

# SAVVY

Avalanche awareness  
in the backcountry

An evening of  
awareness, safety  
and education at the  
Colonial Theater  
January 5, 2023 at 7 pm  
See inside for more details





"Avy Savvy"

is an APG East Idaho-Utah publication produced in conjunction with Avy Savvy Night, presented by:



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# Avalanche event set Jan. 5 at Colonial Theater

Idaho State Parks and Recreation  
News release

IDAHO FALLS — "Avy Savvy Night," an event on the topic of avalanches, is set for 7 p.m. Jan. 5 at the Colonial Theater, 450 A. St. in Idaho Falls.

There will be three presentations and two films shown on the topic, as well as an auction and raffle.

The presentations begin at 7:15 p.m. with Ethan Davis, Sawtooth Avalanche Center. At 7:45 p.m., Frank Carus, director Bridger Teton Avalanche Center, will give a presentation. And then at 8 p.m., Jason O'Neill, with Teton Basin Search and Rescue, and Will Mook will give a guide/avalanche trainer presentation.

Following the presentations, at 8:15 p.m., Utah Avalanche Center's film "To The Hills and Back" will be shown. At 9 p.m., Lesley Martin's film "The Fine Line" will be screened. Martin survived an avalanche in French Creek, Idaho that killed three other people.

The raffle will be 9:10 p.m., and then at 9:30 p.m., a Rob Kinkaid race sled will be auctioned. All proceeds go to the construction of beacon boards for parking lots. ■



**Know before you go!**  
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**"AVY SAVVY"**  
**Night**



**GOT BEEP?**  
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Get The Gear  
Get The Training  
Get The Forecast  
Get The Picture  
Get Out Of Harm's Way

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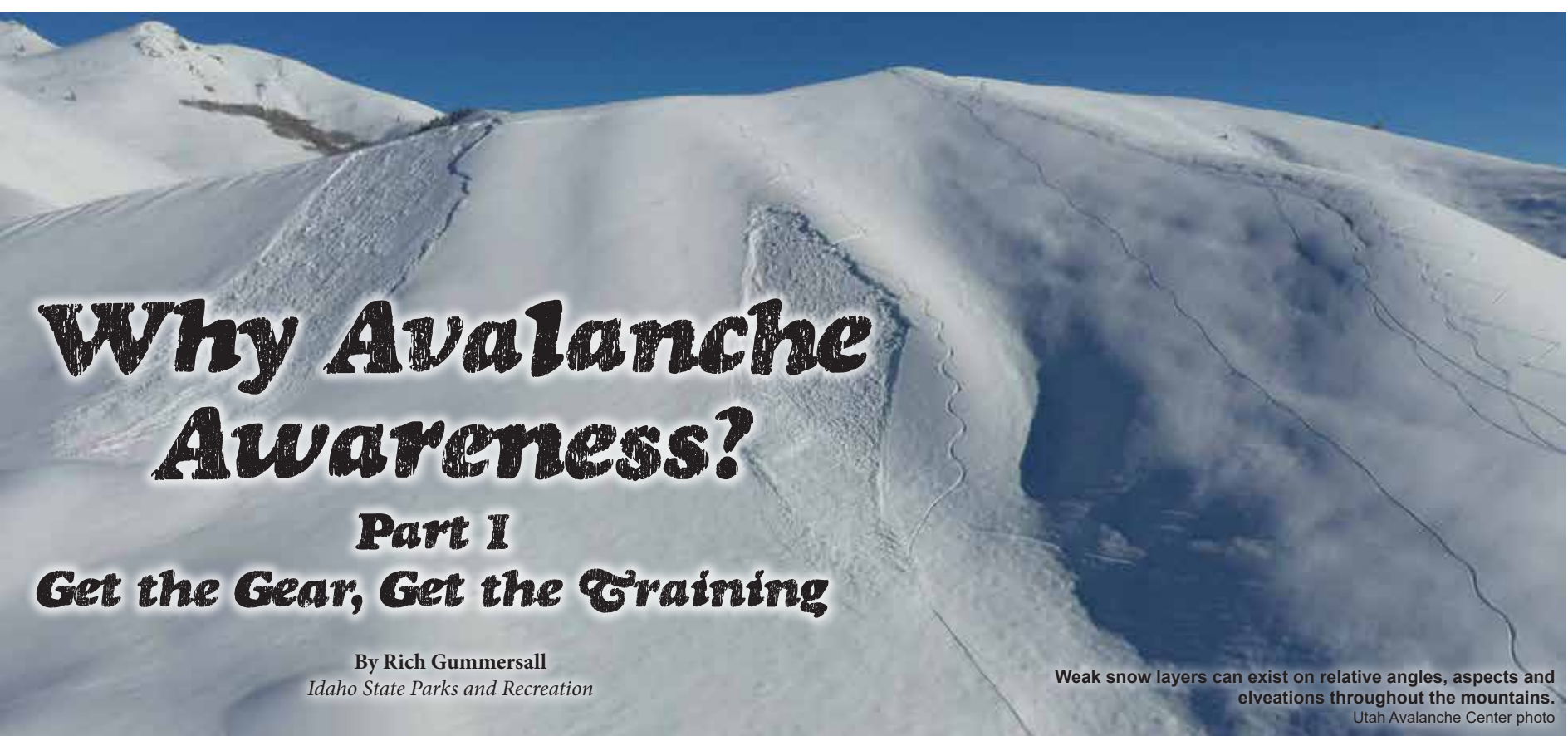




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# Why Avalanche Awareness?

## Part I

### Get the Gear, Get the Training

By Rich Gummersall  
Idaho State Parks and Recreation

Weak snow layers can exist on relative angles, aspects and elevations throughout the mountains.  
Utah Avalanche Center photo

Let's start with our one known factor, terrain. We all picture the same image when we think about avalanche terrain, steep, no trees, rocks... something straight out of a movie. Of course, it isn't that simple. Terrain attracts climbers, skiers, snowmobilers, snow-bikers, snowshoers, and tourists who, with limited time, try and find the best route to conquer peaks, each in their own way. Each year, avalanches claim more than 150 lives worldwide and thousands more are caught in avalanches, partly buried or injured. Technology has made it easier to get into avalanche terrain, more people are finding the joy of exploring Idaho's backcountry and, sadly, 73% of Idaho's motorized avalanche fatalities are happening in Eastern Idaho.

