



# ski patrol

Official Publication of the National Ski Patrol  
nsp.org + Winter 2022 + Volume 39 Issue 2

**OUTSTANDING AWARDS  
ROOKIE PATROLLING**



**Tenth**

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## 40 NATIONAL OUTSTANDING AWARDS 2021

BY CANDACE HORGAN

Despite the challenging season, which included COVID precautions, NSP patrollers were still a key part of helping area management run things efficiently at their resorts. We spotlight the winners of the 2021 National Outstanding Awards.

## 58 ROOKIE PATROLLING

BY RICHARD BASILE

In an organization of over 30,000 members, everyone has had a rookie season, though for many of us our rookie season is a distant memory. Richard Basile recently joined the ski patrol, and in this feature he recounts the experiences of his rookie season of patrolling.

## 62 POWDERFALL PREVIEW

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There are still a few spots left for Powderfall in April at Breckenridge Resort, Colorado. Here are just a few of the highlights of what is planned for the epic biennial celebration. Sign up now if you haven't!

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**BY CANDACE HORGAN**

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**BY BECKETT STOKES**

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## 66 SUBARU AMBASSADORS

**BY ERICA CLIFFORD AND  
STEVE BINNS**


Here is a quick introduction to the Subaru ambassadors for 2021-22.

Cover photo: Alan Heckart  
Left photo: Alan Heckart  
Photo above: Candace Horgan





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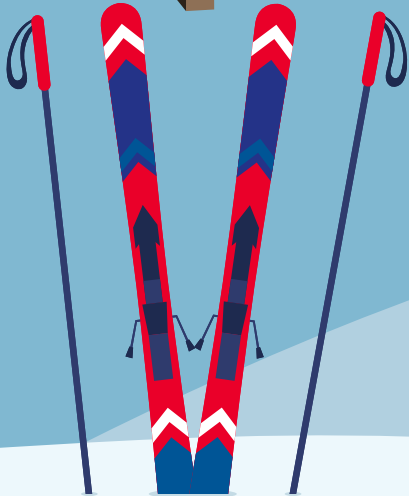
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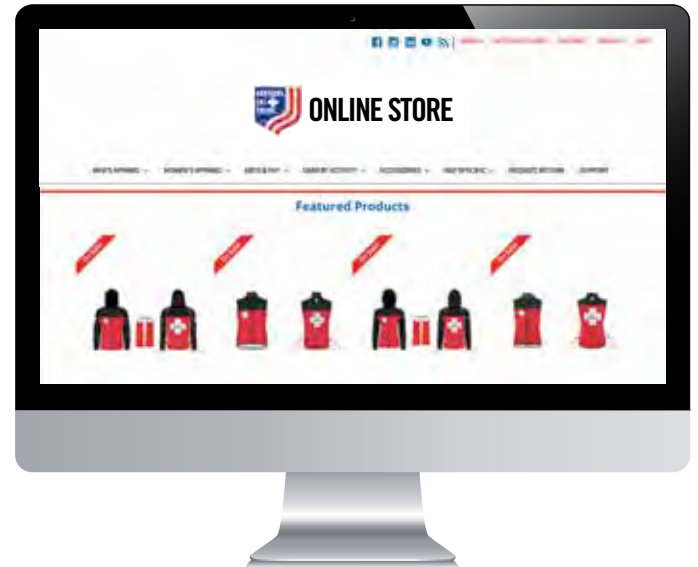
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# Letter

## from the Editor

By Candace Horgan, Editor



As I sit down to write this, our winter in Colorado has gotten off to a rocky start. The snowfall has been slow to come, and the weather warmer than usual. The snow will come, sooner or later, and hopefully come in plenty so that Powderfall 2022 at Breckenridge in April is an epic event.

We have a spread in this issue that shows just some of the sessions and fun planned for Powderfall this year. If any of these interest you, be sure to sign up quickly, as available spaces for Powderfall are almost all closed. It is sure to be a memorable fiesta for all who come, so sign up now before it's too late!

The news has, unfortunately, been filled with stories of a COVID resurgence, as well as a new variant, named Omicron, that is more infectious. However, for now the vaccines seem to be holding. Patrollers will still need to adapt to these challenges, and they always do, helping their resorts have success.

This issue has our annual Outstanding Awards article, which showcases those patrollers who particularly excelled last season and helped their patrols and resorts be successful. Many of them had to face challenges helping their resorts adapt to COVID protocols last season.

Patrolling can be a journey that takes you to new personal growth, to accolades like a National Outstanding Award or a Purple Merit Star for saving a life, or to leadership positions, from patrol director up to division director, national program director or adviser, or even board member. It all starts from a simple question about whether you want to pursue helping people at your local mountain. For many patrollers, their rookie season may be a distant memory, but others are just starting their patrol journey.

In this issue, we have an article from Richard Basile about the process that led him to try out for his local patrol and his experiences navigating Outdoor Emergency Care, Outdoor Emergency Transportation, and becoming a full patroller. Basile's article is

sure to spark memories of your own rookie season.

Speaking of national program directors, there have been new program directors announced in recent months for Avalanche, Mountain Travel and Rescue, and Nordic. A program director was also announced for the new NSP Bike Program. In this issue we have a Q&A with Mike Balk, the new national Nordic Program director. In coming issues, we will be profiling the other new program directors.

Eryka Thorley returns in this issue with another "From the Director's Chair" column, this time profiling Andy Sullivan, the patrol director of Arctic Valley in Alaska, a patrol also known as the Denali Ski Patrol. Unfortunately, this is Eryka's swan song, as she has decided to move on from writing this column. We at SPM want to thank Eryka for her engaging and excellent writing over the years and hope that she may contribute the occasional feature in the future, if her busy schedule allows. We have found a successor, and will be introducing them in the next issue.

Kim Henneman returns with her informative column for caring for our furry friends. In this issue, she discusses how thermal imaging can help pinpoint potential problems with avalanche rescue dogs before they develop into major issues.

Also back in this issue is cartoonist Brett Gehrke with his Patrol Penguins cartoons, offering up humorous takes on what we patrollers experience on the hill. We want to offer apologies to Brett for an inadvertent mistake in the last issue, as the layout of the last issue wrongly cropped one of the images. We will make sure such errors don't occur in the future.

We hope to see many of you out on the hill this winter and then at Powderfall in April for what is sure to be an amazing celebration of all that patrolling is. +

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LETTERS

# Letters to the Editor

## ▶ Pulse Oximetry tips

On page 97 of the fall *Ski Patrol Magazine*, I noticed a picture of someone about to place a pulse oximeter on a finger with fingernail polish. The OEC book says it may cause inaccurate readings, so I checked several studies online. They varied from not causing a significant error to most colors of nail polish causing enough error to remove it. Just make sure that what the pulse ox says and what you observe in your patient match!

---

Andrew Dayton  
*Santiam Pass Ski Patrol, Oregon*

## ▶ Where are the snowboards?

I was pretty disappointed that the “Gear Guide” for the recent *Ski Patrol Magazine* issue didn’t include any snowboarding equipment. While I know snowboarders, like myself, are a minority in patrol, there are still a substantial amount of snowboarders in patrol who would like to be represented by the national organization in things such as this. A gear guide is a pretty simple way to show inclusivity with all disciplines.

I am currently working with my region (Western Region, Central Division) on initiatives to promote inclusiveness for snowboarders on our patrollers, from specialized Outdoor Emergency Transportation training to Snowboarding Enhancement Seminars. In particular, we’ve been starting with improving awareness/knowledge of snowboard considerations for non-snowboard trainers and leadership in our organizations, since the majority, if not all, of patrol trainers and leadership are non-boarders.

I believe the national organization also needs to do better to incorporate snowboarders into the patrol culture, and a small gesture would be snowboards in the “Gear Guide” or the incorporation of articles related to snowboarding in *Ski Patrol Magazine*.

Regards,

---

Kristen Jung  
*Welch Village Ski Patrol, Minnesota*  
*Western Region Snowboard Advisor*

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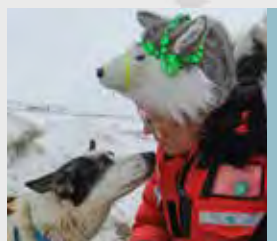
## Richard Basile

Richard J. Basile (RJ) is an alpine patroller with the Boston Mills/Brandywine/Alpine Valley Ski Patrol, which is one of the largest ski patrols in the U.S. His primary resort of patrol among the three local resorts is Alpine Valley in Chesterland, Ohio, near Cleveland. He has been a special education public school teacher for the last 19 years. He lives in Austintown, Ohio. He and his wife, Jill, have three children, Grace, 15; Rocco, 13; and Archer, 6. He's been skiing for 35 years, and all three of his children are avid skiers who like to join him on his patrol days.



## Brett Gehrke

A pro patroller at Belleayre Mountain Ski Center in New York, Brett Gehrke serves as Mountain Travel and Rescue advisor and gondola evac instructor. He doesn't look far for inspiration and thanks all the patrollers lucky enough to be depicted, who will remain forever anonymous in his illustrations. He has worked as a mountaineering/climbing guide and trapeze instructor/catcher. Other seasons are spent fly fishing, sailing, golfing, and kayaking. He volunteers as a guide for Sam's Point Preserve, an EMT for the local squad, and an operator for invasive species eradication on the river. He lives with his wife, Dale, who is his art director and a patroller, on the Hudson River in New York. See more illustrations at Patrol Penguins on Facebook or contact [Patrolpenguins@gmail.com](mailto:Patrolpenguins@gmail.com).



## Kim Henneman

Dr. Kim Henneman is a Utah Wasatch Range native. She tolerated the Midwest for four years to get her veterinary medical degree from Purdue, but moved back to Utah for the outdoor life. She became certified in acupuncture and chiropractic in the early 1990s and worked on her first avalanche dog shortly thereafter. She has helped form the new specialty discipline of canine sports medicine and rehabilitation. As the only veterinarian who is board-certified in both dogs and horses, Dr. Henneman currently writes and gives workshops all over the world, consults regularly with avalanche and SAR dogs, and helps canine athletes competing in numerous disciplines, including as a multi-year Iditarod trail veterinarian. Her goal is to bring knowledge from every discipline to help active dogs everywhere.



## Douglas Hill

Doug Hill has served for 35 years on the Big Bear Ski Patrol in Southern California. He is the current Instructor Development Program administrator for the Southern California Region and serves on the NSP National Instructor Development Committee. He is also an Instructor Development instructor and instructor trainer. He served as the patrol representative at Snow Summit for six years. Hill, a contributor to *Outdoor Emergency Care*, 4th ed., was the Outdoor Emergency Care Program supervisor for the Far West Division for five years and the OEC Program administrator for the Southern California Region. He received an NSP Distinguished Service Award in 2007.



## Eryka Thorley

A native of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Eryka Thorley first headed to the mountains for college at Montana State and has since hailed the West as home. She started patrolling at Big Sky Resort in Montana and recently retired from patrolling at Eldora Mountain Resort. She lives with her husband, Jake, who is currently a ski patroller, and daughter, Wynter, in Nederland, Colorado. Thorley teaches avalanche courses in the Rocky Mountains and organizes hiking trips in the Alps for Alpinhikers, a U.S.-based company.

## Errata



*Ski Patrol Magazine* inadvertently ran the wrong photo with Peter Gray's bio in the last issue. The correct photo is at left, and here again is his bio.

## Peter Gray

Peter Gray is a White Pass Ski Patrol volunteer and part-time pro patroller. He started skiing at Mammoth Mountain in California at age 4, has flown hang gliders for more than 40 years, and currently teaches economics at Central Washington University. He has a long background in physics, micrometeorology, and navigation.



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# From the of Chris Castilian



I hope everyone's season is off to a great start. We here at NSP are ready for 2022 and remain optimistic that we will get to spend more time together — on the snow and otherwise. Our board and other key leaders gathered in January to chart a new course for the organization. We considered next steps for NSP, if and how do we grow, what is the path to financial sustainability, and how do we best support our members and partners. NSP can honor our rich history, but we must look forward and embrace change. Those of us here in the national office are working hard on three near-term priorities.

**First, technology.** We know that many of our members' experiences with NSP — whether it is paying dues, looking for a document on the website, or registering for a class — can be frustrating. We hear you and are dedicated to improving that experience.

