



In Partnership with the US Forest Service
SierraAvalancheCenter.org

2014 - 2015 Annual Report



The winter of 2014 – 2015 marked another successful operating season. The Sierra Avalanche Center continues to function as a partnership between the Tahoe National Forest and a volunteer Board of Directors with 501(c)(3) not for profit organization status. This relationship continues to strengthen both operationally and financially while continuing to gain community support.

We would like to extend our gratitude to everyone who has put forth time and effort to support the Sierra Avalanche Center.

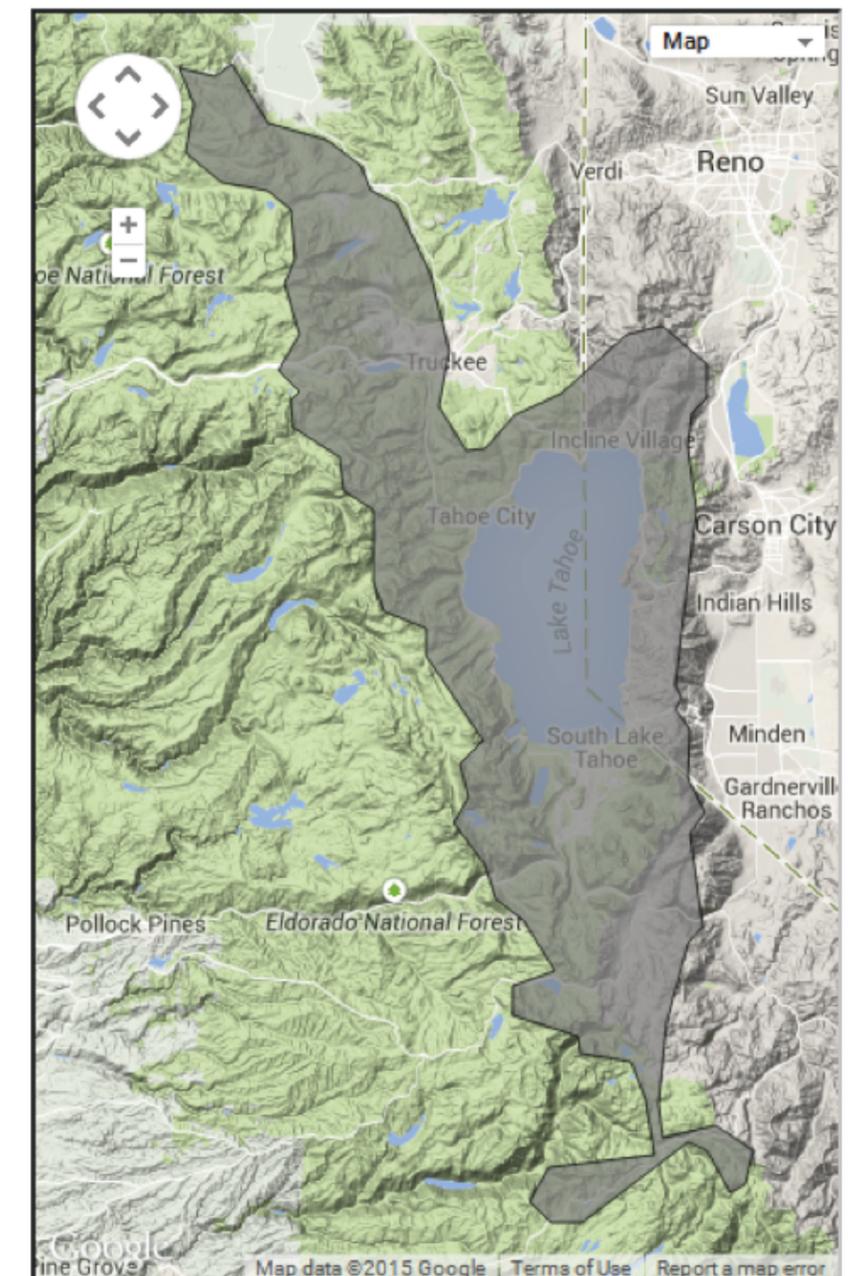
Brandon Schwartz and Andy Anderson
Forecasters
Sierra Avalanche Center Members and
Volunteers
Tahoe National Forest

Highlights from the past season :

- The Board of Directors successfully raised \$79,983 to support the Sierra Avalanche Center's operating budget.
- The Tahoe National Forest provided \$6,847 in infrastructure support.
- The USDA Forest Service provided \$46,650 for forecaster salaries in the form of \$17,000 from Region 5, \$22,761 from the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, and \$7,875 from Region 4.
- The SAC website was accessed over 288,821 times by over 62,499 unique visitors from October 1st through March 29th. Website traffic increased in page views by 7% and unique visitors by 40% despite ongoing drought conditions.
- The SAC website mobile view was improved.
- The Sierra Avalanche Center issued 116 daily avalanche advisories and 3 early season snow condition reports.
- The forecasters continued to strengthen their working relationship with the National Weather Service in Reno, local ski patrols, and other professional organizations.
- The Board of Directors put on a fourth very successful and well attended Professional Development Seminar in memory of Bill Foster.
- SAC non profit continued to offer avy awareness talks at local shops and retail partners and started a BC Basics program to provide introductory education to jump start people's need and desire to get a certified avalanche education.
- In cooperation with California State Parks OHV grant program SAC continued its education, safety signage and messaging, and outreach to the OHV community for winter recreation safety.
 - As part of the OHV grant SAC made several public snowmobile specific presentations on avalanche safety and conducted a formal training session for education. On snow field courses were unfortunately canceled due to lack of snow.

