

## Case 5 – Kautz Glacier Route Climb Planning

**Message 1** sent on May 4 at 0941 for a 27-30 May climb:

Hey All, Here is some prep for our climb of the Kautz Glacier route at the end of the month. The link below is to a spreadsheet of personal gear and team gear for you to edit and add your info. Would like to keep to 3 or so tents as Camp Hazard is not the most spacious (according to Bill, who has been there...) If you are bringing a bivy sack that will work too, I guess. We would like to take 60M ropes to ease the rappels, but skinnier (lighter) is better. If you have one that fits the bill, please bring it.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/187S1BQQbjVM\\_ECPNsRYQD14yNF3h33TbF4f4MorL13Q/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/187S1BQQbjVM_ECPNsRYQD14yNF3h33TbF4f4MorL13Q/edit?usp=sharing)

B has established herself as the **MVP** of the climb by successfully navigating the [pay.gov](https://www.pay.gov) website and getting our trip permit. Kiana, please let us know what each of us owes for the climb. Next priority is to obtain your individual climbing recovery fee document. Link to info is

here: [https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/climbing.htm#fees\\_permits](https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/climbing.htm#fees_permits) That will take you to [pay.gov](https://www.pay.gov) to actually pay the fee. I will use my DEM card #, Kiana, which is: KC-2022-356. I believe all need to provide Kiana with the climbing fee number for our team permit. Please do that!

The Kautz route brief is here: <https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/upload/Kautz-Glacier-Routebrief.pdf>

The very useful Go/No-Go matrix begins on page 7. We will determine whether or not to carry over the week prior to the climb. A camp on Wapowety Cleaver (~13K) would be a possibility with this plan. With good weather, a carryover could be a lot of fun with a high camp. Your input valuable here.

I don't find a lot of blog posts on current conditions so please relay if you have recent intel.

Do get your altitude trips in. I have got a full month with an unexpected trip to help my mother with a move but have been getting out quite a bit - a ski of the Nisqually chute the most recent.

Bill and I may be going to Camp Hazard on Tuesday-Wednesday, May 24-25 both to get a little altitude and to scout the start of the route. Join if you are free.

I am not going to be able to lead any other conditioners as my one weekend in town between now and climb is taken up with events. So, please get out there and climb high!

Will provide meet-up plans closer to the 27th. Let us know what you think - Jerry

**Message 2** Received on May 10 at 1356:

Hey All,

Did a Helens trip last weekend and not surprising anyone but the last 6 weeks have dumped a lot of snow in the higher elevations of the mountains. It was unrecognizable compared to a trip we did in February. Paradise has 4' more snow than it did 8 weeks ago, higher elevations will have received a lot more.

Because of the low snowpack I was optimistic that we'd have an early start to the season and that the Kautz would be in pretty good shape for a late May ascent but at this point I think it's most likely going to be all snow with little to no bare alpine ice which is what I was hoping for on that route. So I'm going to remove myself from this trip and do it now, well in advance, so that someone else still has time to add on.

If others are having the same misgiving and you decide to move to a later date I'd still love to join, schedule permitting.

**Message 3** received on May 13 at 2031:

Our 2019 climb we had a decent snowpack. Placed ice screw anchors into the Penitentes. We were passed by a group of hardy Canadians marching straight up the center of the chute without a care in the world.

**Message 4** received on May 20 at 1737:

All,

Not sure if it's too early to do so, but I wanted to check-in with the group now that we're a week away from the climb. I updated the spreadsheet to add my tent if it can be of use. I have not used it yet, but Mountain Hardware pitches it as a lighter weight 4 season tent (Outpost 2). There seems to be some skepticism online that it can withstand high winds that more robust mountaineering tents are designed to handle (perhaps it's more of a "3.9 season" tent?), but it seems it should be adequate for everything outside of extreme conditions.

I've stayed in contact with the guide I climbed the Kautz route with 2 years ago, and sent an email today to see if I can get any additional info/beta on the route. According to IMGs online schedule they haven't started trips on the Kautz yet (the first is on May 23), but they may have some recent personal climbs/scouting trips.

There's still a lot of uncertainty with weather forecasts this far out, but as of right now there is some colder temps and precipitation lined up for the weekend. The "Go/No Go" weather matrix was mentioned previously, and I was wondering where our "No Go" point stands with respect to the weather.

**Message 5** response on May 20 at 1820:

The forecasts I have are just getting to Thursday, so I don't have any data to make a weather call yet. I would encourage you to not use a tent you have not previously used for the trip.