The first step is transitioning to our new Learning Management System (LMS). Our team of experts, staff, and members selected WBT and its TopClass LMS. This system will provide the scaffolding for all our educational programs and content, from online courses and course materials to education program registration and records. It will be much easier for members to register for courses and enjoy a comprehensive learning experience. For instructors, the LMS will be seamless for managing courses and viewing and updating course records. The LMS will also organize educational materials so that all members can access the NSP education library, which is full of content for all disciplines, and connect and integrate many of our other information systems, thereby making your experience easier so you can focus on patrolling.

We are also examining ways to improve our data systems to make them more user-friendly — both for our members and our member-facing staff — and ultimately more useful and accurate.

Finally, we will streamline and better organize the member website at [www.nsp.org](http://www.nsp.org) to make sure it is offering you the most relevant, helpful, and actionable information in a way that is easy to navigate.

**Second, paid and volunteer patrollers.** The ski and resort industries are evolving, and this is having different impacts on paid and volunteer patrols and patrollers. NSP also needs to evolve and be able to understand how these changes impact our members and what we can do as an organization to support patrollers.

All our paid, volunteer, Outdoor Emergency Care, EMT, and paramedic members do what you do out of love for the sport and the outdoors, and, most importantly, out of your dedication to help others. You all share a significant commitment to and investment in your own training and education. Our volunteer members have made this investment in addition to full-time careers and family obligations; our paid members have undertaken this training as the foundation of careers and life's work. We need to work together to keep NSP and our training current and relevant to the industry so you all can continue to do what you love and be of the best and highest service to the outdoor recreation industry.

**Finally, diversity, equity, and inclusion.** As a teaching organization,



and as first responders, we need to continue to be curious about what role NSP can play in these conversations and understand how characteristics like race and gender need to be addressed in our instruction and in how we provide care. Studies in a variety of settings show us that implicit biases can impact our responses and reactions, even when we don't think these identifying characteristics make a difference.

NSP has a role to play in making this industry more equitable and inclusive, and we are working to understand how best we can engage with our members and partners like Professional Ski Instructors of America-American Association of Snowboard Instructors, National Ski Areas Association, U.S. Ski & Snowboard, and Snowsports Industries America to make a difference.

Over the last few months, we've been working with The Equity Project ([www.theequityprojectllc.com](http://www.theequityprojectllc.com)), a Denver-based firm that helps organizations develop actionable strategies to advance their equity efforts. TEP is helping us understand where we are now and develop a road map to move us forward. Thanks to all of you who have participated in these assessment efforts so far and who have offered to become more involved.

Six months into the job, I continue to be amazed at the level of dedication that you, our members, have to not only patrolling and keeping guests safe, but also to the success of the National Ski Patrol. I wish you a new year of health, happiness, and lots of time on the snow! +



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# Patrol Penguins

BY BRETT GEHRKE



Colorado Pro Patrol Directors Meeting

Patrol directors and assistant patrol directors for most of Colorado's pro patrols met at Ski Cooper on Dec. 13 for their fall meeting to discuss a variety of topics and continue to work on best practices.

Most of the patrols in Colorado were represented. Only a few were missing, including Keystone, Purgatory, Steamboat, Telluride, and Vail, who were all busy working at their resorts.

The meeting was a two-day affair. About half of the attendees were there for the dinner on Sunday night at the Treeline Kitchen in Leadville. NSP was represented by CEO Chris Castilian, who got to hear some of the concerns the paid patrol leadership has about NSP in a more informal setting.

On Monday morning, everyone met at the base area for skiing. Ski Cooper Patrol Director Scott Adams took advantage of the group's size to get some ski packing done in closed terrain that had seen a recent snowfall, but that wasn't quite ready to open to the public. Luckily, most of the group managed to avoid core shots in the steeper, wooded terrain.

The group broke for lunch at noon, which was catered by Ski Cooper with soup and sandwiches. After lunch, the full meeting kicked off with a brief overview about the uniqueness of Ski Cooper and its history. The mountain is owned by one county, but mostly operates in a different county. Some of the expansion plans for Ski Cooper were also discussed.

Castilian was then introduced, and he talked at length about the future of NSP and how he believes NSP must reach out to the young paid patroller who does not necessarily have a relationship with NSP, even if they are a member.

Of course, a big concern for the group is safety on the hill. Just before the meeting, one area had two deaths within a 10-day span. The group talked about those incidents briefly and then how patrols

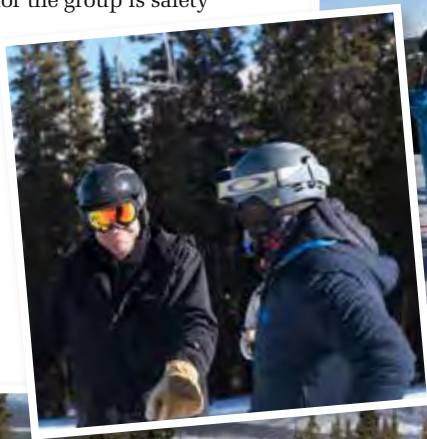
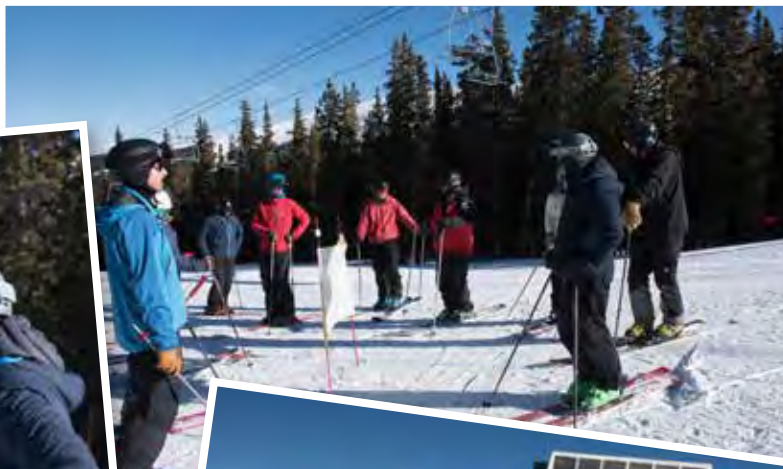
are working to further address safety. Among the methods are informal ski-around audits of the mountain by representatives from various departments, including mountain operations and patrol, and working to include all departments at the resort in safety efforts.

Discussions of safety extended to whether patrols revoke passes of skiers or snowboarders that are reckless. Almost everyone agreed that they will revoke passes, and it was discussed that Ikon and Vail Resorts will revoke passes for all their mountains when they are revoked at one mountain. Reckless skiers and riders can also be notated in the system so that a pass is never sold to them again.

The group addressed a variety of concerns at their resorts, sharing some of the solutions they've come up with. Among them were work weeks and vacation scheduling during the season and whether patrollers are allowed to take vacation during the season. Many of the resorts have patrollers working four-day work weeks, with an average of approximately 45 hours a week. Most resorts do allow their patrollers to schedule vacation. Aspen, for instance, allows five days off per patroller.

The group also discussed scheduling program solutions, such as When to Work, which simplifies the scheduling process for the patrols. Some patrols use Google sheets to do scheduling.

Candace Horgan



Patrol directors and assistant patrol directors enjoy skiing before the meeting. Photos by Candace Horgan



## PROFESSIONAL DIVISION

## The Future of the Professional Patroller

There are a multitude of challenges facing the ski industry and ski patrollers these days. Whether you're struggling with the realities of a global pandemic, suffering the effects of warm temperatures and drought, or you're digging out from a multiday storm cycle, you must constantly adapt to a rapidly changing environment. These are the types of storms that can be rewarding to weather. We wait for snow like the farmer waits for rain for thirsty plants. When the storm cycle breaks and the sun peeks through the clouds, we marvel at the brightness, and we're grateful for the opportunity to come up for air. To be a ski patroller is to embrace these extremes and to find rewards in overcoming these obstacles.

Being a career ski patroller is one of the most rewarding occupations you can pursue. I feel very fortunate to make a living outdoors in a dynamic environment. Unfortunately, I don't know if this lifestyle will be sustainable for the next generations of patrollers. The challenges facing career patrollers these days are less attributable to Mother Nature than to resort community dynamics. These obstacles loom large in the form of untenable workforce housing and rising inflation. While this is happening to a large extent all over the country, the effects are more acute in resort communities where lower wage earners are forced to compete with vacationers or second homeowners for a place to live.

People often ask about the difference between a paid ski patroller versus a volunteer. At the risk of alienating anyone or typecasting patrollers, in general I would say that the paid patroller relies on their patrol income to make a living, whereas the volunteer has a career other than patrolling. As a division director, I see firsthand the hours and years of commitment the volunteers bring to the NSP, and it is truly staggering. The geographic division directors seem to live and breathe the NSP, and my contributions to the organization pale in comparison. That said, we all have the same goals. We are all invested in supporting ski patrollers. At this point in my career, the irony is that the challenges facing the Pro Division aren't necessarily intrinsic to ski patrolling.

Finally, I would like to recommend a film that I saw recently. It is called *Buried*, and it is a documentary about the catastrophic 1982 avalanche event at Alpine Meadows. This award-winning film shines a light on an event that is obviously still seared into the minds of those who lived through it almost 40 years later. The film examines the complex emotional and psychological fallout that results from this type of event, and it serves as a stark reminder of the hazards inherent in mountain environments.

Ski patrollers often witness traumatic events first-hand. These days we are fortunate to have many more tools to help us

cope with tragedy than the crew at Alpine Meadows did 40 years ago. If you are interested in building resiliency in your team and promoting a holistic approach to combating stress injury, I highly recommend the Responder Alliance (<https://www.responderalliance.com/>) as a great resource. From the website:

*Our mission is to advance the national conversation on stress injury formation and recovery in responders of all types. We do this by connecting responders, professionals, and organizations with resources, education, and training formulated on good science. We believe that strong organizational vitality leads to resilient responders. We believe that responders who are equipped to support each other and themselves are the best resource in preventing and mitigating stress injuries that occur in the field.*

This paradigm shift in the way we approach critical incidents and their aftermath provides the next opportunity for us to support each other. The Responder Alliance has created a task force to bring this discussion and training to the National Ski Patrol. I am confident that it will find a receptive audience among our community.

**Dree Kneeland**  
*NSP Pro Division Director*

## EASTERN DIVISION

## The NSP and 10th Mountain Division: Partners in History, Tradition, and Excellence

Sliding down hills on two narrow pieces of wood strapped to one's feet was considered an extreme sport and not just a little odd in the U.S. pre-World War II. Although skiing was well established in Europe, the U.S. had had very little exposure to the sport before the war. However, there was a movement in the Eastern U.S. north country to find hills to slide down, lodging near those hills, and transport to those lodgings.

In the 1930s, that took a concerted effort to do, but it did happen, and the sport grew in popularity among the younger set. This resulted by 1938 in the establishment of the fledgling National Ski Patrol by Charles

Minot (Minnie) Dole at the behest of Roger Langley, a "rolly-poly, good-natured schoolteacher from Massachusetts" (as described by Minnie Dole) who also happened to be president of the National Ski Association of America.

After World War II, the ski industry really took off, mostly due to the impact the soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division had on it when they returned to civilian life. The NSP and the 10th Mountain Division are inextricably linked in this effort because both were the result of the vision and tenacity of Minnie Dole. Dole successfully lobbied General George Marshall and his staff in New York and Washington

for the creation of an arctic fighting force over several years. Once it was created, Dole helped the Army organize and staff the 10th. In fact, this is the only time in history that the military has turned to a civilian organization to recruit its ranks, as Dole drew members from ski patrollers, ski racers, ski instructors, mountaineers, outdoor guides, and other outdoorsmen. He required an application and letters of recommendation be sent to him in his New York office, which was funded by the Army. Once accepted, applicants received a letter from Dole telling them to report to Camp Hale near Leadville, Colorado, headquarters of the 10th, where



The NSP booth at the 10th Mountain Division Mountain Fest field day. Photo c/o Cal Goldsmith.

they trained for combat.

The 10th Mountain Division was activated on July 15, 1943, and served valiantly in World War II, most memorably scaling the heights of Riva Ridge at night to capture those forces and this key position, thereby allowing the assault and securing of Mount Belvedere by the 10th, a critical objective to the advancement of Allied forces in Italy.