Advisory Area

The advisory area of the Sierra Avalanche Center covers approximately 1,500 square miles of the Central Sierra Nevada Mountains of California and Nevada. The advisory area is bound by Hwy 49 Yuba Pass on the north and Hwy 4 Ebbetts Pass on the south. The advisory covers the avalanche terrain along the Sierra Crest and extends to the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada. Two inroads to the west side of the Sierra Crest exist within in the advisory area at Carson Pass and at Ebbetts Pass, in order to include the backcountry terrain surrounding the established boundaries of the Kirkwood and Bear Valley ski areas.



Advisories

From December 3rd through March 29th, the Sierra Avalanche Center issued 116 daily avalanche advisories. The number of advisories issued for each danger level was: 82 Low, 31 Moderate, 3 Considerable, 0 High, and 0 Extreme. Additionally, three early season snow condition reports were posted during November.

Advisories were available 24 hours a day, 7 seven days per week on the internet and by phone. The website experienced over 288,821 page loads this winter. During the forecasting season from December 3th to March 29th, the website was viewed an average of 2,490 times per day. Website traffic compared to the same time period last season increased in page views by 7% and unique visitors by 40% despite ongoing drought. An online archive of advisories can be found at: <http://www.sierraavalanchecenter.org/archive>.

February 7, 2015. Skier triggered size D2 avalanche. Broncho Chutes, Gray Creek Drainage, Mount Rose backcountry, Carson Range, NV. Photo submitted as anonymous.



Field Observations

The avalanche center's formal program of avalanche, snowpack, and weather information remained largely unchanged this season. The website continued to allow public and professional users to include video, photos, and maps in their observations.

Professional Guide services Mountain Adventures Seminars, Tahoe Mountain School, and Alpine Skills International shared their field observations with the avalanche center. The Central Sierra Snow Laboratory, Kirkwood, Mt. Rose, and Sugar Bowl also submitted observations to the avalanche center on storm mornings. Afternoon updates were submitted when possible. This information, combined with observations submitted by the general public, was an important supplement to the information gathered by USFS forecasters Brandon Schwartz and Andy Anderson, as well as SAC professional observers Steve Reynaud and Travis Feist.

The total number of professional level backcountry field observations collected by the avalanche center totaled 174 this past season. These were supplemented by an additional 35 backcountry field observations submitted by the general public.

First publicly submitted backcountry human trigger avalanche observation of the season, size D1. December 1, 2014, Round Top Peak Complex, Carson Pass, CA. Photo submitted anonymously.



Events

Snowfall and cold temperatures in December led to 4 early season avalanche incidents in which people triggered recently deposited wind slabs on 12/1, 12/3, and 12/15-12/16. Although the avalanches triggered during these events did catch and carry the people who triggered them, no one was seriously injured. The cold spell broke on Dec. 20-21 when a warm storm brought more rain than snow and destroyed the potential persistent weak layers. Most of the precipitation that did fall during this storm fell as rain with only the higher elevations receiving significant snow accumulation. Following this storm a short period of cold dry weather settled over the region through the 2nd of January. Then came one of the driest and warmest Januarys on record. That month saw less than 3 inches of snowfall and temperatures climbed above freezing nearly every day. The dry spell finally broke on Feb 7 with another warm storm with high snow levels. This storm represented one of the two storms that deposited more than 18 inches of snow above 8000 ft. this season. The other one occurred at the end of Feb. Overall the season was characterized by infrequent storms and record warm temperatures. The snowpack started undergoing melt-freeze cycles in late Dec. and never stopped. As of Mar. 29 the forecast area had received about 51% of its normal precipitation yet the snow water equivalent sat at 9% of normal. The approximately 30 inches of precipitation that fell this winter only amounted to about 109 inches of total snow fall below 8500 ft. This winter will go down as the 4th drought winter in a row and one of the warmest winters on record. Over 60% of the days had low temperatures above freezing at 8000 to 9000 ft.

