



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton
National Park

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Grand Teton National Park News Release

Seriously Ill Climber Evacuated from Garnet Canyon

Grand Teton National Park rangers used an interagency contract helicopter to evacuate a seriously ill climber from Garnet Canyon on Tuesday evening, July 17, at approximately 6:30 p.m. Charles Ragland, age 65, from Boynton Beach, Florida, was part of a climbing party attempting to summit the Grand Teton with Exum Mountain Guides when he became too ill to continue climbing.

Ragland was experiencing minor gastrointestinal distress on Monday as he hiked to the Lower Saddle (elevation 11,600 ft.). He spent the night at the Exum base camp, and on Tuesday morning, the climbing party set out for the summit. Ragland reached the Upper Saddle of the Grand Teton (elevation 13,160 ft.) before the combination of altitude, dehydration and fatigue made his symptoms worse. Ragland turned around at that point and headed downhill to wait for the rest of his climbing party.

Around 2:00 p.m., Ragland's symptoms worsened, and he became increasingly dehydrated and weak. With the assistance of Exum guides, Ragland slowly made his way towards the Garnet Canyon Meadows. After realizing additional assistance would likely be needed, one of the Exum guides walked ahead to alert a park trail crew working in the area at the time. One of the trail crew employees called Teton Interagency Dispatch by radio at approximately 4:30 p.m., and six trail crew employees then hiked up to Ragland's location to provide assistance. Upon reaching Ragland, they helped him as he slowly worked his way down the canyon to meet up with park rescue personnel.

Due to Ragland's deteriorating condition and the severity of his symptoms, rangers decided to utilize the interagency contract helicopter for evacuation. Two rangers were flown to the Garnet Canyon Meadows at 6:15 p.m. They provided medical care before boarding Ragland in the helicopter for a flight to Lupine Meadows where a park ambulance was waiting to transport him to St. John's Medical Center in Jackson for treatment.

This marks the seventh major search and rescue operation in Grand Teton National Park this year.

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