The NSP and 10th are inextricably linked. The 10th realizes this too and recently established a Hall of Fame in their headquarters to celebrate its more famous members, including Bob Dole, the recently deceased U.S. Senator, General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and retired General Lloyd Austin, the current Secretary of Defense. The very first inductee to their Hall of Fame, however, was Dole.

With this history, I and Scott Launt, a Central New York Region patroller and member of the National Marketing Advisory Council, were thrilled to be invited to the 10th's Mountain Fest 2021 at Fort Drum in Watertown, New York. We were especially honored to be invited to attend the annual Gold Star Remembrance ceremony. This ceremony, presided over by commanding Major General Milford H. Beagle Jr. and Command Sergeant Major Mario O. Terenas, and attended by division leadership and numerous local and state politicians and other dignitaries, was an incredibly moving and emotional tribute to the fallen soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division and their surviving Gold Star families. The 10th had soldiers in combat throughout the Afghanistan War. All know the possibility of devastating loss is a part of being in the military, but it was very hard for me to look at these people

who have sacrificed so much. I couldn't help but reflect on my son's ongoing service in the Air Force. The leaders of the 10th embrace these families, and it was obvious how moved and enormously appreciative the families were.

After this ceremony, Launt and I were treated to a personal tour of division HQ with retired Colonel Sepp Scanlin, 10th Mountain Museum director, along with Master Sergeant Daniel Fields. What a proud history of service to the U.S. is on display there! We look forward to the opening of the new 10th Mountain Division Museum in February 2022.

The next day, we attended the 10th's Mountain Fest field day. We were joined by patrollers from the Watertown Ski Patrol in the CNY Region, by Matt Levinson from the Whiteface Ski Patrol, Eastern Division Historian John Beach, and NSP National Historian Rick Hamlin, among others. We all took part in the festivities at Division Hill to celebrate the 10th Mountain community in the festival-like atmosphere. At our booth, we distributed NSP swag and spread the story of our mutual DNA. It's not every day one can chat with the very impressive senior command of the 10th, Command Sergeant Major Terenas or Major General Beagle. Both expressed their heartfelt gratitude for our presence. We tried to explain that it was we who were truly grateful and honored to be there.

In the early afternoon we were whisked away by Fields to the 10th's Hall of Fame induction ceremonies. This was moving in a different way than the Gold Star remembrance. It was in celebration of outstanding 10th Mountain alumni, and I was struck by the extremely high caliber of men and women in our armed forces. There were retired officers and command sergeant majors in attendance, as well as the leadership of the 10th.

The late afternoon was capped by a capabilities demonstration called "10th Mountain Division Live," complete with Apache helicopters attacking and lowering howitzers and troops advancing in mock battle dressed in winter mountain whites. Presided over by General Beagle and CSM Terenas, attendees and dignitaries sat in bleachers to observe the field exercises, which were narrated and set to music both recorded and live. It was very well done and a real treat for us.



The statue across from 10th Mountain Division Headquarters. Photo by Cal Goldsmith.

In the months ahead, the NSP will engage in several events related to the 10th Mountain Division, including the "D-Series" competition, both at Fort Drum and the finals at Vail, Colorado. Fields and Launt will be speaking about the 10th at Powderfall, NSP's biennial conference, in April 2022. Also, there is the annual tribute to the 10th Mountain Division at Whiteface Mountain coordinated by Matt Levinson and the rededication of Minnie Dole's gravesite at St. John's Cemetery in Paul Smiths, New York, in spring 2022. This will be an exciting and compelling event that will likely be attended by VIPs from the 10th and the NSP, as well as local and state politicians and a strong contingent of patrollers. The grave rededication will also include the placement of a New York State official historic site plaque cast at an upstate New York foundry. This marker will be placed at the roadside indicating that this cemetery is the resting place of the founder of the NSP and the 10th Mountain Division. You'll be hearing more about this event as spring approaches.

As we move forward, the NSP will continue to celebrate and fortify our shared heritage with the 10th Mountain Division. It is a source of pride for us to be affiliated with "the toughest division in the Army."

**Cal Goldsmith**  
*Eastern Division Director*

**Scott Launt**  
*Labrador Mountain Ski Patrol, New York*

## PACIFIC NORTHWEST DIVISION

## Fergie's Forest



Alpentel patrol and area management celebrating with Fergie the naming of the run in his honor after sweep. Photo Shannon Gallagher.

Dr. Geoffrey Ferguson, M.D., has spent the last 35 years dedicated to helping people in the Alpentel valley of Washington. This three-sided canyon is tucked away on the north side of Snoqualmie Pass, Washington, — an area as beautiful as it can be brutal.

Dr. Ferguson is known to many as “Ferg” or “Fergie,” but no matter what you call him, he’ll answer with a friendly smile and a “Hey, bro!”

If there’s a serious accident on the ski hill, Fergie is probably on scene. He is often the one with the most experience and the one that others look to for guidance, but he stands behind the spotlight to shine it on others

An optimist might say he’s always at the right place at the right time, but if you asked Fergie, he’d laugh and tell you that he’s just a “shit magnet.” The reality, based on accounts from everyone who’s worked with him, is that he’s only a magnet because he’s hustling as hard as he can to respond and help the patient and the responding team.

Fergie graduated from the University of Washington School of Medicine in 1974 and has spent his professional career as a vascular and interventional radiology specialist. He completed the prerequisite medical training, now known as Outdoor Emergency Care (OEC), to become a ski patroller in 1988 and passed the class before the lead instructor of the course even realized he was a doctor.

You might ask how Fergie, a doctor, could

go through an emergency first aid class without his instructors knowing he was a doctor; the answer is humility and a mindset of continuous growth.

“It feels like this is him giving back to the world,” Summit at Snoqualmie Ski Patrol Director Rob Gibson says. “With everything that he does with patrol, with SPART (Ski Patrol and Rescue Team), his medical practice, photography, it is just tremendous what he does. We’re just a corner of his world and, fortunately for us, it seems to be an important one.”

When Fergie joined the Alpentel Ski Patrol in the late 1980s, all four base areas at Snoqualmie were separate ski areas with four separate patrols. Central was still known as Ski Acres, and East was still called its proper name, “Hyak.” When the resorts merged to become the Summit at Snoqualmie, the four different patrols also merged.

Fire chief of Snoqualmie Pass Fire and Rescue Jay Wiseman, who was a patroller at Alpentel during the merger, described the Summit as one area but very much separate in the way the patrols operated. One of Fergie’s first signature stamps on the area was developing a consistent system across the pass by coordinating the OEC refreshers, eliminating the overlap, and getting all the patrols growing together as one.

“He’s been a huge asset to me in overcoming every obstacle that’s come our way,” Wiseman says. “The community is growing, more people are traveling the highway, and

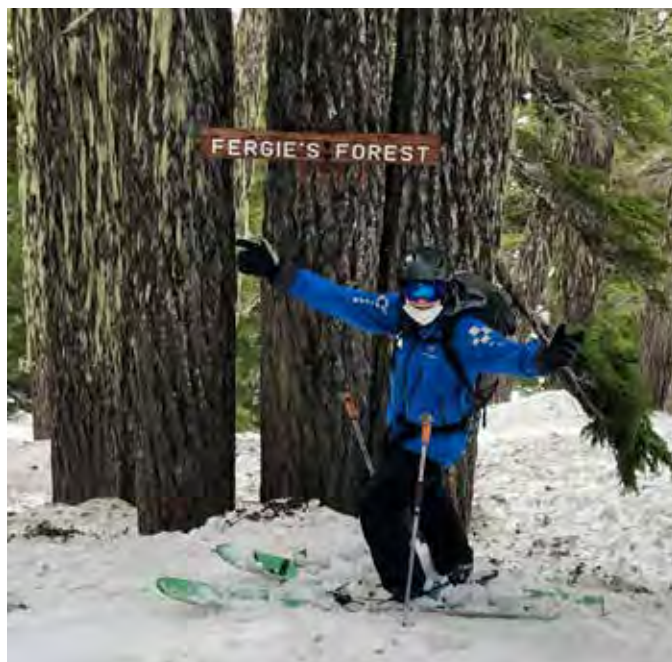
that just increases the need for emergency services. He joined at such an important time and continues to help tremendously by keeping the patrol and fire department working seamlessly together.”

Before every ski season begins, and when most people are getting their last bike riding or hiking in before snow blankets the Cascades, you can find Fergie up at one of the Summit’s first aid rooms preparing for the season ahead. Leading up to the 2020-21 ski season, Fergie would face his most difficult preseason challenge yet — developing a plan to keep guests, patrollers, and operational employees from getting sick during the COVID-19 pandemic and creating a response plan in case they did.

One of Fergie’s first steps was to join the conversation with the many local fire chiefs to stay in-tune with how fire departments were keeping their staff safe as he developed a safety plan for the ski area. When he presented the plan to an all-patrol meeting, he met everyone with patience and understanding as he slowly brought people who were on the fence back to patrol for another year.

By the time the Summit announced ski season was on, Fergie already had a kit of personal protective equipment ready for every patroller with KN95 masks, P100 masks and the people to fit them, protective gowns, and everything else a patroller would need when dealing with a sick patient. After growing frustrated with the amount of time it took for employees to receive COVID test results, Fergie brought on-site COVID testing to the mountain so that every employee would have access to a rapid test to prevent the spread of COVID and help keep the mountain operating.

Fergie had the equipment, the plan in place, and the team to carry it out. Most people would consider that a job well done and move on. Not Fergie. From his biweekly conversations with the local fire chiefs, he discovered the vaccine would become available for first responders and at the drop of a hat, he put all his energy into making a dose available for every patroller. He advocated for the patrol to be in the same class as first responders, built a relationship with the Snoqualmie Valley Hospital who administered the vaccine, and by the beginning of March 2021 every patroller who wanted a vaccine was fully vaccinated.



Fergie finding his run sign on last sweep of the year, end of day. Photo by Gerry Gallagher.



Fergie listening to his story being read at the bottom of the run at the Pettigrew Mountain Safety building after finding his run sign on sweep. Photo by Gerry Gallagher.

Keeping everyone safe during COVID is just one example of the dedication Fergie has put in for the more than 35 years that he's volunteered at the Summit, but the list of accomplishments extends far beyond the COVID era alone. In the span of those 35 years, Fergie has received an award from his peers 17 times, including "Outstanding First-Aid Room Patroller" and "Most Inspirational Patroller" for the 2020-21 season.

Fergie has helped doctors transition to first responders and developed average Joes into trained professionals, and he does it by being humble and relatable. After a major incident, he will host an incident debrief where he'll give recognition to the team who responded, along with a few things that "he" missed to make everyone better during the next event.

"He always has a way of guiding people down the path of the best patient care," says Alpentel patroller Tammy Ross. "The follow-through to educate and improve after the incident provides so much educational value for everyone, especially those on scene and even himself."

Along with developing the systems for care at the pass and reviewing chapters of several versions of OEC books before they've been published, he also has his fair share of ad-libbing to get the job done.

Mike Redman, who's patrolled at Alpentel almost since the area's inception, said his first time working with Fergie was nothing short of radical when a skier hooked a right at upper Gunmount toward Edelweiss Bowl and hit a tree. The skier was suffering from a serious spinal injury and still stuck in the tree when Mike and Fergie arrived. The steep terrain forced Redman to kick in below, which allowed Fergie to sit on Redman's head and shoulders to do an exam and extract the skier from the tree using a Kendrick Extrication Device.

Fergie has responded to hundreds, if not thousands, of calls at Alpentel Ski Area alone, and everyone has a story to tell. Wiseman recalls a skier fracturing his clavicle in Snake Dance and not letting anyone touch him before Fergie arrived. His calm demeanor was able to reassure the patient enough to get them out of an otherwise dicey situation. There's another time that Marc Sherman, a volunteer patroller at Alpentel, remembers crawling into a tree well in the lower part of Felsen with Fergie to realign and splint a knee injury before extracting the patient, making a difficult rescue seem routine.

After a full weekend, and, inevitably, right around the time the lifts close on a Sunday evening, you can almost count on an injured skier calling from somewhere in the Alpentel valley. Some of the more familiar

missions involve Kendall Peak, the Snow Lake Divide, and a 40-degree slope on the north side of Mount Snoqualmie known as "The Slot." It's a safe bet that Fergie, who's already spent the full weekend patrolling at Alpentel, will be one of the first to respond. Fergie's responded to hundreds of these calls, including a featured story in the book *Found: A Life of Mountain Rescue*, when Fergie and a team of volunteers pulled a skier with two broken legs and a laundry list of other life-threatening injuries out of The Slot and back over Mount Snoqualmie.

