



Winter 2016-2017 Annual Report

The Sierra Avalanche Center operates as a partnership between the Tahoe National Forest and a 501(c)(3) nonprofit volunteer Board of Directors. This relationship continues to strengthen both operationally and financially while continuing to gain community support.

The winter of 2016 - 2017 in the Sierra Avalanche Center forecast area marked a historic season on several fronts:

- For the first time ever, the SAC website exceeded a million page views on the season (1,008,302 to be exact), with over 183,533 unique visitors between October 1 and April 23. That represents a 36% increase in page views and a 23% increase in visitors over last season.
- The Sierra Avalanche Center issued 150 daily avalanche advisories and 3 early season snow condition reports.
- The Board of Directors successfully raised over \$200,000 to support the Sierra Avalanche Center's operating budget.
- The USDA Forest Service provided \$26,297 for forecaster salaries in the form of \$17,797 from Region 5 and \$8,500 from Region 4.
- The Tahoe National Forest provided \$11,803 in infrastructure support.
- SAC became an AIARE snowmobile avalanche education provider and taught four snowmobile-specific avalanche courses.
- 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 sixth very successful and well attended Professional Development Seminar in memory of Bill Foster.

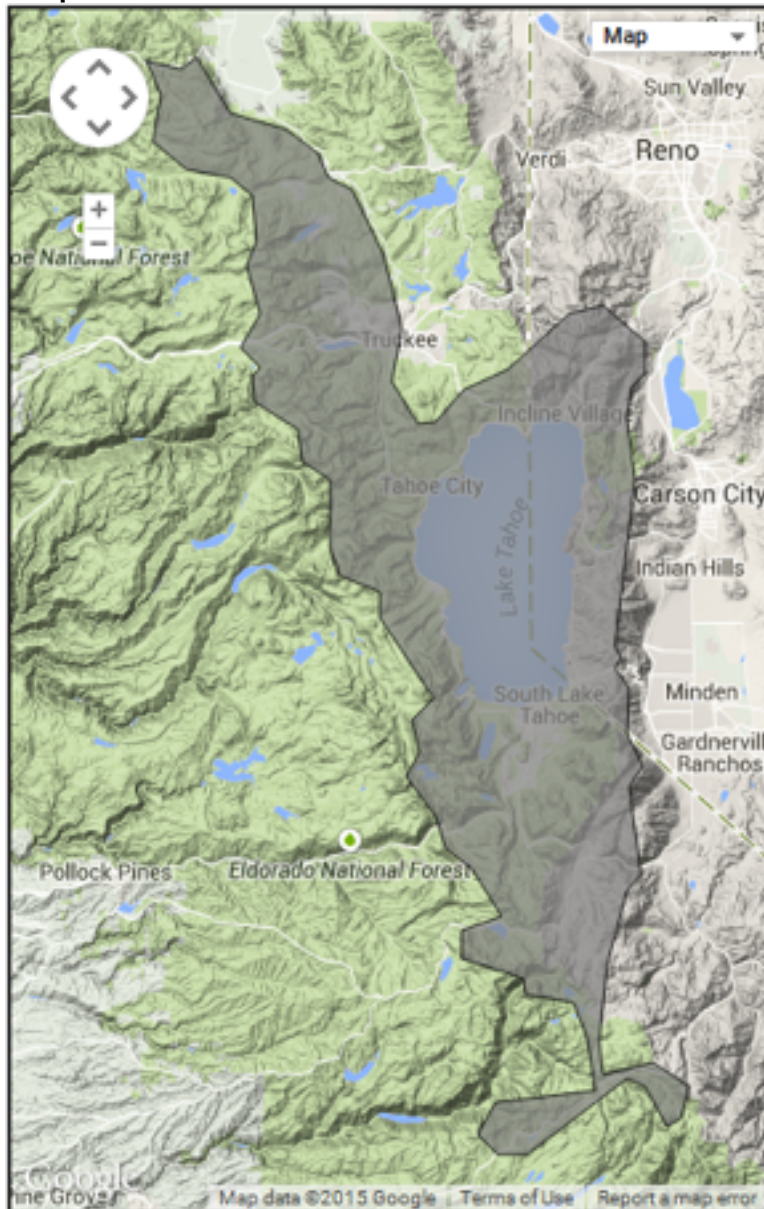
We would like to extend our gratitude to everyone who has put forth time and effort to support the Sierra Avalanche Center.