So, you have decided to travel into Idaho's backcountry — now what? It starts with getting the gear, and we aren't referring to your recreation gear, we are referring to your rescue gear. Immediately your mind says, "Yes, but I don't plan on being in avalanche terrain." As you continue to read this and expand on your avalanche education, you will quickly realize Idaho's backcountry is avalanche terrain or connected to avalanche terrain. We all need to be equipped with avalanche rescue gear and know how to use it in a high stress emergency.

#### Get the Gear - Avalanche backpack, transceiver, probe, and shovel.

**Avalanche backpack:** A pack specifically designed for backcountry travel and avalanche rescue.

**Avalanche Transceiver:** An electronic device worn on the body to aide in quickly finding buried avalanche



A snowmobile that has been caught in an avalanche.

Courtesy of Idaho Parks and Recreation

victims. Also called an avalanche beacon, it has the ability to send and receive a 457khz radio signal. The range of most beacons varies between 40 and 80 meters depending on the brand.

**Avalanche Probe:** A collapsible rod used to probe

through avalanche debris for buried victims. They can knock precious minutes off rescue times in an avalanche situation. Collapsible probes assemble quickly, are very lightweight and compact enough to fit into your backpack.

See AWARENESS, page 4

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# AWARENESS

Continued from page 3

**Avalanche shovel:** An avalanche shovel features strong, grippable shafts, low-profile “stompable” metal blades, and a wide range of grips and blade sizes.

Now you have the gear, time to get the training.

## Get the Training

Let’s start with some basic knowledge and terminology to begin your education.

An avalanche has three main parts. The **starting zone** is the most volatile area of a slope, where unstable snow can fracture from the surrounding snow and begin to slide. The avalanche **track** is the path or channel that an avalanche follows as it goes downhill. The **runout zone** is where the snow and debris finally come to a stop.

Several factors may affect the likelihood of an avalanche, including weather, temperature, slope steepness, slope orientation, wind direction, terrain and general snowpack conditions. This is where understanding the avalanche puzzle begins to take shape, and to piece the puzzle together properly, we recommend attending an organized avalanche awareness with companion rescue class.

This article can’t begin to do justice to the importance



Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center photo

Participants in the West Yellowstone Avalanche Fundamentals Field Session found unstable conditions near “Ski Hill” in the Lionhead area on December 6, indicating that large, human-triggered avalanches are possible.

of attending an avalanche awareness course, preferably a course that has a field-based companion rescue clinic, as well. Topics that will be covered during an avalanche awareness with companion rescue class include:

- Recognizing avalanche terrain.
- Observing snow, weather, and avalanche clues that indicate dangerous avalanche conditions.
- Accessing a regional avalanche forecast to anticipate the days avalanche danger before going into the mountains.
- Group management and communication.
- Using an avalanche transceiver, probe, and shovel to rescue a companion caught in an avalanche.
- Using a decision-making process to choose terrain and manage your risk of getting caught in an avalanche.
- Applying backcountry travel techniques to minimize exposure to avalanche terrain.

Idaho and the surrounding states have many course offerings to meet your avalanche education needs, whether it is a first-time avalanche awareness with companion rescue class, or an avalanche level one or two class.

Eastern Idaho resources can be found at:

- [www.reced.idaho.gov](http://www.reced.idaho.gov)
- [www.sawtoothavalanche.com/classes-events](http://www.sawtoothavalanche.com/classes-events)
- [www.store.utahavalanchecenter.org/collections/classes-education](http://www.store.utahavalanchecenter.org/collections/classes-education)
- [www.mtavalanche.com/education](http://www.mtavalanche.com/education)
- [www.bridgertetonavalanchecenter.org/avalanche-education](http://www.bridgertetonavalanchecenter.org/avalanche-education)

Follow along for the next article in the 'Why Avalanche Awareness' series with topics on Get the Forecast, Get the Picture, and Get out of Harm’s Way. ■



Utah Avalanche Center photo

UAC staff investigating an avalanche that injured one skier found weak faceted snow below 2-4’ of new snow. This type of snowpack had been the cause of multiple accidents that week.

# Adam Andersen Avalanche Project Marks Five Years



Photo courtesy of Adam Andersen Avalanche Project

A snowmobiler making use of an Avy Pack in Island Park.

POST REGISTER — January 2023 will mark five years since Adam Andersen lost his life in an avalanche while snowmobiling.

Following this tragic accident, Adam’s wife Summer Andersen channeled her loss and grief into an amazing foundation, The Adam Andersen Avalanche Project, to help prevent the loss of other lives by providing proper gear and education.

The Adam Andersen Avalanche Project maintains an informative Facebook page ([facebook/AdamAvalancheProject](https://facebook.com/AdamAvalancheProject)) filled with posts about area avalanche danger updates, links to resources like [avalanche.org](http://avalanche.org), and notices about educational opportunities. The page has over 1,600 followers and the audience is growing.

In addition, the Project supplies ten avalanche backpack\airbag\probe kits, which are available for single day use by anyone who doesn’t have access to this important equipment; the use is completely free.

Action Motor Sports of Idaho Falls has helped promote the Project since its inception, hosting an annual avalanche safety event each October to promote and fund the Project, with free gear checks, classes and more.

The Project’s backpack kits are available to pick up at Action Motor Sports in Idaho Falls or in Island Park at High Mountain Adventures. Individuals interested in using these kits can call Action Motor Sports at 208-522-3050 for more information. ■

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# Why Avalanche Awareness?

## Part II Get the Forecast, Get the Picture

By Rich Gummersall  
Idaho State Parks and Recreation

An avalanche can move down a mountain at 200 miles per hour. Avalanches kill 25-30 people each year in the United States. Gallatin Avalanche Center photo

Welcome back! If you have been watching any of the information coming out of the region's avalanche centers, you know this year's snowpack is setting up for a dangerous season. So, let's do all we can to make our recreation time as enjoyable and safe as possible.

In the last article we talked about getting the gear—an avalanche backpack, transceiver, probe and shovel—and getting the training. Like anything in life, training builds proficiency! In this issue we are going to discuss getting the forecast, getting the picture and getting out of harm's way. These three topics take some thought, evaluation, and much practice. For a great resource to make this discussion more understandable, go to [www.avalanche.org](http://www.avalanche.org).