Aside from an incident debrief, you'd never know how involved he was in saving a patient's life unless you asked him, and even then he'd likely pass the accolades to the other members involved in the rescue.

Much like Polaris is the North Star that will always help you find your way, Fergie is Snoqualmie's beacon of direction who has guided patrollers for more than three decades. To recognize all that he has done and for what he'll continue to do, Fergie's legacy will forever be etched into Alpentel's history with a run named in his honor. The run, tucked under the entrance to Shot Six and next to the second "Danger Cliff" sign at the far end of Breakover, will forever be known as "Fergie's Forest."

Andrew Kollar  
Alpentel Ski Patrol, Washington

## PROFESSIONAL DIVISION

## Flight For Life Colorado SARCON back in person



Tom Wood demonstrates a transport device. Photo by Candace Horgan.



Martin Barnett demonstrating useful knots. Photo by Candace Horgan.



Loading a patient in a Flight For Life® Colorado helicopter. Photo by Candace Horgan.



The Friday medical scenario. Photo by Candace Horgan.



Setting up for technical rescue practice. Photo by Candace Horgan.



The Friday medical scenario. Photo by Candace Horgan.

The annual Flight For Life® Colorado Search and Rescue Conference, which attracts members of SAR teams and ski patrols across Colorado, was back to being held in-person at Colorado Mountain College in Breckenridge after being held virtually the previous year due to COVID-19 protocols.

COVID still affected the conference, however. Leading up to the event, the Planning Committee debated how best to keep everyone attending safe. Mandatory vaccination was considered, but ultimately the committee adopted a different approach. Thanks to Centura, the conference was provided with rapid COVID tests. Everyone attending had to take one the day they came, whether Friday or Saturday, and show designated faculty of the event a negative result from the test to be able to participate. The protocol was well-received, and no attendee tested positive. Attendees were still asked to wear masks while indoors, but many sessions were held outdoors.

The three-day conference was held over a gorgeous fall weekend at the end of September. The unseasonably warm temperatures made outdoor activities during the conference extra enjoyable. Friday's sessions included technical mountain rescue skills taught near Windy Point Campground and a medical scenario held at CMC with the opportunity to practice bringing a patient to a helicopter. The medical scenario included multiple patients that had been hit by rockfall, some needing extrication. The high-angle rescue session offered two different classes on rope rescue work and had nearly 80 participants.

Saturday offered multiple tracks throughout the day, including medical, technical, and air medical evacuation. The keynote speaker was Jerad Hoff of the Civil Air Patrol, who discussed the work of the Cell Phone Forensics Team in supporting over 2,500 requests for help in SAR missions and how the team can work with cellphone information to help find lost and injured parties in the backcountry. The medical sessions included airway management, abdominal injuries with compartment syndrome, fluid administration in the backcountry, and case reviews. The air rescue track included sessions on landing zone management and the use of the Barryvox Long Range receiver for helicopter assistance in avalanche rescue, and the technical included sessions on safety in search and rescue and improvised and traditional litter carries.

There were over 120 participants in the various sessions, and feedback forms showed that all sessions were greatly enjoyed.

Sunday brought the mock rescue scenario to a different location. In previous years, it has been held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area, but this year the leaders elected to run it near the town of Montezuma. This offered varied terrain for the participants to bring together all the information they had learned during the weekend.

Planning for the 2022 SARCON will begin in early February. For more information, email [editor@nsp.org](mailto:editor@nsp.org) or visit <https://www.centura.org/our-ecosystem/flight-for-life>.

Candace Horgan

## Dixie Region Name Change to High South Region

The National Ski Patrol and our region are focused on improving diversity and inclusiveness throughout all aspects of operations. The history of the Dixie Region will remain one of dignity and respect due to the many years of dedication given by patrollers toward development and growth over the decades. However, we are focused on removing barriers for recruitment, improving diversity, and being inclusive to all patrollers. As such, the time to rebrand our region is now.

With close proximity to many metropolitan areas, the need for recruitment is vital for our region to stay sustainable. The need to embrace and expand our footprint in building our patrols is imperative to provide the highest-quality services to all our guests and mountain management. Each patrol within the region had the opportunity to suggest names, hold discussion, and offer constructive feedback over the past year. We are proud to say leadership within the division and region, including all patrols, approved the name change unanimously. Below is an overview of the origin of

our new region name and describes how it encompasses our region's true nature, the High South.

In the mid-1960s, resorts such as Sapphire Valley, Hound's Ear, Wolf Laurel, Cataloochee, Ober Gatlinburg, and others began to expand, adding snow skiing to the South. Metro areas such as Atlanta; Columbia, South Carolina; Augusta, Georgia; Charlotte, North Carolina; Knoxville, Tennessee, and the rest of the foothills and the Piedmont areas began to take notice. Most ski areas are only three hours from many Southern cities, and families began to visit year-round and enjoy the mountains in the winter as well. The term High South was coined in the 1960s to refer to this Southern Appalachian/Smoky Mountains region. As such, our new region name reflects this historical precedent.

**Gordon Pettit, High South Region Director**

**Mel Whaley, High South Assistant Region Director**

## Beech Mountain Ski Patrol Base Named in Honor of Longtime Patroller Gil Adams

Gil Adams experienced a little bit of everything during his 50 years at Beech Mountain Ski Resort. The longtime ski patroller was honored recently when the resort named the newly remodeled ski patrol building after him.

Adams joined the National Ski Patrol in 1970 and spent his entire 50-year career at Beech Mountain. He took over the patrol director's position in 1982, a position he held for over 38 years until his retirement last ski season.

"I have had the distinct honor of patrolling with Gil for all of his 50 years. Some of my best ski days were spent with Gil Adams, from our first cup of coffee in the morning to making runs in all kinds of ski weather conditions," said Mike Ohlson. "Gil's true love was and continues to be skiing and ski patrolling, making the mountain safe for our customers, and taking care of the injured. A lot of people have come and gone in 50 years, but Gil has been here through the good and the bad, looking out for skier safety and taking care of the injured. He would always make a point to ski at least one run every day that the mountain was open. The naming of our patrol base is truly a testament to his service and commitment.

"About the same time Gil became a full-time patroller, he also became an employee of the resort and continued there until his retirement. Gil assumed many roles while working at Beech Mountain: snowmaker, snow reporter, carpenter, lift supervisor, and marketing director to name a few."

Ryan Costin, Beech Mountain Resort's general manager, was very appreciative of what all the ski patrol members have done for the resort, especially Gil, which he noted during the dedication ceremony.

"I have been extremely fortunate; Gil has been a mentor to me professionally and personally," Costin said. "Having the opportunity to be here and be able to give back a small part of what Gil gave to us has helped us continue on a path to a successful future. I want to thank all of the patrollers that are here today, without your commitment we wouldn't be able to do the type of improvements that we have been doing the last few years."

Costin recalled back to his earliest times working at the resort his family started. "I became the general manager here 13 years ago. I know at 25 years old, my name and not my experience got me this job. What I didn't know about ski area operations at that point in time was probably pretty large. But what I did know was that if I surrounded myself with people that knew more than I did, it would give us an opportunity to be successful. I asked Gil if he would move his office from the building behind us over to the administration building. I knew being around Gil and having the opportunity to spend as much time as I possibly could with this man would give me the opportunity in the future to hopefully continue on the path that he set out for us in the beginning. I got to spend a lot of time with Gil in the car going to or from North Carolina or Southeastern Ski Area Association meetings, depositions, courtrooms, and then of course here at the ski area on snow or in the office area."

Adams spoke briefly to the crowd and acknowledged just how much the resort had impacted his life. "Ryan Costin called me at work one day and told me what the plan was. I listened to him, and I was so honored, tears came rolling down the sides of my face," Adams said.

Adams said that his parents bought property on the mountain back when it first opened as a resort, and he was skiing on Beech Mountain the first year it opened.

"I am very honored to be here for the naming of this patrol building. I'm so thankful for all of those people that have shown up. Our ski patrol has been a family from way back," Adams said. "I am very honored to have my name put on this building. I am really glad to have been part of this group."

Costin and Richard Yercheck, then a member of the National Ski Patrol board of directors, each presented Adams with a plaque for his service to the ski patrol and the Beech Mountain community.

**Nathan Ham**

*High Country Press*

*Reprinted with permission from High Country Press*



## Appalachian Ski Patrol Honors Wounded Warriors



*Skiing the flag down.*



*Heroes on the Mountain group photo.*

Over the last six winter seasons (with the exception of winter 2021 due to COVID-19) the Appalachian Ski Patrol has held the annual Heroes on the Mountain event to honor U.S. military veteran wounded warriors. Each March, the patrol has hosted up to 88 wounded warriors, their family members, and “Battle Buddies” at Appalachian Ski Mountain in Blowing Rock, North Carolina. The event provides them with a unique weekend opportunity to enjoy the fun and excitement of skiing, snowboarding, and an overall winter sports experience.

Started in March 2013 by Appalachian Ski Patrol Director Joe Donadio, Heroes on the Mountain has been a highly anticipated and successful event each March. The initial idea was for Appalachian Ski Patrol members to raise funds throughout the season to be able to host the event free of charge for the attending wounded warriors. Additionally, Joe and his Heroes on the Mountain committee met with Appalachian Ski Mountain owners Grady and Reba Moretz, their son Brad, and daughter Brenda to obtain their assistance in hosting the event. The Moretz family generously offered the attending participants complimentary lift passes, ski and snowboard rental equipment, as well as rental winter sports clothing and apparel.

The French Swiss Ski College, resident at Appalachian Ski Mountain, also offered to provide complimentary ski and snowboard lessons to the attending wounded warriors. Many of them had never skied or snowboarded before or only had very basic skills, so being able to include the lessons was a key factor to the success of the event.

Perhaps the most important initial planning challenge was how to reach out to the veterans to honor each year at this event. Luckily the Fayetteville, North Carolina, Wounded Warrior Project Office Outreach Specialist (and wounded warrior himself) Bo McCalister gladly agreed to help. He was able to initially find 15 Wounded Warrior Project members who were eager to participate. Now as word of the event’s popularity has spread among the Wounded Warrior Project community, there are more than enough volunteers each year for the event.

Every year in the fall, Appalachian Ski Patrol members begin actively soliciting donations from individuals, local businesses, and organizations. Funds raised cover the cost of hotel rooms, meals, and event mementos for each attendee. The monies raised also pay the cost of a catered dinner party for the warriors at a local resort with live music, awards, and a valuable opportunity for the patrol to further enhance the overall event experience.

The annual event begins on Friday afternoon with the participating wounded warriors arriving at Appalachian Ski Mountain. There they are met by members of the ski patrol, who assist them with registration followed by a pizza dinner donated by local businesses. After eating, they are taken down to the rental department to get their skis, snowboards, boot, helmets, and ski apparel.

The event kicks off officially at 7:30 Saturday morning with the Appalachian Ski Patrol leading a military style Heroes on the Mountain welcome ceremony. This is held in front of the ski lodge

with the ski slopes in the background. The ceremony is designed to honor the service and sacrifice the wounded warriors have made for our nation. The wounded warriors and ski patrol members are lined up on the snow standing facing the lodge. On the upper deck of the lodge, the patrol director, event guest speaker, local and ski area VIPs, media reporters, and public are gathered for the ceremony. Also out on the snow are the Appalachian State University Army ROTC Color Guard members along with local first responders participating in the ceremony.

The opening welcome ceremony and comments are provided by Donadio, followed by presentation of the colors by the color guard. The guest speaker is then introduced. They have been former or retired veterans, several of whom were also wounded warriors, including a Vietnam veteran Silver Star and Purple Heart recipient.

After the guest speaker concludes their remarks, attention is directed to the top of the Appalachian Ski Mountain’s Big Apple ski slope directly in front of the lodge. At the summit, and carefully chosen for their flag skiing and snowboarding skills, 12 ski patrol members are all holding a large American flag. Local bagpiper Fox Kinsman, dressed in full Scottish regalia, begins playing as all attending become silent. At this moment, the patrol flag detail begins very slowly skiing the stretched out flag down the slope as the sound of the pipes echoes across the mountain in the cold, crisp winter air. It is a moving sight and a symbol of recognition to all those wounded warriors attending that their sacrifice and service to our nation is appreciated.