Brandon Schwartz ~ Lead Forecaster TNF USFS

Advisory Area

The Sierra Avalanche Center advisory area 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.

Map of the Sierra Avalanche Center Forecast Area



Tahoe National Forest Forecast Team

The Tahoe National Forest employs the avalanche forecasters who work in the Sierra Avalanche Center Program. Brandon Schwartz is the lead forecaster and directs the avalanche forecasting program. Andy Anderson is the senior forecaster and Steve Reynaud works as third forecaster in the program under Brandon and Andy.

All three forecasters work five days per week collecting daily avalanche, snowpack, and weather observations. This data is combined with additional data received from the SAC Professional Observers, local backcountry guide services, professional ski patrols and the general public. The Tahoe National Forest forecasters are solely responsible for the creation of the daily avalanche advisories issued through the SAC website as well as any issued avalanche watches and warnings.

Field Observations

The center's program of avalanche, snowpack, and weather information continued in strong fashion following the personnel additions last season. The Tahoe National Forest/SAC forecasters were supported with field observations from the Southern portion of the region by Travis Feist and David Reichel as professional field observers. The SAC website allows the public and professionals to upload video and photos along with their observation submissions, and pinpoint map placement to identify incident locations and share crowd-sourced information from the field. This greatly enhances the coverage and information sharing of SAC's service.

Professional Guide services Alpenglow guides, Alpine Skills International, Donner Summit Avalanche Seminars, Mountain Adventures Seminars, and Tahoe Mountain School shared their field observations with the avalanche center. The Central Sierra Snow Laboratory, Kirkwood, Mt. Rose, Squaw Valley, and Sugar Bowl also submitted observations to the avalanche center. This information, combined with observations submitted by the general public, was an important supplement to the information gathered by USFS forecasters as well as the SAC professional observers.

The total number of backcountry snowpack and avalanche observations collected by the TNF/SAC forecasters and pro observers totaled 298 this past season. These were supplemented by an additional 66 backcountry snowpack and avalanche observations submitted by the local guide services and 152 observations from the general public.