Message 6 received on May 22 at 0659:

Good morning.

Spoke to the Mt. Rainier WIC just to get any information I could on current conditions.

The WIC is opening full time starting Thursday. They were open yesterday and will be one today if anyone has any interest in calling.

The ranger informed me that there were people going up the finger, although no report on how or what they did. Additionally, a group from Muir didn't make it as far as Ingram Flats do to avy conditions.

Weather watch and maybe check with rangers Thursday.

See you all soon.

**Message 6** sent on May 22 at 0825:

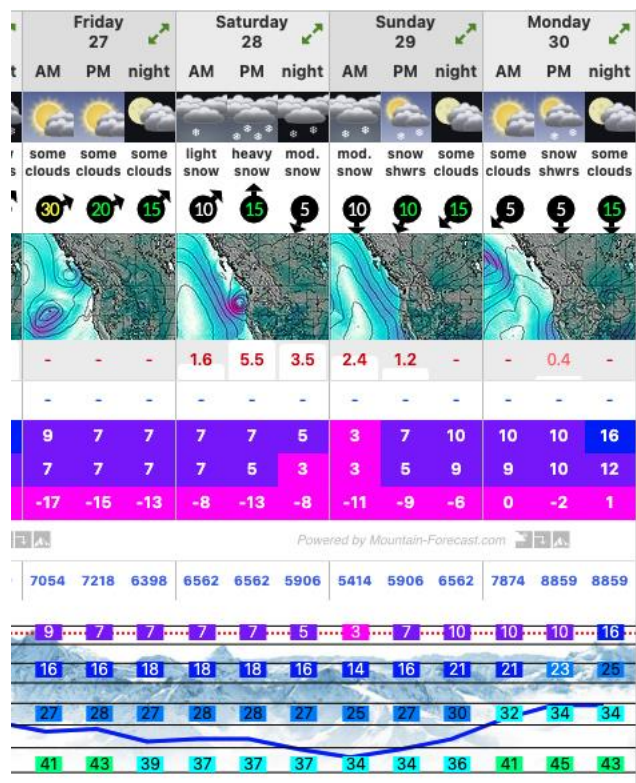
Thanks Xxxxx. Let's do a data call on Tuesday and maybe even a quick Zoom or FaceTime to give everyone a voice in the planning. I do want to modify the info in the spreadsheet in that we should all bring beacon, probe and shovel. Would 7ish work for everyone?

**Message 7** sent on May 25 0825 (after Zoom call the previous night):

A, B, C, Thanks for your time last night. Continuing to review the weather and route plan this morning. I think the weather is looking good enough for a Sunday summit plan using the 3-day/2-camp plan (Strategy 1) from the Kautz Routebrief. I am leaning toward Go at this point and continuing to prepare gear for the trip. We could be a little later starting Friday with this plan to get to the 8400' camp that afternoon. No need to respond now, will talk Thursday. Thanks,

**Message 8** received on May 25 at 0939:

Sunny Monday :) Almost no wind!



**Message 9** sent on May 25 at 2015:

A, B, C, I spoke to Xxxx Xxxx - a Kitsap member who was a client on the RMI Kautz 4-day seminar. He gave me lots of great information on their experience.

They spent 2 nights at Paradise, 1 at Wilson Bench (~7200'), 1 at Upper Castle (~9400'). He noted 2 guides went up to the rock steppe and noted 2 main concerns. 1) 3 layers of concern on the Turtle snowfield. They stated they would stay left on the rock ridge to avoid this concern area. 2) Wind loaded chute with cornices was the bigger concern and the reason they did not attempt to summit. But very high wind also had a big impact on them - winds in the 60's MPH with gusts to 90 MPH. Said two of their Trango 4 tents were shredded up pretty bad - poles broke in the wind then tore the tent fabric. Guides stated that either a big avalanche or a number of days of sun were needed to stabilize the route enough for them to put in a route.

They said there were about 30 other climbers on the route and all (he thought) were going to the Upper Castle with intent to ski down from there. One ski team had a tent shredded as well and had to dig a snow cave during a night there.

Guides stated they do not use Camp Hazard any longer due to rock fall concerns.

He stated fixed ropes for rappel were present and were in good shape.