Upon the flag’s arrival at the bottom of the slope, a flag detail of local first responders carries the flag to the waiting fire department ladder truck. The flag is then attached to the fully extended ladder.

At this time, a local singer and member of the Appalachian Ski Mountain staff begins singing the national anthem as the flag is slowly raised to the top of the ladder and begins flying in the breeze. At the end of the national anthem, six single-engine RV-8 aircraft flown by Team Aerodynamics do a military-style formation flight over the ski area to complete the ceremony.

After the ceremony, the wounded warriors spend the rest of their day in ski and snowboard lessons as well as free skiing and boarding. Then they are treated to a Saturday evening catered recognition dinner featuring presentation of event mementos, fun awards, live music, and all around good camaraderie between the warriors and ski patrol members attending.

Over the last year, and taking advantage of the delay in hosting the event because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Heroes on the Mountain has become a fully incorporated nonprofit organization of the Appalachian Ski Patrol and has applied for official IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax exempt status. Appalachian Ski Patrol is now looking forward to being able to host the 8th annual Heroes on the Mountain event in March 2022.

**Chuck Rhodes**  
*Appalachian Ski Patrol, North Carolina*

# TIPS *from the* VET!

THERMAL IMAGING, INJURY, AND THE WORKING DOG

## USING TECHNOLOGY TO FIND INJURIES BEFORE THEY BECOME PROBLEMS

KIMBERLY HENNEMAN, DVM, DACVSMR (EQ, K9), DABT, FAAVA, CVA, CVC

**F**or over 20 years as a sports medicine veterinarian, not a day has gone by where I haven't sometimes wished a patient could talk to me and tell me where they hurt or what they were feeling. However, being a realist and knowing that I am never going to get that info verbally from most of my patients, I have looked long and hard for the tools to get my patients to speak to me in other ways. Then, several years ago, an equine surgeon friend showed me a tool just coming onto the medical market, a tool modified from military and house inspection uses. That tool was thermal imaging, which gives veterinarians the ability to measure reflected heat from a body.

Thermal imaging, the same type of colorful, tracking imagery seen in the Arnold Schwarzenegger film *Predator*, has been around for decades, but it didn't start becoming practical and affordable as a medical tool until the advent of digital technology. My old analog thermal camera had three fairly heavy and cumbersome components. The camera was separate and attached by a cable and had to be filled with liquid nitrogen, and images had to be taken off of a TV monitor screen with a separate camera. Today's cameras, like the one shown above, are about the size of a large flashlight or SLR camera, run off of a battery, hook up to wi-fi, and store hundreds of detailed, digital images. Additionally, with the correct software, temperature ranges can be maximized to increase detail and definition. I guess a bit of an added benefit is that I can also find studs in the walls and water leaks.

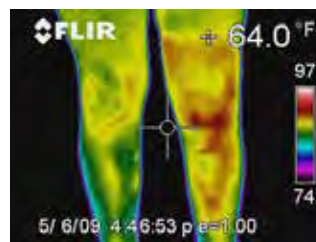
So, what does this mean to avalanche dog handlers? It means that we now have a practical, small, efficient, fairly inexpensive tool that fits in a suitcase and can recharge off my car battery to monitor soft tissue stress, function, and injury in working dogs. Typically in veterinary medicine, our imaging diagnostic tools only evaluate structure (X-rays and ultrasound) and then mostly only that of bone with X-rays. Currently, the use of musculoskeletal ultrasound in the canine sports medicine world is still in its infancy and not as developed as in the equine world. Thermal research in the equine world has shown thermal imaging to be very effective in not only identifying injuries before they get to a crisis stage,



A FLIR camera typical of the high-resolution thermal cameras being used in animals.

but also injuries not obvious to the examiner (due to masking by another injury). Not too much has been done yet with thermal imaging in the performance dog, but the field is a blank slate with unlimited potential and possibilities. The insulating ability of hair can sometimes be more of a problem, but you can still get information from the legs, face, and ears.

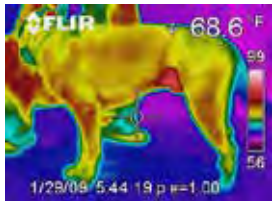
Thermal imaging can give performance and working dog handlers and veterinarians who want to do more than just treat a lame dog with an anti-inflammatory a great new tool. This tool can not only diagnose an existing soft tissue injury but can also find suspicious areas that could mean an injury brewing in the early stages. Smokejumpers have a saying, "Every fire starts small." That means it is easier to deal with a problem in the initial stages. That can be a bit difficult with the high-drive dog because many won't tell us that they have an issue cooking until they are already three-legged or can't move their necks or backs. Thermal imaging, either as a regular part of maintenance or even when they are 'ADR' (ain't doin' right), can provide significant clues. The abnormal temperature hints of cool or warm may not tell me exactly what the problem is, but it can certainly tell me where to start looking in my physical exam. This will not only save me time and the owner money (by not having to X-ray everything), it can also point out compensation stress points that can be addressed with massage, laser, chiropractic, acupuncture, changes in work, or physical therapy. With a thermography camera, a veterinarian can easily and painlessly scan the entire dog within minutes, providing information regarding the whole body.



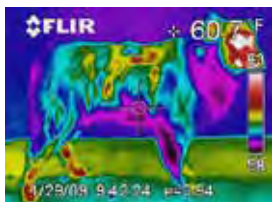
The author's knees three months after a ski-induced ACL injury. (Hint: the left leg, the one with more color, is the surgical leg.)

Dealing with the whole dog not only can make sure that you are really getting to the injury efficiently, it can also ensure that any compensations that could affect performance or work endurance later are addressed before they have a chance to cause problems. In the hands of someone who really understands movement mechanics and structure relationships, thermal imaging

monitoring after an injury can also help tailor rehab (PT) and training regimes to make sure that tissues aren't being stressed too early and that conditioning is moving at a pace appropriate for that particular animal's recovery. Several years ago when I had an ACL repaired, I used my thermal imaging regularly to monitor the recovery of my injured leg and make sure I wasn't overstressing the good one.



This is the thermal image for a normal dog after a day of training in a harness on the slopes.



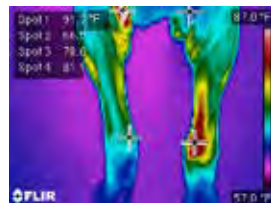
This dog still shows rub marks from training in its harness from the day before.

I have used the camera to help evaluate at SAR and avalanche dog training sessions. Several years ago at a Wasatch Backcountry Rescue training school, I had the chance to monitor several dogs over time (before and after a day of helicopter lifts and back-country rescue training). We found several dogs with harness rubs; only one harness (a design being beta-tested) didn't impinge or rub on the dog for the entire day. Although those dogs didn't show overt problems with their activities associated with searching and digging out a victim, on palpation several dogs tensed and showed discomfort in those areas. No doubt, eventually those repetitive stress areas, left unaddressed, could one day lead to problems — and maybe not obvious ones such as problems in an opposite compensating leg, in the neck, or referred pain to the back. Additionally, I have come across some interesting findings, plain and simply because we were willing to be open-minded and look for a cause when we have had an odd thermal scan. As my equine thermal colleague likes to say, "It shows you what you didn't know you didn't know."

So, what does thermal imaging in the working dog look like? My practice includes not only avalanche rescue dogs but also dogs who do agility, fly-ball, obedience, herding, police/patrol, explosives/drug detection, wildland search and rescue, and mushing/skijoring, so we see all kinds of issues. These photos are a mix

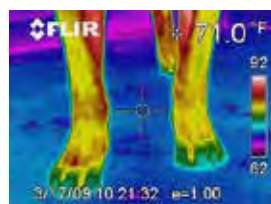
of dogs from various disciplines. Here is how to interpret the images.

On the right is a scale that is the temperature range that I am using for that scan. Above the upper temp and the image will be white; below the lower temp and the image will be black. I can adjust this during a scan to give me the best possible detail in the color range that I like to see. (Everyone is a bit different on their color differences.) The crosshair in the middle is the temperature shown in the upper right (or left, depending on the camera). On the camera itself or within the software, I can move the crosshair to measure specific areas as well as the range.



A wildland SAR dog showing strain of the right Achilles tendon where it attaches at the hock.

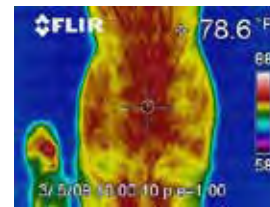
This is a wildland SAR dog with a pulled Achilles tendon. Notice the red spot (indicating a warmer area) at the attachment of the right Achilles tendon to the hock. The presenting complaint was that the dog's working endurance started to diminish. There was no lameness or overt decrease in the dog's drive. An ultrasound later demonstrated some separation of the fibers as well as damage to the bursa.



Moderate carpalitis (inflammation of the wrist) in a young sled dog in training.

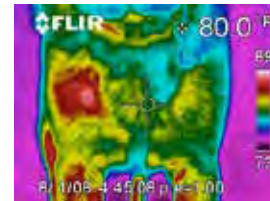
Here is the right wrist and toes in a young sled dog (sprint) two days after a race. This was a maintenance check to keep on top of any training stresses. Note the areas of deeper red in the wrist and toes of the right front (left side of the image). We used this information to more closely examine the wrist and foot as well as discuss why this dog might be stressing that limb. The dog was adjusted chiropractically with additional changes to his booties and stretching regimen.

This is scan taken from above onto a dog's spine (head is at the top and tail at the bottom) during a pre-race check-in. The musher had concerns with a sudden onset of "a loose tug line" (the dog not pulling). This is a wheel dog from a distance team that completed the Iditarod the previous year. She had just gotten new harnesses with a slightly different design; notice



Spinal view of a sled dog showing asymmetric and uneven heat patterns.

some crookedness issues.



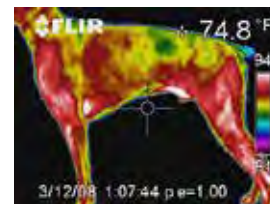
Avalanche dog with heat (from inflammation) from poor harness fit over the right shoulder (left side of image).



The harness causing the problems in Image 8.

the heat on right ribcage (and musher's inside ball of left foot!). This was thought to be a harness fit problem combined with some crookedness issues.

Here is an avalanche dog with a harness problem. It is pretty hard to miss the hot area across the front of the right shoulder, then note how the harness is fitting. I consider this a MAJOR problem, especially in a dog that might have to be backcountry searching in deep or uneven snow for the day. There was no overt clinical lameness yet, but I guarantee that there WILL be if this situation is not fixed.



The green spot on this dog's dorsal flank is from a bruise under the skin.

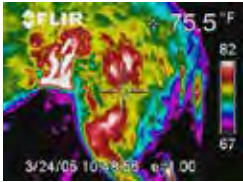
Heat is not the only abnormality that can show up. Cool areas are also signs of problems. Areas can become cold if there is pain (nerve reflexes will constrict blood vessels in the area) or if there is edema or bruising, since this fluid is now removed from the flow and heating of blood as it passes through the body. In this photo, you can see a cooler, green area in this agility dog's lower back; the culprit was thought to be bruising from somebody slamming while playing with other dogs.

Here was one of those "Dang, what the heck is that?" moments. I was in a swarm of lure coursing whippets trying to work our way through to the dog in question. His buddy didn't want to leave his side, so I just scanned them as is (initially). Imagine my surprise to see the difference in the overall body temps in two dogs that had been doing the same thing in the same environment for the past day. We ran them around the house a bit, and the temperature



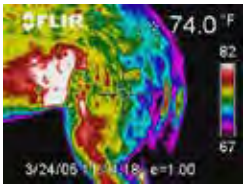
Two whippets side-by-side demonstrate differences in body temperatures.

difference remained the same. I suggested having the cooler (and older) dog looked at. Blood work showed that dog to have hypothyroidism.



Heat and inflammation in the left hind limb of an aging avalanche dog before acupuncture.

Often, I use thermal imaging to monitor acupuncture treatment. Sometimes I see a very quick change and sometimes I don't. Here are two pictures, before and after (within 30 minutes of each other) acupuncture treatment for hip problems in an aging avalanche dog (the photos are time-marked).