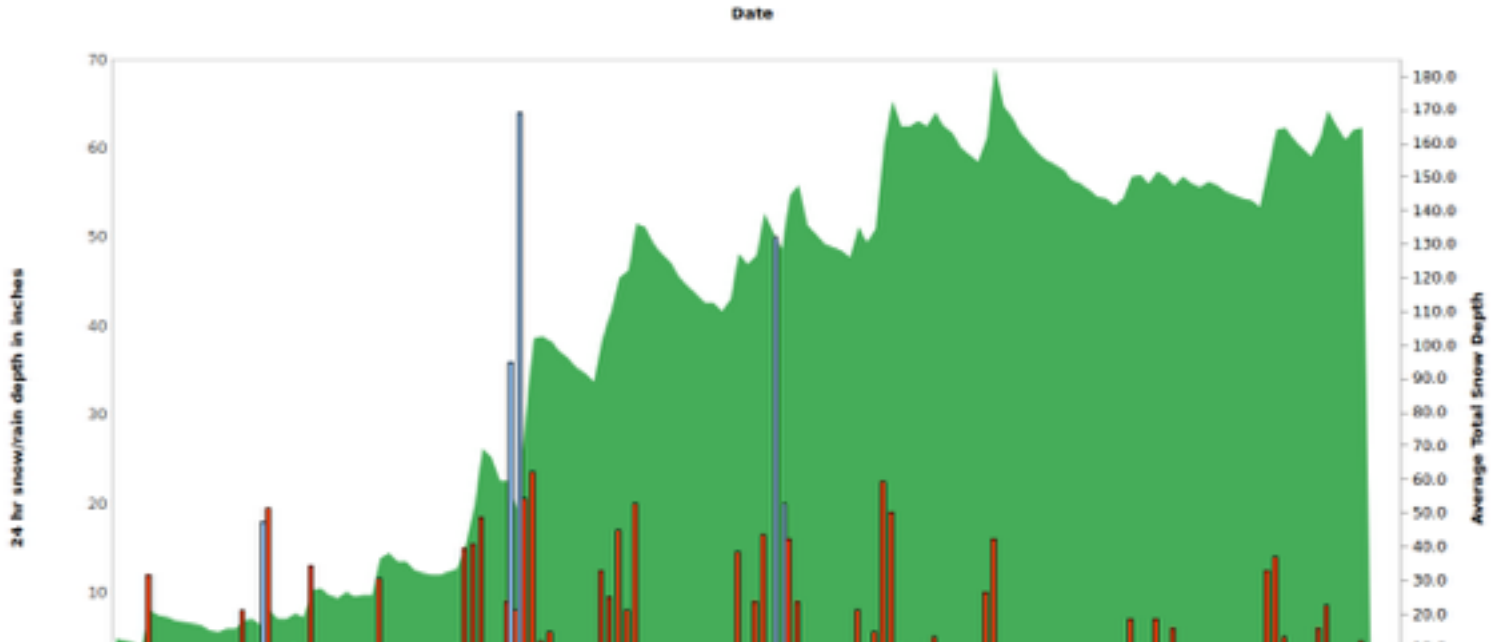
Avalanche Advisories

From November 23rd through April 23rd, the Sierra Avalanche Center issued 150 daily avalanche advisories. The number of advisories issued for each danger level was: 23 Low, 85 Moderate, 30 Considerable, 11 High, and one Extreme. Additionally, three early season snow condition reports were posted in November. An online archive of advisories can be found at: <http://www.sierraavalanchecenter.org/archive>.

Advisories were available 24 hours a day, seven days per week on the SAC website and by phone. The website experienced over 1,008,302 page loads from 183,533 users this winter. During the forecasting season from October 1st to April 23rd, the website was viewed an average of 4,918 times per day.