**Get the Forecast – Information put out by the avalanche centers annotating the days hazards for a specific area.**

When we talk about a forecast, we are referring to a specific avalanche forecast put out by an avalanche center. What is an avalanche forecast? An avalanche

forecast tells you about avalanche danger and snowpack conditions for a given mountainous region over a specific period of time.

Here are things to know about the forecasts:

- They're large-scale descriptions of the day's avalanche danger in broad, general terms and not specific to specific slopes.
- Forecasts change daily, much like a weather forecast.
- Always check to make sure you have the forecast issued for the day you're going out; some advisories expire within a certain time period.
- Not all avalanche centers issue daily forecasts.
- These forecasts apply to backcountry avalanche terrain—generally slopes steeper than 30 degrees—not ski resorts or highways.
- In addition to avalanche forecasts, centers may issue bulletins, watches and warnings.
- Avalanche warning: High avalanche danger is expected within 24 hours of the forecast; travel in avalanche

*'Keep in mind, a historical trend doesn't forecast what is to come. Weather in the form of precipitation, wind and temperature is constantly changing the strength of the snow and, therefore, the stability of the snow.'*

terrain isn't recommended or should be avoided entirely.

- Avalanche watch: Very dangerous avalanche conditions are expected in the next 24 to 48 hours.
- Special bulletin: Dangerous conditions exist but conditions don't meet the level necessary for an avalanche warning.

One of the best things you can do to set yourself up for success is visit [www.avalanche.org](http://www.avalanche.org), and find the avalanche center that supports the area or areas you tend to recreate. Visit that center's website and sign up for the daily avalanche email. This way, you will receive the avalanche forecast as soon as it is published. This will help in a couple ways. First, you will know the avalanche forecast for the day. Second, you can look at a few days

of forecasts and see if there has been a trend in avalanche danger. Keep in mind, a historical trend doesn't forecast what is to come. Weather in the form of precipitation, wind and temperature is constantly changing the strength of the snow and therefore the stability of the snow.

It takes time becoming proficient in reading and understanding an avalanche forecast, which takes us back to the last publication, Get the Training. Participating in an organized course will help you learn to interpret what the snow conditions mean, what incoming weather might do to the strength of the snow, and in general help you learn to read a forecast.

See FORECAST, page 6



# FITZGERALD'S BICYCLES

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# FORECAST

Continued from page 5

## Get the Picture – Putting your resources to use.

I have said it many times, but this one takes the most practice because now you are using your knowledge, skills and abilities to make backcountry travel decisions. Too many factors to identify in this article go into getting the larger picture, so I will touch on just a few, and again, point you towards getting the training. Participating in an organized class and learning from experienced backcountry travelers is key.

After getting the avalanche forecast and watching the incoming weather forecast, you can start to make your ride plan. When we talk about getting the picture, it is about being observant and aware of your surroundings while you're in the backcountry. There are a few key things to always watch for:

- Identify any avalanche terrain.
- Look and listen for signs of dangerous avalanche conditions.
- Watch for conditions that are different than those described in the avalanche forecast.
- Be aware of group dynamics.

When it comes to avalanche terrain, the best practice is to simply avoid or, at the very least, minimize your exposure to avalanche terrain. This is one of the central skills to recreating and making decisions in the backcountry. On a basic level, avalanche terrain can be defined by both of the following factors:

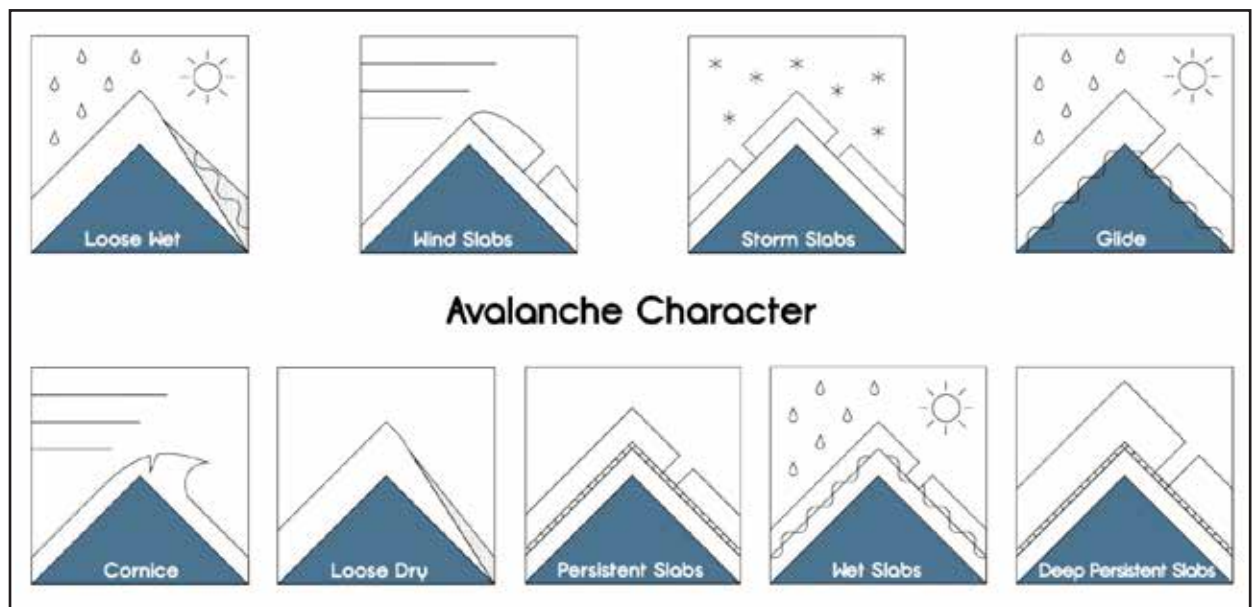
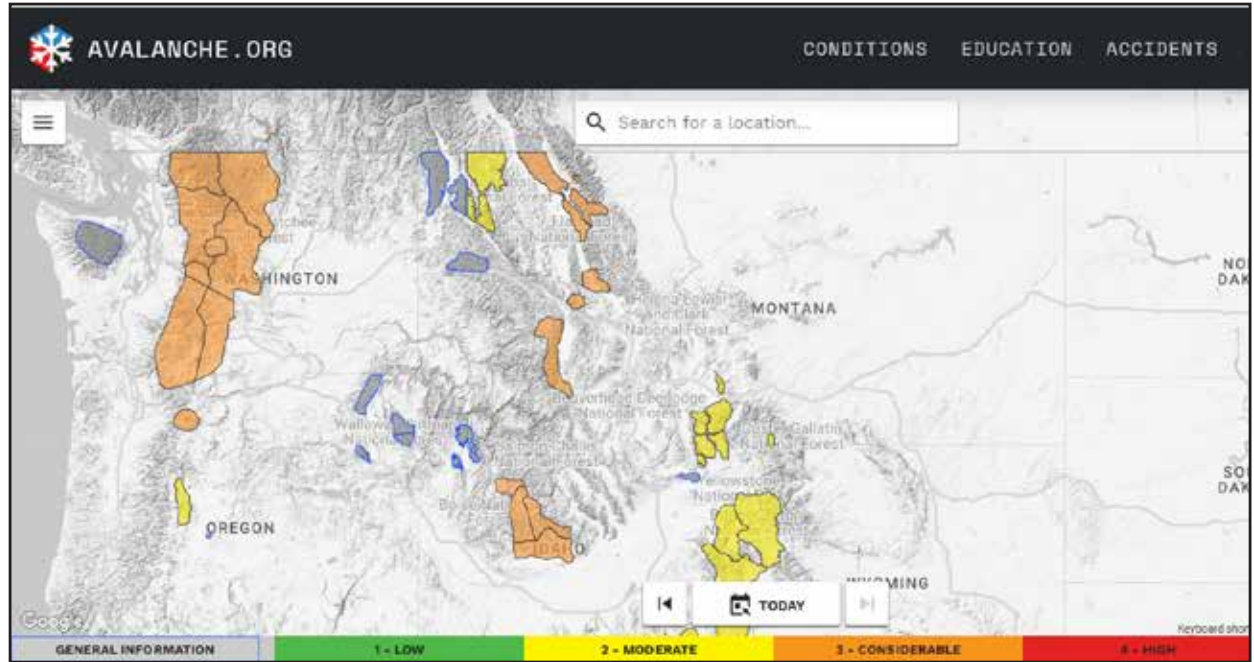
- Slopes steeper than 30 degrees and areas below these slopes.
- Slopes lacking trees or with trees open enough to move through easily on a snowmachine, skis, or board.