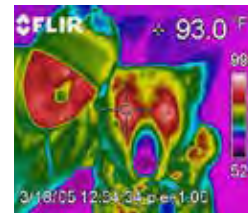
Thirty minutes later, the same dog after acupuncture.

The warmer area around the left hip and down toward the stifle has cooled down after the acupuncture treatment. Note that even though this dog has a thicker hair coat, the images still provide a great deal of information.

Hopefully, avalanche dog handlers can see what potential this imaging has in working dogs, especially for theirs. Not only can certain injuries be identified faster, it can also be an excellent device to monitor conditioning, equipment uses, and return from injury. You don't have to be a veterinarian to acquire and use a thermal imaging camera, although you would need a veterinarian's help in interpreting images if you are a layperson. In the continental U.S., the main supplier for thermal cameras and veterinary/animal training is Vetel Diagnostics in San Luis, Obispo, California ([www.vetel diagnostics.com](http://www.vetel diagnostics.com)). Camera costs are coming down as technology improves. Currently, only SLR-sized cameras have the resolution needed for evaluating canine musculoskeletal injuries; however, the current FLIR One Pro made for iPhones and Androids may soon reach the point of usability in animals.

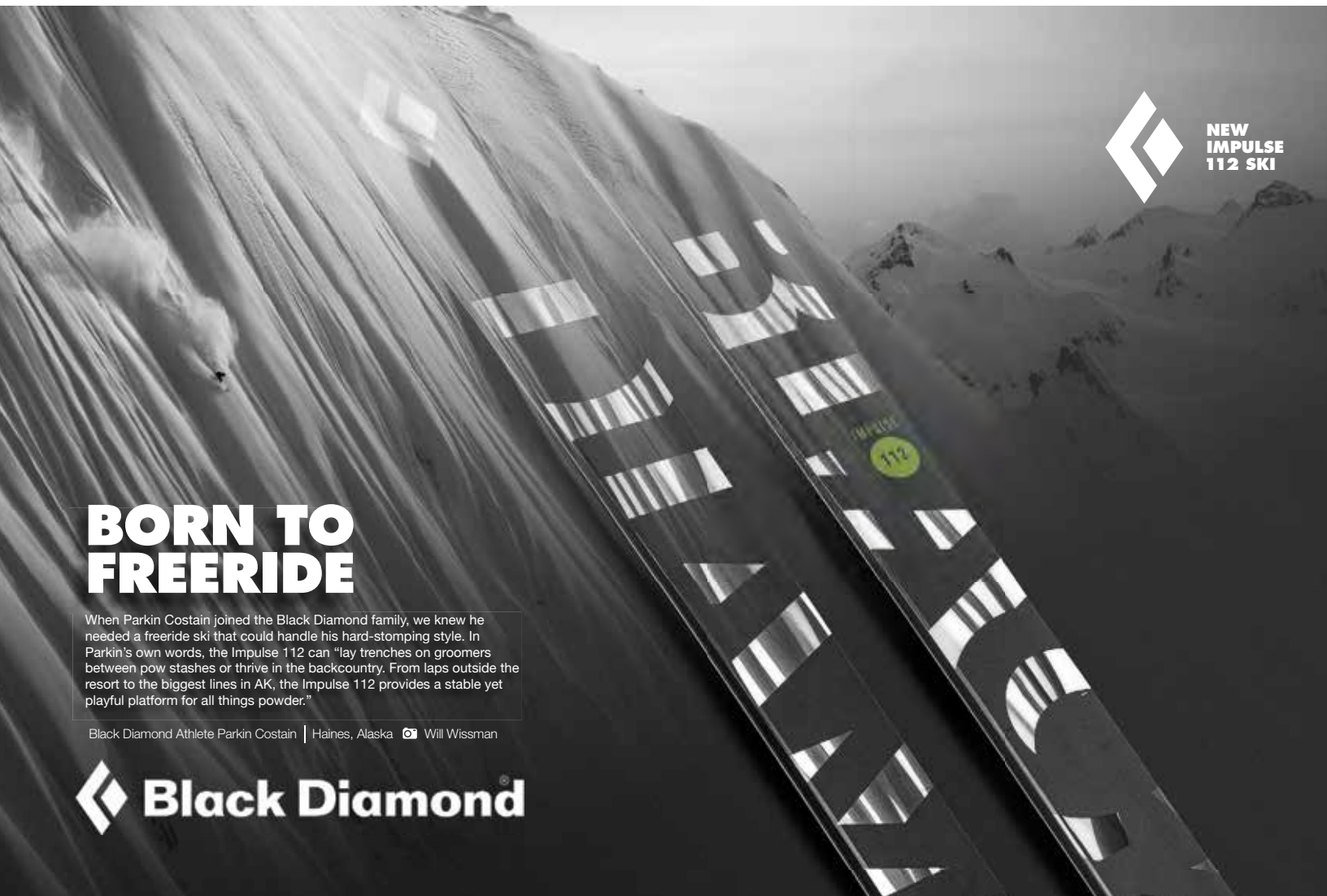


The FLIR One Pro smartphone thermal camera



An avalanche dog handler and his pal.

Last, but not least I sometimes use the camera just to have fun and remember that it is all about the team, just from a slightly different perspective. +



NEW  
IMPULSE  
112 SKI

## BORN TO FREERIDE

When Parkin Costain joined the Black Diamond family, we knew he needed a freeride ski that could handle his hard-stomping style. In Parkin's own words, the Impulse 112 can "lay trenches on groomers between pow stashes or thrive in the backcountry. From laps outside the resort to the biggest lines in AK, the Impulse 112 provides a stable yet playful platform for all things powder."

Black Diamond Athlete Parkin Costain | Haines, Alaska | Will Wissman

 **Black Diamond**

# FROM THE *Director's* CHAIR

ANDREW SULLIVAN, ARCTIC VALLEY  
PATROL DIRECTOR

BY ERYKA THORLEY

PHOTOS BY ALAN HECKART



Carving turns while patrolling.

Andy Sullivan is the kind of guy you want to show up when you're in a bind. Flat tire, broken equipment, serious ski injury, he's ready to help. When no one else at Arctic Valley wanted to continue as the ski patrol director, he stepped up. That was 17 years ago and still, today, no one else has offered to take over his duties. Despite his serious responsibility at a steep, mom and pop mountain, Andy loves to ski and is proud to lead his crew of dedicated volunteers in rugged Alaska.

**SPM: When does your season normally start?**

**Andy:** A couple of years we couldn't open the area until late December, early January. This year, we opened two weeks ago. We had a soft opening for members-only on November 13. I had to step away to teach an OEC course on the 20th and 21st, and that's when the mountain opened fully to the public.

**SPM: How long have you been patrolling? And how long as the director at Arctic Valley?**

**Andy:** I've been patrolling for 20 seasons. This year is my 21st season. I've been the director for 17 years. I came on and it was a "you're it." Nobody else wanted to be patrol director, and I became that guy. The people that I thought would take over, didn't. The one guy who was patrol director previously didn't want it. It was



Andy Sullivan

interesting. I would love to be dethroned, but it hasn't yet happened. We are an entirely volunteer patrol and are only open on the weekends.

**SPM: Did you move up the ranks at Arctic Valley or start at a different ski resort?**

**Andy:** As far as ski patrolling, my experience has been at Arctic Valley. I didn't join NSP until 1999 when I was a candidate. I had thought about it in years past and especially when I was living in Maine, but my car wasn't a high-quality car that I could count on so it just didn't happen. I was also going to college at the University of Maine, and it wouldn't

have worked out.

**SPM: How did you get started skiing?**

**Andy:** I started skiing as a kid in Massachusetts, not really in Massachusetts but my parents like to ski and once we got to a certain age, they would take us. We had to learn how to ski in our backyard, which was a sloping backyard to a cliff. If we couldn't stop, we were going to go off that cliff. We had a nicely sloped backyard and had to be able to do turns. Once we could do turns, we could go to Belknap (now Gunstock) in Gilford, New Hampshire. The other place we went to a lot was King Ridge. It was an all-day trip, three hours up and

three hours back.

**SPM: How did you start patrolling?**

**Andy:** I actually thought about patrolling at the University of Maine, but it just wouldn't work out. When I moved to Alaska with my wife, who is from here, Arctic Valley was pretty close to where we live. When our two girls were young, I would go up and ski with them at Arctic Valley. At that time, one of the patrollers came up to me and told me that they were looking for patrollers. I was actually working as a volunteer to help with the lift program. It's a small area, and they needed volunteers to make up the difference between the paid and nonpaid people. During lunch breaks, they needed people to sit up at the top of the lift and make sure that people were OK. I got a lot of free skiing out of it and then was approached by a patroller.

**SPM: Where did you grow up?**

**Andy:** I lived outside of Boston until I was 11 and then moved to the Midwest. I didn't like living in the Midwest and have now been in Alaska more than anywhere else. I don't think I've ever grown up. One brother still lives in Massachusetts, another brother in Vermont, and a sister lives in Tennessee. They don't ski.

**SPM: What is the history of the Denali Ski Patrol?**

**Andy:** The Denali Ski Patrol started as an offshoot of the Anchorage Ski Club. They had a rope tow in downtown Anchorage. When the military put the road into Arctic Valley, that's when it was initially explored for a ski area. There is a Cold War missile base up in the valley, and our lodge is at almost 2,500 feet; everything above the resort is treeless, it's arctic tundra. When the military put in the road, they automatically thought about putting in a ski area. This was back in the 1940s. My parents knew how to ski and used to ski in New Hampshire. My dad was a World War II vet. The real alpine skiers of the 10th Mountain Division were in Colorado learning how to do that for World War II. They didn't know how to ski in Alaska because there weren't any military bases there until the end of World War II. After the war, they started working on the Cold War defense plan and they turned Arctic Valley into a radar and Nike site. A Nike is an intercontinental ballistic missile that would try and shoot down whatever came close to Anchorage.



*Ski cutting a slope.*

**SPM: What is the thing that keeps you coming back year after year to patrol?**

**Andy:** I'm retired. I don't have a life, but I love to ski, and this patrol has changed quite a bit since I've joined it. When I joined, we had five to eight people who we could count on patrolling. Now we have 12 radios, and on some weekends they are all gone. I think it's the camaraderie. I love to work with people who enjoy skiing like I do. I'm a stickler for technique, and it's one of those things that I impress upon people who are skiing with me and skiing with patrol. If you're going to wear a patrol uniform and a cross, it's nice that you can ski and ski well too. We're not an easy hill. We have a rope tow for 5 and under skiers. We have two chairlifts and a T-bar. The T-bar is tough for snowboarders. Years ago when there weren't many snowboarders around, we didn't have many beginners.

**SPM: What type of avalanche mitigation program do you have?**

**Andy:** I have a full snow safety team. I participate sometimes, but most of the time it's the rest of the team. All of us have Level 2 avalanche certificates or higher. We can't use explosives anymore as that went out with 9/11, so we do all our mitigation with ski cutting. We have three major routes that we have to run every morning before the public is on the mountain. We have a winch cat for some of the area, and that helps mitigate those slopes.

**SPM: Ski cutting can be tricky given the conditions. Do you ever wish you had access to explosives?**

**Andy:** We've set off some avalanches. We know the area, so that is the difference with going in the backcountry and ski cutting on your own. We know what will go and what won't go based on history. That's where we have a great advantage.

I tell people that if they want to ski out of bounds, which is possible, we really don't want them to return into the area because we don't know when and where they'll come back. If the road is closed, you don't want people stranded. You can ski out of bounds, but you can't ski back into the resort.

We'll ski cut every weekend. If we're concerned, we'll go up midweek and check things out as well. The best thing about our area and most areas is that if it's prone to release, take the energy out of it and ski the heck out of it. That's better than grooming it. We have a huge section of the mountain area that can't be groomed because it's too steep. If we ski it, it's fantastic all season.

**SPM: There are many things that make your mountain unique. What are a few of the major things? Can you describe Arctic Valley for those that may not be familiar with it?**

**Andy:** I think it's unique in many ways because it's a small area compared to Alyeska, the premier ski area in south

central Alaska. We have a small parking lot and a 7-mile dirt road to get to the lodge. We're family oriented. At least until COVID, we'd have a lot of couples that would come up with their kids and take turns skiing. We only have three parking lots to accommodate folks who come up. With COVID, we have a limited number of tickets that we'll sell each day.