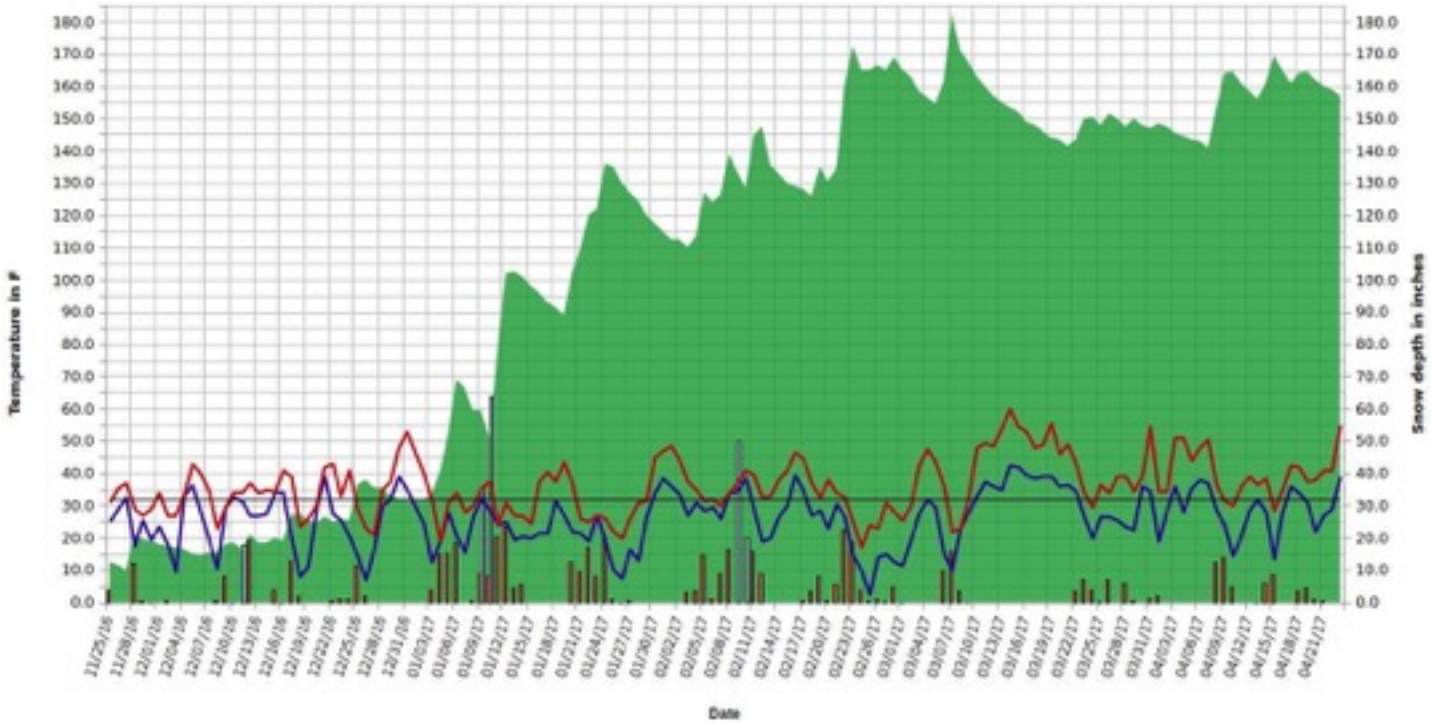
Winter 2017 Snowfall Data

Average Weather Observations from along the Sierra Crest between 8200 ft. and 8800 ft.

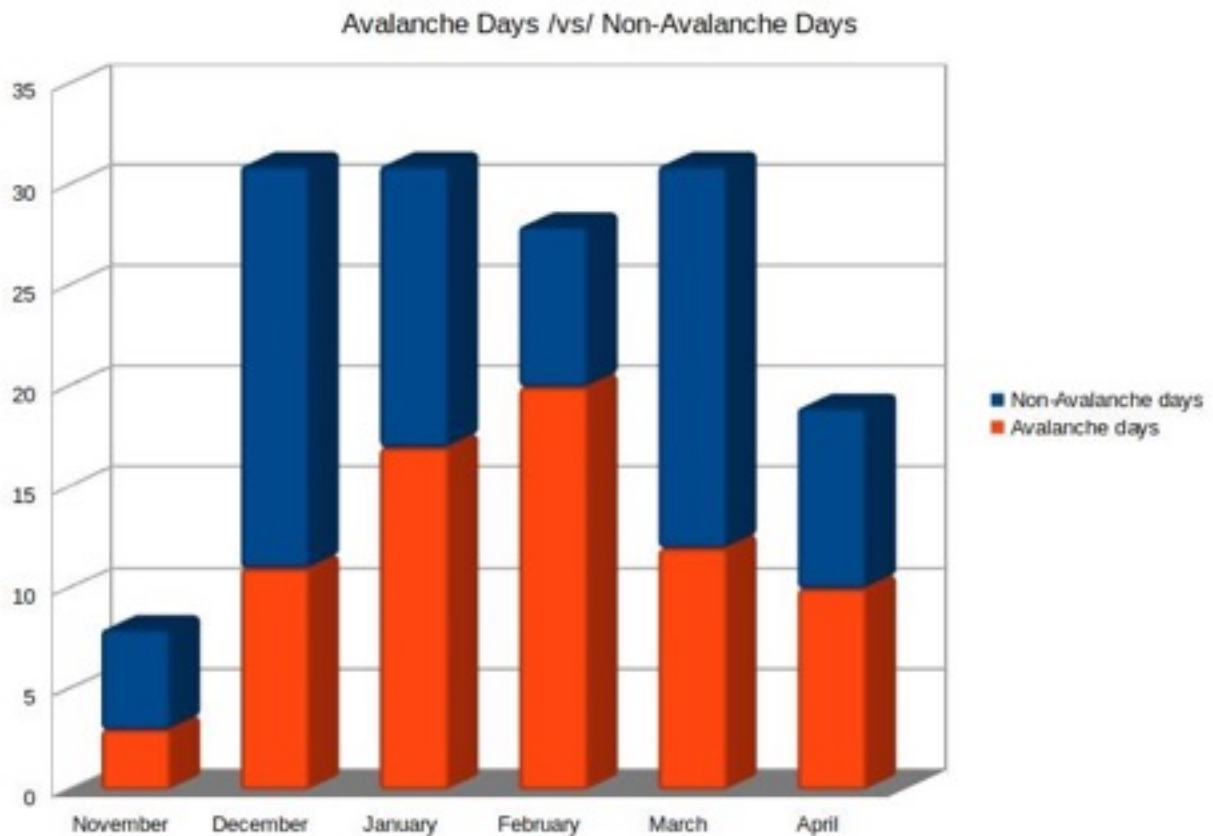


Average Weather Observations from along the Sierra Crest between 8200 ft. and 8800 ft.