Signs or “red flags” that you can identify in the backcountry that should automatically make you think danger of an avalanche exists or is increasing are:

- Recent avalanches.
- Cracks shooting through the snow or a sudden collapsing of snow under your weight.
- Significant accumulation of new snow or rain.
- Wind blowing snow and forming drifts.
- Rapidly warming temperatures or melting snow.
- Persistent slab avalanches in the forecast or snow profiles showing weak, sugar-like layers of snow.

Many more details go into successfully getting the picture, including practice, communication, finding an experienced mentor, and getting the training. Getting the picture means being aware, and you can do this by identifying avalanche terrain, watching for signs of unstable snow and avalanche danger, looking for conditions different than those in the forecast and being aware of group dynamics and communication. After getting the picture, you can get out of harm's way.

## Get Out of Harm's Way – picking the appropriate terrain for your group and the conditions.



TOP: An avalanche forecast is essential for staying out of the most dangerous areas when planning a backcountry trip. ABOVE: These nine distinct avalanche characters, or problem types, are used by avalanche specialists to describe and communicate avalanche conditions.

National Avalanche Center photos

Our final section is going to talk about getting out of harm's way. The best way to get out of harm's way is to avoid avalanche terrain. This involves knowing when and where to go and how to travel safely in the backcountry. Backcountry travel has inherent risks. While no day can be completely safe, we can make individual or group decisions to reduce exposing our group to unnecessary risks. Exposure to avalanche danger can be identified as the amount of time, distance traveled or your location within avalanche terrain. By reducing our exposure, we reduce our risk of being caught in an avalanche.

Some other things you can do to get out of harm's way

are:

- Stay out of closed areas and don't cross ropes or closed gates at ski areas or on highways.
- Stop, regroup and take breaks in non-avalanche terrain, well away from places where avalanches could run from above.
- If you choose to cross or travel on slopes steeper than 30 degrees, put only 1 person at a time on the slope.
- Keep your group within visual and voice contact with each other.
- Clearly communicate with your group about the location of avalanche terrain and nearby safer terrain, as well as a plan for travel and regrouping.
- If necessary, use visual signals or two-way radios to communicate at a distance.
- If a partner loses a ski or gets their snowmobile stuck on a slope, don't try to help them. Keep an eye on them from safer terrain out from under the slope.

In this 'Why Avalanche Awareness' series, we have talked about getting the gear, getting the training, getting the forecast, getting the picture and getting out of harm's way. There are many pieces to constantly consider in managing the avalanche puzzle, but with training, practice and good backcountry decision making we can choose to reduce our risk.

Follow along for the final article in the Why Avalanche Awareness series where we are going to hear from Ethan Davis from the Sawtooth Avalanche Center as he talks about a study he completed this last summer on avalanche specificities in East Idaho. ■



FAR LEFT: Propagation after a wind slab was triggered under Bridger Lift is a red flag that should automatically deter travel in the area. Submitted photo courtesy of Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center

LEFT: A team from the Utah Avalanche Center conducting a snowpit test to determine stability. Utah Avalanche Center photo



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# Backcountry Emergencies

## Avalanche Incident Response

From the Utah Avalanche Center

In Utah, we average slightly more than 3 avalanche fatalities each winter with many more close calls and accidents in the backcountry. You should be prepared to conduct your own rescue and be self-sufficient, as rescue teams can be hours, if not longer, away.

### In the event of an Avalanche Emergency

1. Perform Companion Rescue. Time is of the essence. Survivability is drastically reduced after the victim has been buried for greater than 15 minutes. If you have enough resources, consider keeping one person on the ridge to call 911.
2. If you need medical or transport assistance – Call 911 (At this time, texting 911 is not operational in all counties). Consider a satellite type signaling device if you are in an area with poor cell phone service.