**SPM: How many day tickets do you sell?**

**Andy:** I want to say that it's somewhere around 250 per day.

**SPM: How many patrollers do you have?**

**Andy:** I have around 30 volunteer patrollers.

**SPM: How many new patrollers do you have each year?**

**Andy:** This year I took on four new patrollers who transferred in from out of state. I have two patrollers who transferred in state between last year and this year. It's odd that way. I've had years

where nobody came in, and last year I had three candidates and they all came to patrol.

**SPM: How do you train your rookies?**

**Andy:** There are several areas in the country that have trees and you can't see the entire area. Our resort, from the peaks you can see the entire area. We have some run names, and that's our first focus for the rookies, to learn these names. Because we're so steep, you can't run a snowmachine up to somebody. Sleds are our main source of transportation from any incident area to the lodge and the parking lot. Last year with COVID, we didn't take anybody to our aid room. We skied them right to their car. For rookie training, we want them to know the area, know the names of runs. If they are not a proficient skier, that's priority number two. We're a steep area. It's not a big resort where we can send our skiers down to the intermediate area. We can't do that.

**SPM: Who's the longest running patroller on your mountain? What's your**





Patrollers working one of the snow safety routes on the mountain.

**average years of experience on your patrol?**

**Andy:** There was an article about him in *Ski Patrol Magazine*, Dave Hendrickson. He is going to turn 91 this year. He is not skiing right now, but he really wants to make this his 70th year on ski patrol. When I started at the ski area, he was still very much skiing. In the last five years, he hasn't been spending many hours on the hill. This would be his 70th year on ski patrol. He started on ski patrol before I was born.

**SPM: Do you have a young adult patrol program?**

**Andy:** No, we don't. We used to. We used to have some high school kids that came up, but that was before my time. Most of those high school kids were sons or daughters of other patrollers.

**SPM: How else do you engage with the local community around Arctic Valley?**

**Andy:** In summer, there are concerts and events. Running events, underneath our Chair 2 there is a cabin that is our bump station in the winter. In the summer, it can be rented like a U.S. Forest Service cabin and is booked solid all summer long. Denali is visible from the top of Chair 2, as are all the mountain ranges to the west of Anchorage. The cabin is part of the top of the chairlift. There is an incinerator toilet and basic amenities.

**SPM: What is your annual snowfall?**

**Andy:** We have large wind events that take it away. I've tested snow 8 feet in some areas and 2 feet in others. It varies because of the terrain. The military has a station where they check winter snowfall because there is a creek that flows down from the saddle. They take an annual measurement in the spring, and it's usually always around 200 inches of snow.

**SPM: When is typically the best time to ski at your resort?**

**Andy:** Early winter, like now, is outstanding because we haven't had any super wind events. February to April is outstanding because we don't have wind events but can have some wicked great dumps in March. February is when the light comes back, so we can ski a full day again. December we're in the single digits and the snow is light and soft. The wind really takes our snow away.

**SPM: What is the most significant call or challenging call that your patrol has recently handled?**

**Andy:** Our lifts are not brand-new. Whenever there is a breakdown in a lift, it's challenging. In fact, we had a breakdown last weekend and one of the lifts derailed. The patrol had to evacuate people from the lift. That hasn't happened in years. These lifts were installed in the '60s, '70s, and '80s. They are prone to

wind events.

**SPM: What is the required medical certification and experience for your paid and volunteer patrollers?**

**Andy:** Outdoor Emergency Care for all our patrollers. I have two doctors, two nurses, and a couple paramedics, but everyone is OEC or higher trained.

**SPM: Are your doctors able to function at their highest-level training level?**

**Andy:** If they want to. It's their call to treat as they see fit, but they are not hill doctors and don't need to assume that responsibility. It's up to them. The mantra for ski patrol is if you have an accident, get them to higher care as soon as possible. We're only 7 miles away from Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER), which is the military post. They can be at the top of the mountain in less than minutes. Life Flight will get people to Anchorage faster if that's where they need to go.

**SPM: What are some of the traditions on your patrol?**

**Andy:** We used to have a tradition called "the boot and the pot." It was instigated years ago, and there were 100 people in the Denali Ski Patrol at that time. Every month the boot and the pot were awarded. The boot was for something that you did well, and the pot was a chamber pot lined with fur. We still have the boot and pot but don't do it anymore. Now the patrol



Beautiful views while out on the mountain.

is smaller, and it went away. We don't do a beer buy. It's not because we don't like beer. We're not paid as patrollers, and the ski club can't pay us as they're a nonprofit, so instead we receive tokens and they can buy food for lunch and for tickets to bring other people up and maybe buy a draft beer. The idea of somebody buying beer for somebody else is not an issue. I do still know where the boot is and where the pot is.

**SPM: You mentioned this idea of membership? What does this mean?**

**Andy:** Because Anchorage Ski Club is a nonprofit, it's important that we have a lot of members. The ski area applies for grants, so having a large number of members on the Anchorage Ski Club is paramount. We are limited by the parking lot as far as how many people come to visit. If we haven't had snow in a week or two, our numbers will be way down. With the recent snow, we'll be busy and could fill up.

**SPM: How much time is spent on medical calls for your patrol? How many calls do you typically run in a year?**

**Andy:** Well, that's kind of nice. A high number is close to 12 medical calls in a season. We're not open seven days a week, but 12 has been the highest that we've responded to in the past few years. Last year, there were only seven.

**SPM: How do you train for that?**

**Andy:** I think part of that is that our terrain does not attract beginners.

**SPM: Do you have summer operations at Arctic Valley?**

**Andy:** As I mentioned, there are weddings and a mountain run. There was a band concert this summer. These events don't necessarily require ski patrol unless they are going to run a lift. Then they need someone trained in lift evac. Many lifties are pretrained, but it's important to have someone up there who knows the ins and outs of belaying someone out of a chair if



Riding an old-style chair at Arctic Valley.



Sporting the patches on the jacket.



A patroller enjoys the day.

you have to.

**SPM:** *What are your plans to manage the pandemic this year from a patrol and mountain operations perspective?*

**Andy:** The lodge is open now. Last year it was closed, but you could go in and use the bathroom. This may change. It's always fluid. We still don't allow folks to come in and change their clothes; that has to happen in the parking lot.

**SPM:** *What else is unique or special about Arctic Valley and its patrol that we have not yet discussed?*

**Andy:** I think it's great in terms of the locals. People who come from out of state to ski Alaska are not necessarily going to come to Arctic Valley unless they know somebody. Now and then I see someone on the slopes that I don't know, but most of the skiers I know and they know their skillset. I try to get my patrollers to notice people that may not know how to ski so they can help them. The T-bar often has first-timers ride all the way to the top, and then they are scared and can't function. It's the same as the chairlift. Once you're up there, you're stuck. If you haven't been there before, it can be dramatic. You may get a courtesy ride or not. There is no easy way down. +



Team spirit before a day of patrolling at Arctic Valley.

# AN INTERVIEW WITH **Mike Balk**



Mike Balk, kneeling, with a group before a Powderfall Nordic/Backcountry session. Photo by Candace Horgan.

## NEW NORDIC/BACKCOUNTRY PROGRAM DIRECTOR OUTLINES APPROACH

BY CANDACE HORGAN

Mike Balk has been a patroller for 14 years and in that time has taken on several leadership roles. In fall 2021, he took on his biggest to date when he was named the new NSP National Nordic/Backcountry Program director.

Balk has a good relationship with outgoing Nordic/Backcountry Program Director Rick Shandler, as he was Shandler's assistant director from 2017-20, and he hopes to build on Shandler's efforts. He also served as Eastern Division Mountain Travel and Rescue supervisor and understands well the overlap between the Nordic/Backcountry, MTR, and Avalanche programs, having helped coordinate the AMN (Avalanche, MTR, and Nordic) instructor refresher for Eastern Division since 2015. He also has both alpine and Nordic Senior and is currently working toward Nordic Master.

Balk is hoping to build a basic set of skills that all Nordic patrollers should have, regardless of what area of the country they patrol in, as he recognizes that Nordic/Backcountry patrolling is very different in each division.

One challenge that Balk recognizes is that due to the limitations of the database used by NSP, there is no accurate count of the number of Nordic patrollers there are in NSP. He intends to focus on ways to get a more accurate estimate of NSP Nordic patrollers and use that information to better communicate about the program to its intended audience.

**SPM:** Well, let's start by introducing you to other members of the NSP. Why don't you tell me a little bit about your patrolling background, how long you've been patrolling, how you got involved in it, where you've patrolled, etc.?

**Mike:** OK. Well, I've been patrolling since 2007 in eastern Pennsylvania. I was a patroller at Camelback.

**SPM:** I remember Camelback. I skied there once when I was little.

**Mike:** Oh, yeah? You grew up out here?

**SPM:** Yes, I grew up in New York, actually, and my grandparents lived in Wilkes-Barre, so I used to go see them all the time. And once I went to Camelback. I actually lost a rental ski there skiing down Marcy's or Macy's or something.

**Mike:** Marjie's (laughs).

**SPM:** This is probably around 1980, 1981, somewhere in there. The ski came off and took off down the hill.

**Mike:** I'm sure they found it eventually. So, Camelback is where I started, and I was there until a couple of years ago. I'm also a Nordic patroller.

**SPM:** Valley Forge?

“I got involved in MTR and Avalanche and Nordic, and they’re just so much more than just going downhill.”

**Mike:** I am on their list, but my primary is High Point in New Jersey.

**SPM:** *Oh, OK, so tell me a little bit about that. I mean, is it a straight-up Nordic patrol that works at a Nordic ski area, or is it a Nordic backcountry patrol?*

**Mike:** It is a groomed facility, and they do primarily in-track. There is a concession there for rentals. High Point was the Eastern Division Nordic patrol of the year, and I can’t remember if we were first or second for national. Yeah, I think we were second national.

**SPM:** *I think so, too.*

**Mike:** So, very close to being the nation’s best Nordic patrol. Woo-hoo! I’ve been there for a few years, and that is when I learned that there is more than just one mountain and skiing downhill. I got involved in MTR and Avalanche and Nordic, and they’re just so much more than just going downhill. I was a Boy Scout, and it felt like the continuation of the fun stuff the Boy Scouts did, playing outside, camping, things like that.

**SPM:** *Well, did you have much of a Nordic backcountry or mountaineering background before that? Like just recreationally?*

**Mike:** Not a lot, no. I had been Nordic skiing before, so it was an easy transition to becoming a Nordic patroller. I had already had my MTR class, and so I knew the basics of the skills needed.

**SPM:** *Had you done much climbing or anything like technical mountaineering before?*

**Mike:** No, and I still don’t. It’s not necessarily part of most backcountry. Yeah, I haven’t done that; I do know that a lot of backcountry people do the technical stuff, but I have not.

**SPM:** *Had you done much ski touring outside of Nordic areas, and is that something you’re starting to do more of?*

**Mike:** So, the backcountry side of things I don’t have a lot of experience. I have not done ski tours other than non-groomed trails in parks, national parks or state parks that have trails that they just let you ski on kind of thing. That’s technically backcountry, and I have skied in one of the state parks in New York, the Adirondacks, but again, they’re hiking trails in the summer, so it’s nothing on the technical side of things. No ropes needed, no ice axe needed, no stuff like that.

**SPM:** *Well, I know you did at least one sort of interesting day at Snowbird, right? In 2019, because I took a photo of you at the start of a day. You had a rope in your hand.*

**Mike:** Yes, I did. That was an awesome photo, and it’s my photo on the NSP site now.

**SPM:** *So, tell me how you got involved. Didn’t you become Eastern Division Nordic/Backcountry advisor or something before national?*

**Mike:** I was the Eastern Division MTR supervisor, and I’ve been the assistant to the national Nordic/Backcountry guy, Rick Shandler, for several years, and I’ve worked with Eastern Division Nordic Supervisor Phil Galka for a number of years. I filled in when the

MTR position was going vacant, so I filled in there, and then the MTR and Nordic/Backcountry national positions both opened up, and I applied for both of those. So, that’s how I came to abandon early the MTR position (laughs).