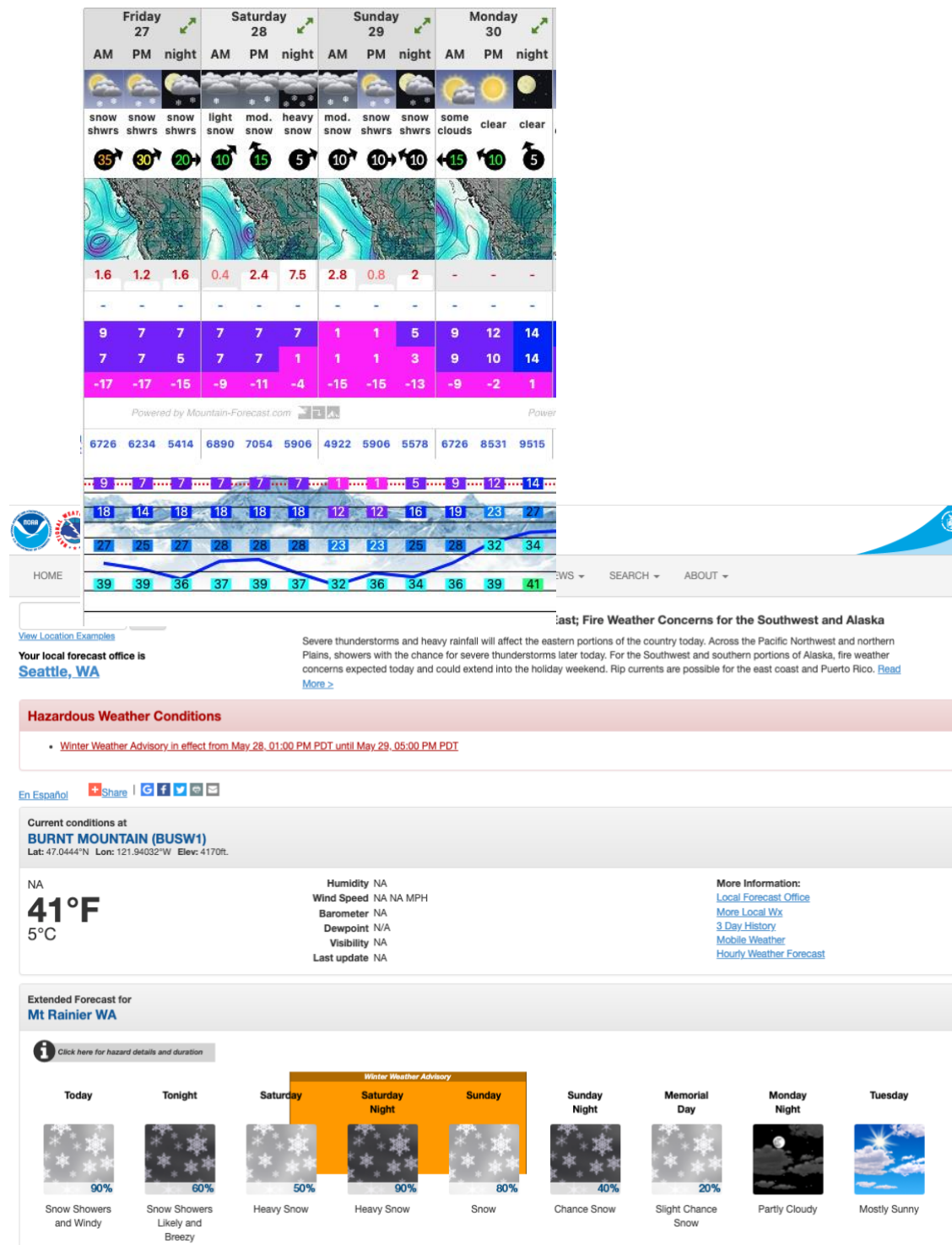
Happier news. The first guided trip was successful on the Ingraham Direct route in the last couple days. (Might be an alternative for us.)

So, to summarize, the main concern was the loaded chutes at the moment. Wind was far worse than is forecast for us.

That is the data from up to today. See you on Zoom at 11 AM tomorrow.

**Message 10** received on May 27 at 1117:

With the updated forecast, are we still planning on attempting to summit? What are people's thoughts on the avy danger even on the Ingraham Flats?



Drove to Ashford for trip and to consult with RMI guides first.

**Message 10** sent on May 27 at 1313:

B and C, We just spoke to the RMI guides - and Pete Whittaker(!) We think it is the best plan to cancel altogether. Weather is not getting any better and the guides say 2-3 weeks to get the Kautz route to settle out. They also recommended we not try and tough it out during the upcoming storms either, which finally convinced me to call it. Sorry to have drug it out so long.