- State, “**This is a backcountry emergency, involving an avalanche accident.**”
- State your location. Know how to get GPS off your phone. It is critical to state, “This is a backcountry rescue,” as your dispatcher in that county may have a copy of a backcountry map. State the nearest backcountry location from the map and include drainage, sub-drainage, and any other topographical landmark (i.e.-”We are in the Room of Doom in upper Mineral Fork of Big Cottonwood Canyon”). Otherwise, provide the dispatcher with the drainage, sub-drainage, nearby landmarks, GPS Coordinates, elevation, and slope aspect if possible.
- State number of patients and their status.
- Detail what help you are requesting.



Utah Avalanche Center photo

It can take hours for search and rescue teams to reach an avalanche incident, so it is best to be prepared for any accident and relay as much information as possible to dispatchers.

### 3. Patient Care

- Treat life threatening injuries (Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Hypothermia, etc.).
- Be proactive making yourself and your patient(s) comfortable as rescues will take longer than anticipated.

### Being prepared for a winter accident

**Skills** – Know CPR; know how to improvise a hypothermia wrap; take a Wilderness 1st Aid or Wilderness 1st Responder class; take an avalanche class; take an Avalanche Companion Rescue class.

**Gear** – Repair & 1st aid kit, map/compass/GPS, headlamp with spare batteries, fire starter, bivy sack/e-blanket, shovel, phone, extra layers, extra cell phone batteries, whistle.

**Mindset** – You need to have the mindset to be the primary rescuer in an avalanche incident. Never let your guard down. Pay attention and make good decisions. Remember that risk is always

inherent in mountain travel. Self rescue is best, but consider what happens if you get halfway out and decide you need help. Nightfall, approaching storm, loss of cell phone service, etc., can complicate things. Help can always be turned around if not needed. Don't delay a serious medical emergency due to worries about cost. Salt Lake, Davis and Utah county don't charge for rescues, but you may be charged for medical transport to the hospital.

### Rescue operations

Remember, this is your rescue. Each county's Sheriff's Office is authorized to conduct Search and Rescue. Authorized implies that they are tasked with implementing a plan, but are not mandated to effect the rescue. An Incident Commander must consider the hazard to his/her rescue technicians before committing them to any situation. Be prepared to keep yourself and your patient comfortable as help may take longer than you might expect.

### Potential reasons that your rescue may be delayed:

- Weather conditions at your location or elsewhere might delay or preclude a helicopter (wind, visibility, snow).
- Helicopters or volunteer rescue crews may be busy with another rescue.
- Rescue teams can't find you. Make sure you are visible from the air if a helicopter is being used. At night, a light source (headlamp) is critical.
- If you are in dense trees consider moving an uninjured person to an open area or ridge if it can be done safely.
- A helicopter pilot may locate you and then leave to pick up backcountry rescue personnel and return.
- Snow and weather conditions may slow rescuers approaching by ski or snowmobile. Remember, rescuers are volunteers. When they are called out, they need to leave work or home, drive to the staging point, and assemble at the command post as a team for briefing.
- Rescues outside a major area may require greater travel time and fewer available qualified rescue personnel.

It is always a good idea to know the dispatch number of the area you are traveling. If you trigger or see an avalanche adjacent to the road or one of the ski areas and are sure no one was caught in the avalanche, call the nearest mountain dispatch and alert them to the situation. This will allow Search and Rescue teams to stand down, preventing them from being subjected to unnecessary hazard.

Remember, when you travel in the backcountry, your safety is ultimately your responsibility, and you should always be prepared with the gear and training necessary. However, we all know that the best laid plans can go awry, and there are resources available to help you back to safety. ■



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# Why Avalanche Awareness?

## Part III

### Working Group Addresses Eastern Idaho Avalanche Impacts

By Ethan Davis

Sawtooth Avalanche Center

On December 17, 2022, two teenagers were killed in an avalanche. They triggered the slide while skiing and snowmobiling in the Big Hole Mountains 12 miles west of Driggs. Avalanches have claimed the lives of six people in this region since modern record-keeping began in the 1950s. This accident, as the ones before it, are tragic events. They leave an indescribable void in the hearts of the families and communities that are left behind. The Big Holes are just one corner of Eastern Idaho that needs our attention.

Since 2010, 11 people have died in avalanches in Eastern Idaho's backcountry. All but one of these victims were riding snowmobiles or snowbikes. Eastern Idaho, for the purpose of this article, is defined as the mountains near, south, and east of I84, I86, and I15 bounded on either end by the city of Pocatello and the Island Park Region near the Montana border. Averaging nearly one accident a year, Eastern Idaho has earned a top spot on a list you don't want to be on.

Avalanche accidents trigger an outpouring of community support. Those directly and indirectly involved look for causes and organizations to support in hopes of avoiding similar accidents in the future. Three Avalanche Centers border the region providing a wide range of avalanche information and education but vast tracks of avalanche terrain lack a Daily Avalanche Forecast. The efforts of Avalanche Centers and motivated individuals and organizations are gaining steam, and the momentum toward a long-term solution is finally coming to a head.

The National Avalanche Center (NAC), in conjunction with the Sawtooth Avalanche Center (SAC), the Bridger-Teton Avalanche Center (BTAC), the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche



Photo courtesy of Bridger Teton Avalanche Center  
This avalanche claimed the lives of two teenagers in the Big Hole Mountains 12 miles west of Driggs.

Center (GNFAC) and the Utah Avalanche Center (UAC), recently announced the formation of a working group that aims to reduce backcountry avalanche accidents in Eastern Idaho. Goals

include: improving the quality, spatial coverage, and accessibility of avalanche information; expanding free and low-cost avalanche education; and fostering vital partnerships with community groups and

private entities across Eastern Idaho.

The group's first task was to quantify the problem. Determining the date, number and location of accidents, as well as the travel mode of those involved, helped inform the group's goals. For the first time, avalanche accident information in Idaho can be viewed on one map (<https://tinyurl.com/3hvefkv3>). The map includes avalanche accident site locations and pertinent layers, such as avalanche forecast area boundaries, groomed snowmobile trails and slope steepness.

