



Photo courtesy of Ben VandenBos and the SAC.

A YEAR FOR THE RECORD BOOKS!

The winter of 2016-17 was one we won't soon forget!

We are thrilled to report **ZERO avalanche fatalities or significant injuries within our advisory area this past season!** While we can't attribute the "perfect record" entirely to our work at the Sawtooth Avalanche Center, there's little doubt that our products help backcountry travelers make better decisions. The winter of 2016-17 will be remembered for record-breaking precipitation, snowfall, and avalanches. The month of February stood out, slamming the advisory area with 380-440% of our 30-year average precipitation! Intense storms prompted EXTREME avalanche danger ratings for the first two times in SAC history. Our longest and heaviest storm event of the season dropped at least 60-80" of snow in 11 days. Ethan almost caved and bought a snow-blower, but he didn't want to jinx us! Here's to another great season partnering with the stellar Friends of the Sawtooth Avalanche Center and the most supportive, down-home mountain community in the Rockies!

Ethan, Matt, and Scott – the SAC Avalanche Forecasters

2017-2018 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

HEADS UP! OUR CALENDAR OF EVENTS IS EVER-GROWING...

- Homegrown Film Festival** – Liberty Theatre, Hailey **November 10**
- Avalanche Awareness** – Sawtooth Brewery, Hailey **November 16**
- 509 Series Snowmobile Movie** – Hailey TBD..... **November 30**
- Introduction to Avalanches, Classroom Session** – Hemingway Elem. School, Ketchum **December 14**
- Introduction to Avalanches, Field Session** – SNRA Headquarters..... **December 16**
- Introduction to Avalanches, Classroom Session** – WRHS Theater, Community Campus, Hailey..... **January 11**
- Introduction to Avalanches, Field Session** – SNRA Headquarters..... **January 13**
- Avalanche Awareness** – CSI, Twin Falls..... **January 18**
- Banff Mountain Film Festival and Friends of SAC Raffle** – Limelight Hotel, Ketchum..... **February 2, 3 and 5**
- Motorized Level I, Classroom Session** – Hailey..... **February 9-11**

Go to sawtoothavalanche.com for more info on classes and events!



Providing 50% of the Sawtooth Avalanche Center's Annual Operating Budget

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Our mission is to support the Sawtooth Avalanche Center and promote life-saving avalanche safety information, education and outreach throughout Idaho communities.



FRIENDS OF SAWTOOTH AVALANCHE CENTER

PROVIDING 50% OF THE SAWTOOTH AVALANCHE CENTER'S BUDGET

2017 / 2018 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Axel Peterson - Photo by Max Lowe

Welcome back, Friends!

Wow! Seems we are STILL talking about the historic snowfall last season and winter is already knocking on our doors! Should the weather forecast hold true, we can anticipate a snow year to rival the last two!

Never fear, the Friends AND the Sawtooth Avalanche Center are primed and ready to meet the challenge once again. We are thrilled to announce that we have **ZERO staff turnover!** Our three amazing forecasters are returning for a third year as a forecasting team. Scott Savage, Ethan Davis and Matt Wieland work tirelessly to provide the safety products so many of YOU rely upon as you play, work and travel in the snow-filled backcountry. Their herculean efforts last season were assisted greatly by the Friends' first intern, Ben VandenBos, and with YOUR support the intern program will continue this season. Stephanie Eisenbarth is returning for her second year as the Friends' Executive Director, and alongside the Friends' Board, is committed to working hard with YOU to provide 50% of the SAC's annual operating budget. That is a BIG DEAL! **YOUR donations support the forecasters who produce those fact-filled daily advisories all winter long.**

In addition to returning staff, the Friends are very pleased to announce a new Education Coordinator position this year, and introduce Stacy Ward as the inaugural Education Coordinator. Stacey is a native Idahoan, is a backcountry skier and snowmobiler, and has a diverse background in the field of recreation, including (but certainly not limited to) directing the Outdoor Program/Ropes Course at the College of Southern Idaho, and working with Sawtooth Mountain Guides. The Friends desire to expand their free or low-cost recreational awareness program in south central Idaho. Specific program goals include 1) never saying "no" to an avalanche safety course request; 2) increasing the number of local classes offered by at least 25%;

3) reaching >90% of 8th grade students in Blaine County; and 4) expanding into surrounding areas, including Fairfield, Twin Falls, Boise and Challis. Stacey looks forward to being the "spark plug" that develops the incredible opportunities the Friends' education program can bring. **YOUR contribution will help ensure the expanded education program is a success!**

With the help from an Idaho Parks and Recreation Department grant, the Friends are replacing the avalanche center's aging snowmobiles with two new machines this season. Reliable sleds are crucial for the program, allowing the forecasters to cover some serious ground when collecting field observations. **YOUR donation will give the forecasters the tools they need to produce those accurate advisories that help keep us out of trouble. To help offset the costs, the Friends are raffling one of their 2013 snowmobiles. The sled is a Polaris 600 PRO, 155 track, with 1,500 miles. Tickets are \$100. There are only 100 tickets available!** Tickets are available at Mahoney's Bar and Grill and Woodside Motor Sports in Bellevue, Sturtevant's in Hailey, and Backwoods Mountain Sports in Ketchum, or contact Steph at 208-720-3242. Drawing will be held once all tickets are sold. **Great odds for a great cause! Are YOU going to be the lucky one?**



Photo by Rob Head

The Friends and title sponsor Black Diamond Equipment are fired up to present a night of film, fun, food and suds to benefit the Sawtooth Avalanche Center and celebrate phenomenal local athletes and filmmakers. The "Homegrown Film Festival" will be held at the Liberty Theatre in Hailey on Friday, November 10. Tickets are available at Sturtevant's in Hailey and at Backwoods Mountain Sports, the Elephant's Perch and Ski Tek in Ketchum. **YOU won't want to miss this opportunity to view local athletes in action on the big screen and support YOUR avy center.** Proceeds from this event will support an intern forecaster at the Sawtooth Avalanche Center this season - the Friends are proud to announce the internship program for 2018 is in memory of Chris Peterson.