11/23/16



■ Total Snow Depth
 — 24 hr Snow Accumulation
 — 24 hr min * 10 to convert to - snow equivalent
— 24 hr Maximum Temperature
 — 32 Degrees F.



Sierra Avalanche Center Nonprofit Organization

Avalanche Awareness and Education

The nonprofit arm of SAC continued its focus on public outreach and avalanche education during the winter of 2016 by focusing its effort on the Know Before You Go platform of avalanche awareness. Sixty-three presentations were made to 4,256 individuals focusing on ski teams, middle and high school students, coaches of Far West, parents, and the general public through outdoor shops and ski clubs. This program more than doubled in size this season and has been received with enthusiasm across the region as interest in backcountry winter sports continues to rise. SAC will continue to expand this program of basic avalanche safety to educate new users on the need for skills, equipment and the daily forecast before entering the backcountry.

SAC continued to target winter OHV users with Know Before You Go messaging in retail shops, online, and with radio and TV Public Service Announcements. Presentations were made at OHV dealerships across the region and two avalanche awareness education courses specific to OHV users were taught with a classroom session and field day to bring lifesaving information and skills to the motorized winter sports community.

SAC Income and Expenses: 10/1/16 - 9/7/17	
Total Income	\$238,496
Donations (individual, corporate, foundation)	\$111,955
California and Nevada state OHV grants	\$94,744
Events	\$28,674
Other	\$3,123
Total Expenses	\$185,861
Forest Service Forecasters	\$67,657
Professional Observers	\$15,937
Executive Director	\$39,277
Avalanche Instructors	\$16,212
Advertising/marketing/merchandise	\$16,318
Equipment	\$9,880
Professional fees (website, accounting)	\$7,855
Other (insurance, banking, association dues, etc)	\$12,725

Board of Directors ~ Executive Committee

Holly Yocum ~ President

Dustin Evans ~ Treasurer

Mark Bunge ~ Vice President

Bob Moore ~ Secretary

Directors ~ Jonathon Laine, Eric Petlock, Dave Fiore, Todd Offenbacher, Jason Oelkers, Zach Tolby, James Brown, David Bunker

Advisory Board ~ Dan Dixson, Cameron Bordner (legal Advisor), John Swanson, Debbi Brobak, Jeremy Jacobson, Kerry Stendell, Sean Kristl

Staff ~ Forecasters - Andy Anderson, Brandon Schwartz, and Steve Reynaud

Professional Observers - Travis Feist and David Reichel

Executive Director - Don Triplat

Volunteer Intern - Dylan Hagan & Isaac Laredo ~ Sierra Nevada College

Special Thanks

The SAC community owes a great deal of appreciation to the volunteer board of directors and advisory board members who put their personal time into managing and shaping the center and directing the activities to keep the avalanche center going. Without their commitment this organization would not exist.

A special thanks to our sponsors and donors that provided the financial support necessary to sustain SAC operations and programs; our annual operations are funded heavily by these individual and organizational donors, without whom the daily forecast and educational programs would not exist.

We are also deeply grateful to local guide services, resort patrol staff, and the public who take the time to submit snowpack and avalanche observations. SAC operates across a large region, and everyone who submits information and photos helps the forecasters and other backcountry users see what is happening in the snowpack across the forecast area.

If you made a donation to SAC this season, please take a moment to reflect on the importance of your contribution and how it affects your community of winter recreation enthusiasts and recognize the companies below for their contribution. Every bit helps us to put it all together and support all of you with a daily avalanche forecast for the greater Lake Tahoe area.

Don Triplat ~ Executive Director

Sponsors 2016-17 Season

SAC values all of our industry partners and sends a heartfelt “Thank You” to all of the organizations that have helped support the free daily forecast, and the growth and development of the Center over the past 10 years.

Summit - Sponsors who donated more than \$10,000 to SAC



Extreme - Sponsors who donated more than \$5000-\$9,999 to SAC



High - Sponsors who donated between \$2500 and \$4999 to SAC



Considerable - Sponsors who donated between \$1000 and \$2499 to SAC



Moderate - Sponsors who donated between \$500 and \$999 to SAC