This first phase of research uncovered distinct spatial and demographic patterns. Since the year 2000, the typical backcountry avalanche victim in Eastern Idaho is: Male (100%), a snowmobiler or snowbiker (87%), from Idaho (73%), and 30-49 years of age (53%). Further digging uncovered an unfortunate commonality. In 86% of recent accidents, victims had insufficient or missing rescue gear. While a sobering statistic, it highlights a fixable problem that we can all address. Each backcountry traveler needs to carry (at a minimum) an avalanche transceiver, probe and a shovel. You need to have all three on your body (not strapped to your machine) in order to effectively locate and dig out a buried rider. While carrying all of the required rescue gear does not ensure you'll survive an avalanche, it does give your well trained companion the tools needed to get you out alive.

Presentations of this research in the fall sparked renewed interest and support for a long term plan to reduce avalanche accidents in Eastern Idaho. To kick off the effort, the public is invited to a night of presentations and avalanche related films beginning at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 5, 2023 at the Colonial Theatre in Idaho Falls. The event is hosted by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Proceeds from the live auction of a snowmobile will fund avalanche safety information boards and avalanche transceiver check stations at

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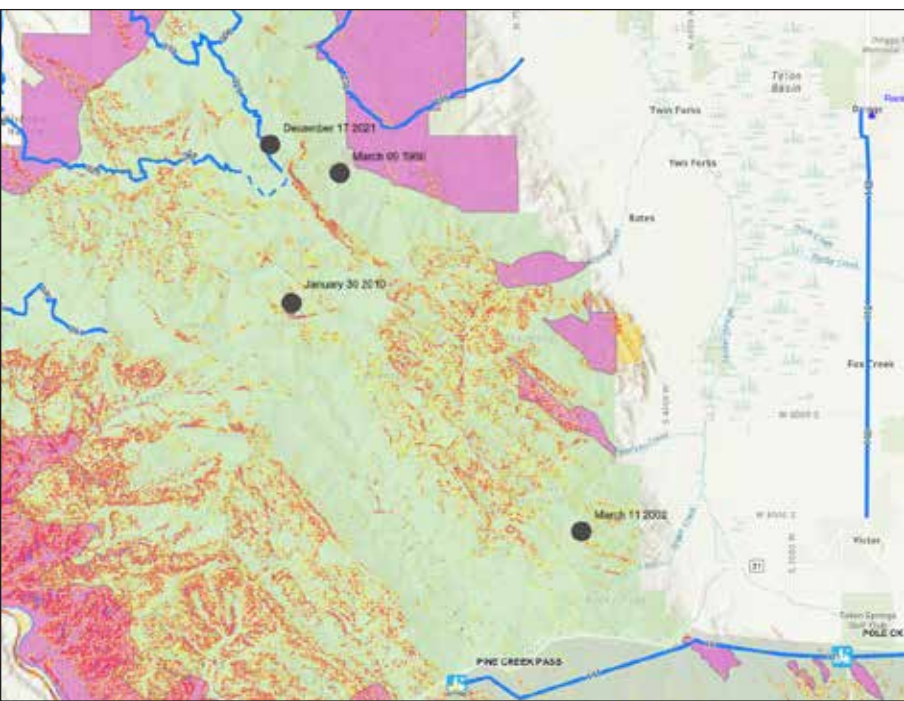
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Photos courtesy of Sawtooth Avalanche Center

TOP: A snowmobiler examines a weak layer of snow following a storm. ABOVE: A new map shows avalanche accident site locations and pertinent layers such as avalanche forecast area boundaries, groomed snowmobile trails, and slope steepness. (<https://tinyurl.com/3hvefkv3>)

trailheads across the region. Of the six fatal avalanches in the Big Holes, at least four were known to have insufficient rescue gear. All accidents occurred to the northwest of Highway 31 just outside the boundary of the Bridger-Teton Avalanche Center's forecast area. Meanwhile, groomed snowmobile trails provide the allure of easy-to-access backcountry riding akin to that of ducking a rope to leave the relative safety of a ski area. The problem is painfully clear, and it's ours to fix. It's Idahoans that are dying, local snowmobilers – fathers,

sons, brothers and uncles. I believe that some – if not a majority – of the recent avalanche accidents in Eastern Idaho could have been avoided with the right combination of daily Avalanche Forecasts, appropriate rescue gear, and the training to know how to use it. Let's capitalize on this upwelling of community support; the writing isn't on the wall. In the future, it's my hope that the conversations we're having around avalanche accidents here will be very different. A success story – one that we achieve together. ■

# Keeping Your Beacon in Check

By Rich Gummarsall  
Idaho State Parks and Recreation

East Idaho is aggressively placing beacon check-stations allowing all backcountry users a safety check before leaving the trailhead to ensure their beacon is transmitting.

The feedback you receive will depend on the check station you approach. Two manufacturers are being utilized, Ortovox and BCA. Both are very user-friendly. The Ortovox model will display illuminated green arcs and emit a tone if a properly transmitting avalanche beacon is presented. A beacon that is not transmitting will display a red triangle, indicating the user should service their equipment or simply change the batteries. The BCA model will display a green circle if a properly transmitting avalanche beacon is presented. A beacon that is not transmitting will display a red X, indicating, again, that the user should service their equipment or simply change the batteries. Snowmobilers, skiers or any backcountry user can simply approach the sign, keeping a ten-foot spacing from other users; the station performs the checks and provides sight and sound feedback automatically.

There is also a beacon park on Teton Pass near the Coal Creek Trailhead. A beacon park like this one allows users to turn on buried transmitters and practice using their beacon and a probe to find them. These practice locations prepare those traveling in the backcountry for a possible avalanche incident. According to Jackson Hole Community Radio (KHOL), there will also be beacon parks set up at the Rendezvous Park and at Snow King Mountain Resort.

East Idaho's avalanche transceiver signs are going up this winter and next so keep your eye out for one in your recreation area:

- Klim, through the Avalanche Alliance and the Hunter Houle foundation has put together 10 just this year, with adopting organizations placing and servicing them.
- Madison County Grooming Program & Search and Rescue have placed signs within their area.
- Bonneville County Grooming & Sheriff's Office have placed signs within their area.
- The Gallatin Avalanche Center has posted check stations within their forecast area.
- The Fremont County grooming program has five throughout their grooming area.
- The Tri-County Grooming program (Bear Lake, Franklin Caribou) are putting up four around their grooming areas.
- Twin Falls snowmobile club is putting up two, one in the South Hills and the second in Fairfield.

