

FRIENDS OF



SAWTOOTH
NATIONAL FOREST
AVALANCHE
CENTER

PO Box 2669

Ketchum, ID 83340

December 2, 2002

Dear Friends:

The motto this year is: **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**. Why? Because avalanche accidents kill more people on public lands than any other natural disaster. Unfortunately, last year was another record year for avalanche victims, resulting in 35 deaths throughout the United States. But avalanches don't happen by accident: they only happen in certain terrain with certain snow conditions. If you can identify those conditions you can unravel the avalanche puzzle and travel more safely through the backcountry.

Here in the Wood River Valley, and throughout central Idaho we are fortunate to have the Sawtooth National Forest Avalanche Center helping provide the tools we need to make good choices and to react decisively in an emergency. The Avalanche Center issues advisories that contain critical snowpack and weather information; they are your link with what has been happening while you have been at work, at school or asleep. The Center provides up to date information at your finger tips via phone (622-8027) or website (www.avalanche.org).

Although the Avalanche Center provides critical snow, weather and avalanche user information daily *free of cost*, this would not be possible without private funding and broad public support, especially given recent budget cuts in the Forest Service. Approximately 50% of the Avalanche Center's budget is paid for through private donations. In other words, without public support, the Center would either have to shut down or significantly scale back its services. Neither of these options is very attractive, especially given the unprecedented levels of backcountry winter recreation in our area.

Now more than ever, the Sawtooth National Forest Avalanche Center is stretched to the breaking point, and *we need your help!*

The Friends of the Sawtooth National Forest Avalanche Center is working to raise \$20,000 to help support the Center's outreach and educational activities. This money will also help pay for the remainder of the new Lower Titus weather station which is up and running. The station, which was made possible predominantly by Friends' donations, provides hourly snow and weather data from Titus Ridge above Galena Summit. Now it is possible to click on the Center's home page through www.avalanche.org, and find out how much snow has fallen in the Galena Summit area or in the headwaters of the Salmon River.

As the snow begins to fly this winter, we hope you will make a contribution to the Friends of the Sawtooth NF Avalanche Center. With your help we can make the backcountry a safer, more enjoyable place for everyone. Thanks for your support, and have a great season in the snow!

Best Holiday wishes from the Friends of the Sawtooth NF Avalanche Center,

Louise Stump
Co-Chair

Michael Malko
Co-Chair

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2002-2003 Avalanche Classes and Events

<u>Time & Date</u>	<u>Class/event</u>	<u>Location</u>
6-9 pm Thursday, December 5	Basic Avalanche Awareness	Hemingway Elementary
6-9 pm Thursday, January 9	Basic Avalanche Awareness	ERC Building

These classes are co-sponsored by Blaine County Rec, the ERC and Friends of the Sawtooth National Forest Avalanche Center

Every Thursday

Beacon Clinics

Ketchum Park & Ride Lot, North End

(except for Christmas, New Years weeks)

Sponsored by Backwoods Mountain Sports (726-8818)

March, 7th 2003

Annual Snow Ball

Next Stage Theater

Please contact the Sawtooth NF Avalanche Center at 622-0095 for more information about classes, or check the Calendar of events in the local papers. We recommend the www.avalanche.org website and click on the education link and the National Avalanche Center link

Friends of the Sawtooth NF Avalanche Center Advisory Committee:

Sara Berquist, Steve Butler, Tom Champion, Tina Cole, Dennis Davis, Mark & Martha Deffe, Jay Gress, James Kennedy, Rob King, Michael Kraynik, Michael Malko, Beau Mills, Nils Ribl, Louise Stumph, Kay Tenney, Steve Wolper