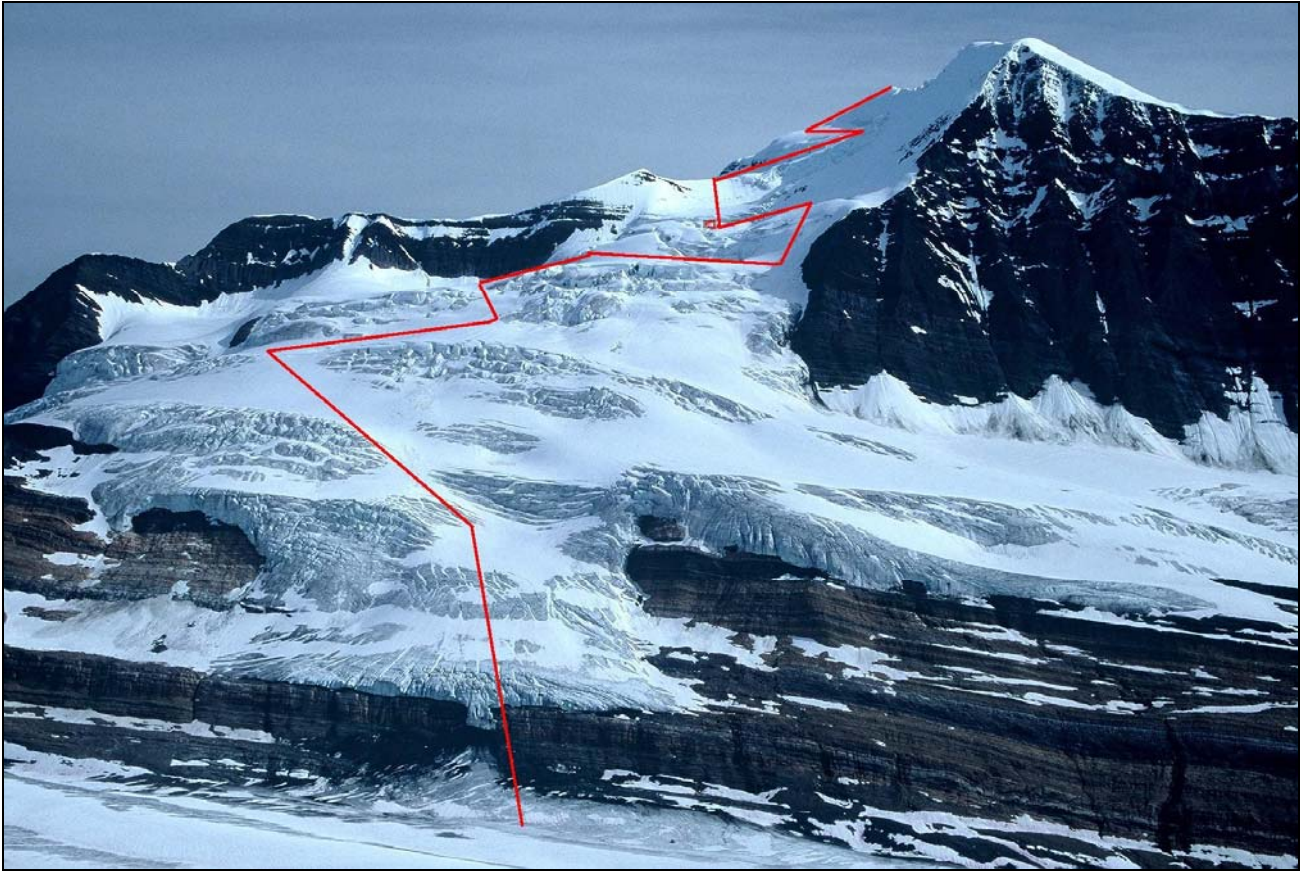


## Clemenceau Icefield Update

My friend Colin and a couple of buddies climbed Clemenceau and Tusk during the third week of July, 2006. The standard route seems to be getting increasingly problematic as the glacier melts away, opening up wide crevasses that are hard to get around. At one point, they were pondering how to get past one such giant hole when a serac from above came tumbling down, eventually coming to rest in said crevasse and, unbelievably, forming a bridge for them to cross.

*This crevasse is in the middle of the standard route up Clemenceau*





The red line shows how far right they had to go on the middle glacier to bypass some big crevasses (the red square is approximately where the big crevasse in the previous photo was encountered). The photo above was taken from Reconnaissance Ridge in late July 2005. When we climbed this route in the mid-1990s, the remnant ice tongue in the middle of the lowest rock band was a couple of hundred feet wide and thick, affording easy access to the route. In 2006, this tongue was completely gone.



*This photo, taken from the air in 1979 by Glen Boles, shows how much glacial cover has been lost over the past 27 years*

Incidentally, Colin's group took GPS readings on the summits of Tusk and Clemenceau. Tusk's showed 11,014 feet (the official height is 11,023, and this reading pretty much confirms Tusk's eligibility in the 11,000er club [I've found GPS elevation accuracy within 15 feet or less on the many summit readings I've taken]; Tusk wasn't on the original 11,000er list of the late 1970s). Clemenceau's reading was 12,150 feet (official height 12,001 feet), which is a surprise, since recent maps didn't show a 12,000-foot contour. If this reading is reasonably accurate, it solidly confirms Clemenceau as one of only four Canadian Rockies' peaks over 12,000 feet.

Colin's group reached and exited the Clemenceau Icefield from the Icefields Parkway via Fortress Lake and Chisel Pass in three days, each way (see the Clemenceau Icefield Loop report under "Mountain Trips" on this website for more details of this route, which we used as an exit in 2005. This may be the most direct access route on foot, now that the Sullivan River road has been decommissioned.)