It is vital to always carry a functional avalanche transceiver, avalanche probe and shovel when snowmobiling, skiing, boarding or traveling in potential avalanche terrain. Know before you go by checking the current avalanche and weather forecasts, train regularly with your equipment and riding partners and most importantly, travel smart and stay safe when in avalanche prone areas. ■



Photo courtesy of Idaho State Parks and Recreation  
Avalanche beacon check stations, like this one at Lionhead, are going up throughout East Idaho, allowing users to ensure their beacons are working properly before venturing into avalanche areas.

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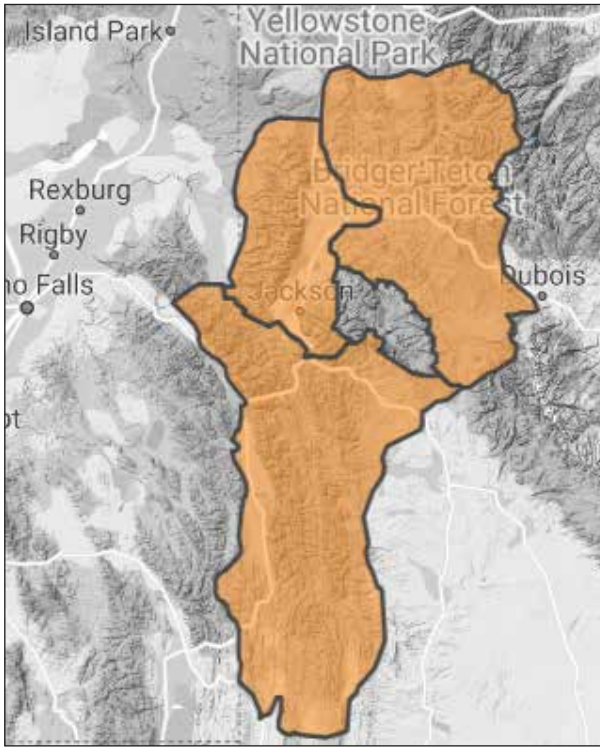


# Regional Avalanche Centers

These centers give you the most up-to-date avalanche forecasts, including snowpack and weather reports and any observations made by them or submitted to them. All of the centers offer free and paid avalanche courses for skiers and snowmobilers, making sure those

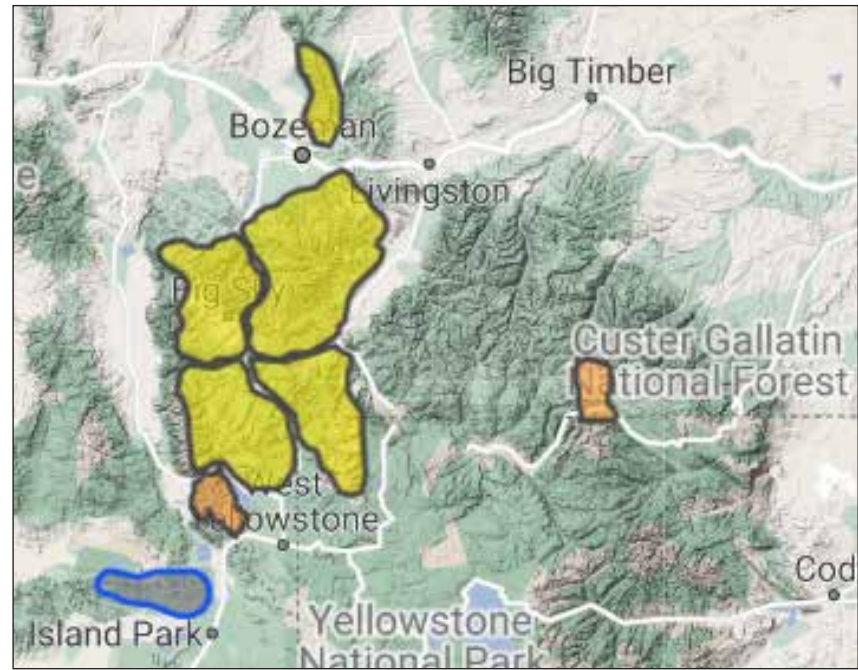
who wish to travel and recreate in the snow-filled back country are prepared and able to stay as safe as possible. Visit their websites, or [avalanche.org](http://avalanche.org), when planning your trip to stay aware of any avalanche dangers.

## Bridger-Teton Avalanche Center [bridgertetonavalanchecenter.org](http://bridgertetonavalanchecenter.org)



**Area:** Bridger-Teton National Forest and Grand Teton National Park; this includes the Swan Valley area, south and east of Victor and Driggs, and the Jackson Hole area south to Cokevill, WY.

## Gallatin Avalanche Center [mtavalanche.com](http://mtavalanche.com)



**Area:** Bridgers, Gallatin N, Gallatin S, Madison N, Madison S, Lionhead, Cooke City and Island Park.  
For Island Park Trip Planning, visit [mtavalanche.com/forecast/centennials](http://mtavalanche.com/forecast/centennials).



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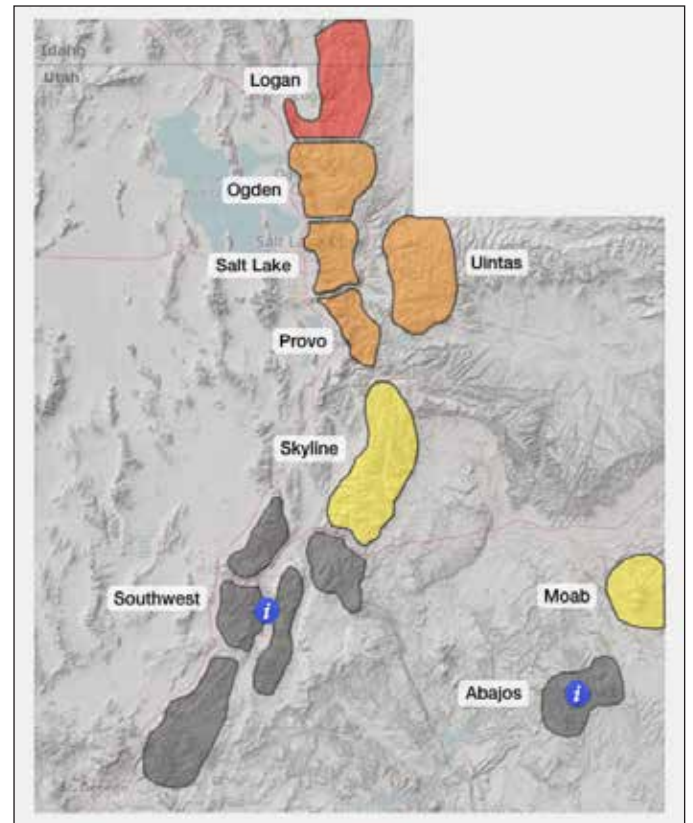


