planned for Mt. Marcus Baker.

Personal Gear

We will bring all of the same personal gear on Mt. Rainier as we have planned for Mt. Marcus Baker.

Food

Since our trip up Mt. Rainier is only a few days long, we are not requesting any money to pay for food. We will be able to fund food for this trip on our own.

Travel Information (also written previously and accounted for in total cost)

Roundtrip Shuttle from Colorado Springs to Denver- $90 (per person) total- $360

Measures Taken to Reduce Costs-

We have cut down on travel costs by flying from Denver when it was cheaper (even when considering the shuttle fare), by lodging in cheap youth hostels, and traveling on buses or seeking rides from friends. We have cut down on food costs by de-hydrating what we can and finding prices from wholesale food companies.

Total Travel Expenses- $4543
Total Food Expenses- $323.83
Fuel Cost- $35

Money asked for from Kellogg fund- $4901.83