	Total Snowfall inches	Number of Storms (Consecutive days of snow with more than 1 inch total accumulation)	Dates of Storms	Strom Snow Total	Dates of Avelanch Cycles	Reported People Caught, or burried
December	53	6	12/4-12/7	12	12/1 and 12/3	1
			12/12-12/13	13	12/13	0
			12/15-12/18	11	12/15 and 12/16	3
			12/20-12/21	8		
			12/25-12/26	4		
			12/30-12/31	6		
January	3	1	1/27-1/28	3	1/27 (loose dry)	0
February	36	2	2/7-2/10	28	2/27 and 2/9	0
			2-Feb	2		
March	18	3	2/27-3/4	18	28-Feb	0
			3/11-3/12	2		
			3/23-3/25	4		

Profit and Loss Standard

August 2014 through July 2015

Income

Ordinary Income/Expense		
	Income	
	Autumn fundraiser	11,325.85
	Deposit	
	ATM Deposit	925.00
	Ski lift ticket sales	17,134.40
	Deposit - Other	13,967.56
	Total Deposit	32,026.96
	Donation	
	Anonymous	1,230.50
	Bear Valley lift ticket sales	160.00
	Donation thru mail	6,464.25
	Online donation thru PayPal	668.54
	Sugar Bowl lift ticket sales	8,381.00
	Donation - Other	10,842.75
	Total Donation	27,747.04
	Fundraisers	
	bc basics	383.00
	bc basics & sunnyside	1,060.00
	Other	956.23
	tahoe mtn sports	1,800.00
	Total Fundraisers	4,199.23
	Online donation through iATS	3,045.82
	Realized Gains	565.41
	SWAG sold	1,073.14
	Total Income	79,983.45
	Gross Profit	79,983.45

Expenses

	Administrative fees	300.20
	Advertising	6,042.05
	Bank service charge	622.72
	Board of Directors meeting	1,120.03
	Business development	160.58
	Business Trade Fair	75.00
	Chamber of Commerce	375.00
	Education contractor	2,495.00
	Field Observations	5,550.00
	Filing Fees	20.00
	Forecaster equipment	1,371.42
	fund raising event	3,120.00
	Insurance	3,430.73
	Non-profit status fee	
	Tax status filing fee	
	Tax preparation	700.00
	Total Tax status filing fee	700.00
	Non-profit status fee - Other	25.00
	Total Non-profit status fee	725.00
	Office Supplies	168.38
	Post office box rental	150.00
	Pro Development Workshop	502.00
	Processing fee	0.98
	Program development	7,532.17
	Program Development contractor	38,840.00
	Refund	--188.00
	SAC Logo wear	5,103.81
	shipping	325.14
	Snowmobile equipment	1,046.50
	TD Chamber of Commerce	130.00
	Travel/Training	5,215.64
	Uncategorized	1,500.00
	Unrealized Gains	1,654.35
	website development contractor	3,700.00
	Website server fee	1,256.00
	Total Expense	92,344.70
	Net Ordinary Income	--12,361.25
	Other Income/Expense	
	Other Income	
	Interest Income	596.15
	Total Other Income	596.15
	Net Other Income	596.15
	Net Income	--11,765.10

Board of Directors

Sierra Avalanche Center functions as a partnership between the US Forest Service and a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization known as Sierra Avalanche Center. These entities have partnered through a formal agreement to provide a quality product for the public and affected agencies. Sierra Avalanche Center's mission is to inform and educate the public about backcountry avalanche conditions in the greater Lake Tahoe area. The Board of Directors includes Holly Yocum (President), Mark Bunge (Vice President), Bob Moore (Secretary), Randall Osterhuber (Treasurer), David Fiore, David Bunker, Jonathon Laine, Jason Oelkers, Todd Offenbacher, Dave Paradysz, Eric Petlock, and Dustin Evans. The Advisory Committee to the Board of Directors includes: Cameron Bordner (Legal Advisor), Debby Broback, Justin Broglio, and Larry Heywood. During the 2014-2015 season the Board of Directors created an interim Executive Director position to transition the organization toward full time management which was filled by Don Triplat.

The Board of Directors is the financial backbone of the Sierra Avalanche Center. Through soliciting donations from the public and organizing & marketing fundraising events, they are the major source of funding for the Sierra Avalanche Center. Money raised by the Board of Directors covered approximately 50% of the operational costs for the Avalanche Center in 2014 - 2015. Through a collection agreement with the Tahoe National Forest, these funds pay for forecaster salaries and the costs of professional level continuing education. Additionally, the Board of Directors provides compensation for contracted professional observers and some equipment needs for the forecasters.

Board of Directors

President | Holly Yocum
Vice President | Mark Bunge
Secretary | Bob Moore
Treasurer | Randall Osterhuber

Board Members

David Fiore, Dustin Evans, Jason Oelkers, Jonathan Laine, Todd Offenbacher, Dave Paradysz, and Eric Petlock.

Advisory Committee

Debbie Broback, John Swanson,
Justin Broglio, and Larry Heywood

Staff

Forecasters: Brandon Schwartz and Andy Anderson
Observers: Steve Reynaud and Travis Feist

Sponsors 2014 - 2015 season

SUMMIT PARTNERS - Donations of more than \$10,000



EXTREEM PARTNERS - Donations of \$3,000 to \$10,000



HIGH PARTNERS - Donations of \$1,000 to \$2,900



CONSIDERABLE PARTNERS - Donations of \$500 to \$999



MODERATE PARTNERS - Donations of \$100 to \$499





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