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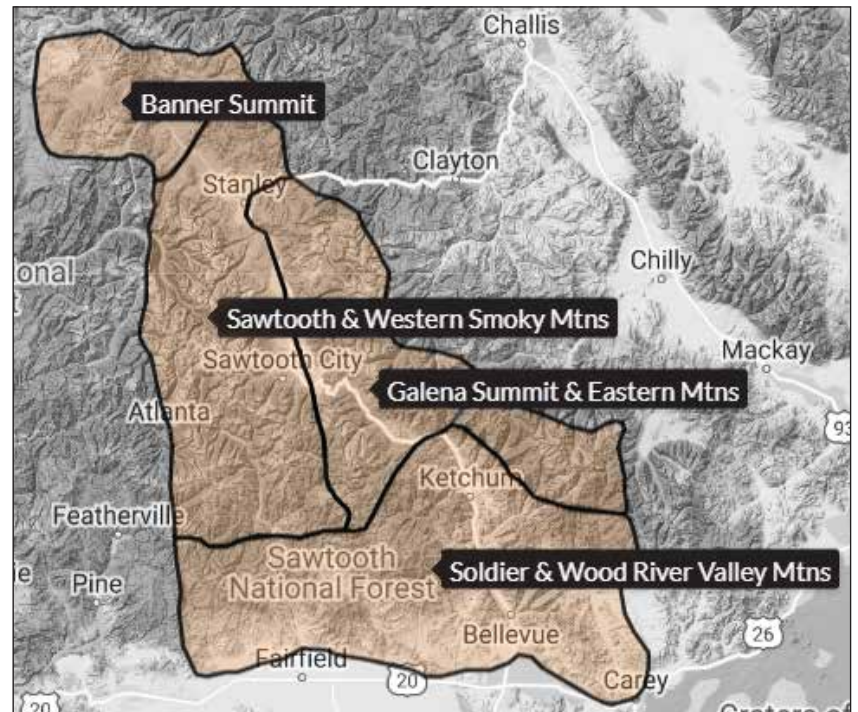
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## Utah Avalanche Center [utahavalanchecenter.org](http://utahavalanchecenter.org)



**Area:** Utah, plus the Idaho area between Bear Lake and Preston and north into Mink Creek

## Sawtooth Avalanche Center [sawtoothavalanche.com](http://sawtoothavalanche.com)



**Area:** Stanley area from Banner Summit, Sawtooth and Western Smoky Mountains, Galena Summit and Soldier and Wood River Valleys south to Fairfield and Picabo.





# MEET THE GTRK9 PUPS

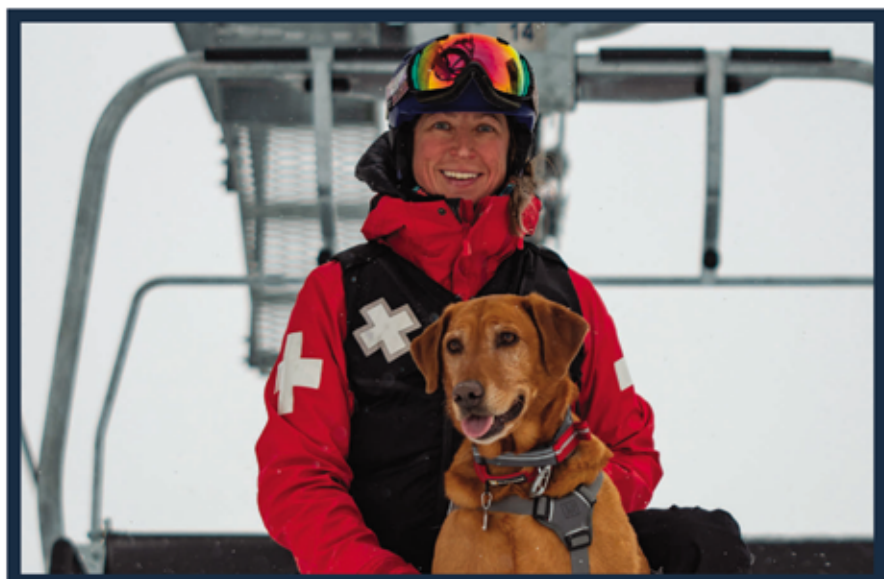
## MEET THE DOGS IN THE RED JACKETS & THEIR HANDLERS



**JOE AND CALVIN**  
 BIRTHDAY: Mother's Day, May 10, 2020  
 BREED: German Shepard and Brittany mix from the north end of Teton, Idaho  
 LIKES: He likes to chew slippers, chase cats, & dig holes.



**DAN AND TELE MUNDO NAGY**  
 BIRTHDAY: December 24, 2018  
 BREED: The Avy Squirrel | 42 lbs of Fury | 14" Tall  
 LIKES: She loves to ski, mountain bike, rock scramble, swim, and be 11/10 stoked at all times.



**BECCA AND IVY "THE RED ROCKET"**  
 BIRTHDAY: August 5, 2013  
 BREED: Red Lab  
 FAVORITE PASTIME: When not at work, she loves romping on & off trails around Teton Valley and keeping the family chickens and her non-patrol canine sister, Arlo, in line!



**CASEY AND MIKKO "MEATBALL"**  
 BIRTHDAY: March 13, 2017  
 BREED: Yellow Lab  
 FAVORITE TREAT: Meatballs  
 FAVORITE GAME: Tug or fetching anything from the water.







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