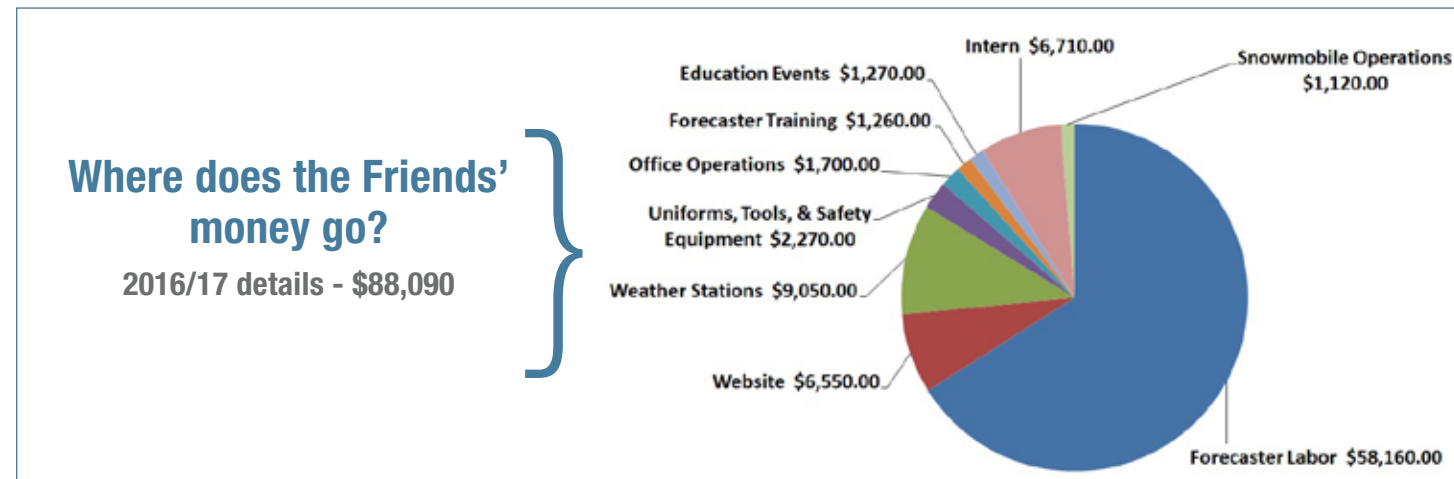
YOUR Sawtooth Avalanche Center truly is a community effort, and any donation large or small, could save a life! Please become a Friend today.

To learn more visit: sawtoothavalanche.com

2016-2017 HIGHLIGHTS Sawtooth Avalanche Center

- Daily Avalanche Advisories began on December 9th and continued through April 16th. In total, the SAC produced 129 Daily Avalanche Advisories in addition to 12 General Snow and Weather Information updates.
- The SAC issued 9 Avalanche Warnings and 22 days of HIGH avalanche danger (compared to 4 Warnings and 11 days of HIGH danger last season).
- The SAC issued 2 days of EXTREME danger – the first time the SAC has issued EXTREME danger ratings.
- There were no fatalities within the advisory area for the 3rd year in a row. Although four skiers, two snowmobilers, one snowbiker and one car were caught in avalanches, no one was seriously injured.
- Most of the advisory area received greater than 200" of snow and 30" of snow water equivalent (SWE) in January and February alone.
- Local professional groups contributed nearly 300 observations, and the public sent in just over 100 observations – thanks!
- February was WET – weather stations recorded 380-440% of our 30-year average precipitation.
- The SAC advisory received over 240,000 views via web and email subscriptions. Advisories were accessed an average of 1,750 times each day – a 16% jump.
- SAC educational programs reached over 1,500 individuals.
- Our social media campaigns were viewed over 300,000 times.

For more details on the 2016-17 season, view the SAC annual report at www.sawtoothavalanche.com/docs/2017-SAC-Annual-Report.pdf.



Invaluable Intern

Ben VandenBos stormed into the Wood River Valley, skiing an impressive 130 consecutive days last season! Ben was the SAC's first "full time" intern and will leave big shoes to fill (literally- he's a size 11). Ben was a huge asset to the SAC, observing large amounts of backcountry terrain, assisting in public education and taking beautiful photos. By spring, Ben tackled the task of creating and issuing backcountry advisories of his own. **The Friends plan to continue supporting the SAC internship program at a cost of \$7,000 annually. Contribute to ensure this program continues!**

ABOVE PHOTOS courtesy of Ben VandenBos and the SAC.



THE AVALANCHE CENTER NEEDS YOUR OBSERVATIONS!

Last year's "observers of the year" were **Simone Kastner** and **Jaime Shaw**. Simone and Jamie received some great prizes for their efforts – thanks and keep up the great work everyone! The SAC forecasters depend on knowing what you're seeing when you're out having fun – they can only cover a tiny chunk of the 6,000 square mile advisory area each day. This season, you'll be able to see the forecasters' field observations and those submitted by the public. **Check the "Observations" tab on the [sawtoothavalanche.com](http://www.sawtoothavalanche.com) homepage to submit your info and view reports from the field. If you like what you see, consider donating to the Friends to keep improving SAC web products!**



Friends of Sawtooth Avalanche Center 2016/2017 Donor List

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To become an Avalanche Advisory sponsor contact: scott@sawtoothavalanche.com

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ABOVE PHOTOS courtesy of Yancy and Wyatt Caldwell