

Rocky Mount native killed in climbing accident

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A Rocky Mount native was one of two women killed Saturday in a climbing accident in Grand Teton National Park.

Tyler Strandberg, 28, formerly of Rocky Mount, and 28-year-old Catherine Nix of Jackson, Wyo., died Saturday morning after falling about 200 feet while trying to climb 12,300-foot Teewinot Mountain, the sixth-tallest peak in the Teton Range. Their bodies were recovered from a rocky ledge at an elevation of about 11,500 feet.

Strandberg, the daughter of Buckley and Beth Strandberg of Rocky Mount, was a 2009 graduate of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. She graduated from Rocky Mount Academy in 2005. She is the granddaughter of Jim and Marie Gardner.

A third member of the climbing party, 26-year-old Rebecca Anderson of Jackson, was rescued unhurt from a small ledge by helicopter, park spokesman Andrew White said. About 30 people were involved in the search and rescue effort, including nine climbing rangers.

"The two climbers more or less fell simultaneously. We don't have a conclusive reason why," White said.

The climbers were climbing without ropes, he said.

"It wasn't a situation where one fell and the other fell trying to get down to the other," White said. "They were simultaneous falls."

The route the three women were attempting is considered a fairly easy 4.0 climb with a hiking trail that nears the rocky summit, but the party is believed to have wandered from the best path.

"They were in steep terrain, planning to do a nontechnical ascent of Teewinot," White said. "It's difficult, but not a climb everybody takes ropes for."

"They got off route into some technical, super-steep terrain, and that's when they fell. The exact mechanics are something to be investigated."

Anderson is believed to have been near her companions when they fell, White said.

"They were in roughly the same area," he said. Strandberg and Nix "fell simultaneously - she saw them fall, and they fell out of sight."

Information from the Jackson Hole (Wyo.) News Guide is included in this report.

Editor's note: This story has been updated to correct information about Ms. Strandberg's age and graduation date.