**SPM:** *How did you get to know Rick? I mean, he’s in Pennsylvania too, right? Because isn’t he Valley Forge?*

**Mike:** Yep.

**SPM:** *Did you know him just through patrolling gatherings, because you’re on different patrols?*

**Mike:** Yes, I met him through Avalanche. In fact, my first instructorship was Avalanche. I became an Avalanche instructor and helped out the Eastern Division side of things for a few years, and that’s where I met Rick. Then we’ve just crossed paths a zillion times, so now we’re just friends.

**SPM:** *So, Nordic/Backcountry seems to me, it’s got some passionate adherents, but it’s a small group in NSP, I think. Is that something that you would agree with?*

**Mike:** Many of the people are very passionate, yes. I would question how small, because I could tell you that there’s 10,000 of us, and you would not be able to prove me wrong because there is no way of telling how many people are Nordic patrollers in the National Ski Patrol.

**SPM:** *Really?*

**Mike:** Really. I do not know how big my audience is. We are working on that, but the database is such that you cannot query it to say how many Nordic people are registered on a Nordic patrol. Many people are secondary at a Nordic, and the database is such that it doesn’t work that way. So we are, best guess, more than a thousand out of the 30,000, but there’s no real way of knowing the absolute number at this point.

**SPM:** *So, I think Rick did a lot to raise the profile in his term as Nordic/Backcountry Program director, and Nordic Master was obviously a big start as well. Do you have Nordic Master, or is that something you’re currently pursuing?*

**Mike:** I am a Nordic Master candidate. So, my application is in, but I have not fulfilled all the requirements yet.

**SPM:** *So, tell me what your vision is for the program. You know, I think Rick laid a good foundation for you, but you always have to move forward. So, what are some of the goals you have for the program?*

**Mike:** Well, our current issue, besides finding out how many of us there are, is updating the manuals. We have brought Nordic/Backcountry into our fold because we have a lot of similarities in that we are not alpine, but there are a lot of differences between the two of us. Our gear is very different, or it can be very different. Our skiing skills, how we access the area, the areas that we ski in, can be very different, but underlying that is our ability to travel to find an injured person and do eXtended Outdoor Emergency Care (XOEC), because we don’t have a full trauma pack coming to us within two minutes. We might have to be out there for hours or overnight. So, a lot of our



Mike Balk at Powderfall. Photo by Candace Horgan.

basic skills of overnighting, of taking care of an injured person for a long period of time, working with just what we carry, we all have that in common, but our skiing skills to the Outdoor Emergency Transportation part can vary widely based on where in the country we are. Are we sidecountry? Are we truly backcountry where you have to go uphill first to access the runs? So, we are looking at following the example of Professional Ski Instructors of America and creating two tracks: a Nordic track and a backcountry track, and trying to better define the skills needed to be N/BC patrollers and the skills needed to be an instructor for those skills.

**SPM:** *OK, so tell me about what it's like to patrol at exclusively a Nordic cross-country area with defined trails and stuff. I assume you're doing the skate ski bit or the long skinny skis with the bar binding, the New Nordic Norm maybe, since the 75-millimeter thing has gone by the wayside, at least for cross-country skiing.*

**Mike:** You would think that, yet I have 75mm three-pin bindings. I do have some NNN, New Nordic Norm, as well. So, there's a wide variety, and that's just for the skinny skis. I also have that for my telemark skis. The broad range of equipment is an issue. I also have bindings that I use my alpine boots in that I can free the heel and

then lock it in.

**SPM:** *What do you have, the Marker Baron or the Kingpin or the Fritschi?*

**Mike:** Marker Barons. I don't know if that's technically AT.

**SPM:** *Oh yes, Marker Barons are considered AT.*

**Mike:** So, that way I can use my alpine boots. I can skin up and ski alpine down.

**SPM:** *So, getting back to patrolling in a Nordic area. I mean, the terrain is flat and kind of rolling a little bit usually in my experience. I haven't done too much of it. I never patrolled it. I've done a little bit of cross-country in-area skiing. I would imagine if somebody were to get hurt somewhere, it might prove challenging to get them out because you don't have gravity as your friend to help with the toboggan and coming downhill. How do you extricate somebody like that?*

**Mike:** Well, hopefully there's a motorized vehicle of some kind that can bring a sled and haul them back. If they're off-trail, we obviously have to get them back on trail, and sometimes the snowmobile or

“I’ve heard people describe Nordic skiing as terror at 4 miles an hour, because your heel doesn’t latch, you can’t do a hockey stop.”

the quad are broken and we have to bring them in. So, one skill that most Nordic/Backcountry people have is being able to build a toboggan out of skis and tarp and rope. We would use the patient’s skis, put them on that with some padding, tie them in, make a burrito of them with a tarp, and haul them that way.

**SPM:** *I would imagine that would be quite the challenge.*

**Mike:** It is, yes. So, if you imagine backcountry, you have potentially deep snow that you’re pulling this through. You have cross-slope, so you need three or four people on this. If you’re going across the slope, everybody’s uphill keeping them from sliding down and moving forward kind of thing. So that’s one of the Nordic/Backcountry skills that we have, is how to do the extrication. That would be the “T” of Ski and Toboggan, the toboggan. Hopefully, we have radios, so you call for help, which again, they aren’t going to be there within two minutes, to help in whatever need we have, either first aid or for transport. In winter, the days are short, the slopes are not lit, so we normally close around four o’clock, and at that time when everybody is supposed to have brought their skis back in and there’s still a car in the parking lot, then we do the search and rescue kind of stuff, try and figure out where they are, are they injured or are they just lost? Did they just not realize how slow their skiing was on cross-country? We get a lot of people who come and have skied alpine either one or many times, and they think, “Oh, this should be easy, it’s flat here.” I’ve heard people describe Nordic skiing as terror at 4 miles an hour; because your heel doesn’t latch, you can’t do a hockey stop. Many of the skis don’t have metal edges, and even what for any alpine skier is a bunny slope, it can be very different when you don’t have the skill and the knowledge of how to ski that way. So, a lot of what we do is also show people how to get up, help them up, tell them the best places to ski, because we have green, blue, and black slopes, which most people are familiar with. If you are a beginner, you should stay on those green slopes, which, hopefully, are flatter. Nothing in Pennsylvania or New Jersey is truly flat, and High Point is at the top of a mountain, so it has some steepness to it. Certain areas, those black trails, some are pretty steep.

**SPM:** *So, it seems like there are definitely some integration opportunities for Nordic/Backcountry with some of the other programs, like MTR and Avalanche. I think there’s some overlap in the skills. Would you agree with that? And have you reached out to the other new program directors to see what their goals are to kind of work together to grow your programs?*

**Mike:** Absolutely. We have a pretty good working relationship with the program directors and definitely on the supervisory side of things. We definitely have a lot of overlaps, especially with MTR. Some places, like the Central Division, have no need for Avalanche, which also makes it difficult for them to become Nordic Seniors, because right now, Avalanche is required, but it’s impossible for them to get avalanche training without traveling thousands of miles. So, we’re going to be looking into that as well coming up here, once we get our basic patroller documentation done.

**SPM:** *I mean, obviously, I think you just touched on it. It seems like the skillset is definitely different, say, in someplace like the Rockies or the Pacific Northwest versus the East Coast. So, what*

*do you do as far as creating a set of standards that will help the patrol directors to guide their patrollers in terms of achieving the skills they need to become effective Nordic patrollers, Nordic backcountry patrollers?*

**Mike:** We’re working on that (laughs). That’s part of the reason we’re redoing the documentation, because bringing in the backcountry people, there’s a lot of stuff in there that they need, but there’s a lot of stuff they don’t need. The V1, V2 skiing technique, you don’t need in the backcountry, and you definitely can’t do it with skins on. Well, you might be able to, but it won’t be effective. So, that’s what we’re working on, trying to get that better developed and separated out and show where the overlaps are and separate out the things that are different. We will have a core set of skills, much like alpine where I can ski pretty much any slope, but if I go out West to someplace that does avalanche mitigation and throws dynamite, I am not qualified for that. I can do specialized things that are unique to each resort or location, but I have to receive specific training for that location. It’s a skill that some people need, but it’s not part of basic patroller. We’re going to find those things that all Nordic and backcountry people need, and then if a resort requires something specific or a specific location requires an additional skill, those will be shown as optional/additional resort-based skills, the same way that alpine does.

**SPM:** *Are you going to be attending Powderfall? Is there going to be any sort of Nordic/Backcountry Program track at all this year out in Breckenridge?*

**Mike:** I am planning on being there. We are going to do a similar program to what we did last time where we will prep people for what they need to take with them, then we will go someplace off trail where we need to skin to get to the location and set up a few activity stations. I’m not sure exactly which stations we will do this year, and last time I checked, the course was full. We did three stations last time. One was an avalanche scenario. One was anchors, building anchors for low-angle rescue, and another was shelter building. So, that’s what we did last time, and it will be something like that where we’ll have some stations and people rotate through, and with a tour to get there and a tour to get back before the lifts close.

**SPM:** *Is there anything else you want to share with SPM readers about Nordic/Backcountry and what you plan to be working on and what you can do for them?*

**Mike:** So, a lot of people are dual. They might be only registered as alpine, but a lot of alpine places have Nordic facilities. I would encourage the patrol to set up an additional Nordic patrol and have those people that are helping out at the Nordic area register there as a secondary so that we can help better define who our clientele, who the NSP’s clientele is, and have better communication with the people that need the communication. Right now, there’s a lot of people that are only registered as alpine, and if I send something to everyone registered as Nordic, they wouldn’t get it. Breckenridge, for instance, has a Breckenridge Nordic, but when they need first aid, they just call the alpine people and they get somebody from the alpine place to help out. +

# 2021 NATIONAL OUTSTANDING

## AWARDS WINNERS

BY CANDACE HORGAN

**A**fter COVID-19 abruptly ended many resorts' ski seasons in spring 2020, there was considerable nervous energy in the ski industry as fall 2020 came. After all, COVID was surging again, and the question of whether and how there would be a ski season was in flux.

Thanks in part to the efforts of ski patrols across the ski industry, the 2020-21 ski season was a complete success. It was the fifth-best season on record, with 50 million skier visits recorded. A record number went to visit ski areas in the Pacific Northwest, while the Rocky Mountain region recorded its second-best season ever.

In a press release from the National Ski Areas Association, Kelly Pawlak praised the efforts areas made to keep visitors safe.

"What a year it has been. From utter uncertainty to a top 10 season in terms of participation — it shows the wide spectrum that our industry bridged this year," said Kelly Pawlak, NSAA President and CEO. "We are proud of the collaborative adoption of COVID-19 best practices that all ski areas implemented and diligently followed from opening to closing day. Americans yearned for safe outdoor recreation, and ski areas across the country delivered.

"We are very appreciative of the support and cooperation of our customers, and the tenacious and diligent work of our staff, the combination of which resulted in a successful season," Pawlak said.

Ski areas were open for an average of 112 days in the 2020-21 season, and most remained open for their normal operating season. COVID-19 still had a say in how resorts managed guests, with some setting skier capacity limits. Other limitations included advance purchase requirements for lift tickets and rentals. Some areas also eliminated group lessons.

Perhaps the biggest change was when people skied, as midweek

visits accounted for 48% of total visits, a 27% increase from the previous season.

With the news of the Omicron variant, as well as case increases during the holiday season, the pandemic is likely to affect the coming season as well.

Whatever challenges ski areas face, patrollers will be ready to help the resorts have successful seasons, just as they did last season.

The 2021 National Outstanding Awards winners and runners-up represent five of the NSP's 10 divisions. Another two divisions had active awards programs last year, with multiple Yellow Merit Star Awards in those divisions. Congratulations to every patroller honored for their work last season.

Each division nominates three judges to vote on the awards. The judges view anonymous nominations, and each one is scored by three different judges based on the criteria for the award. Each judge sends a summary of the points they assign to the nominees in each category, and the results are then tallied.

All winners of the Outstanding Awards receive either a Gold Unit Citation for patrols in the Outstanding Large Alpine Patrol, Outstanding Small Alpine Patrol, Outstanding Bike Patrol, and Outstanding Nordic Patrol categories, or a Gold Merit Star for the winners of patroller awards. The runners-up receive either a Silver Unit Citation or Silver Merit Star.

Lastly, there were no submissions for National Outstanding Bike Patroller for the 2020-21 season. Please remember that new category when preparing awards nominations for the coming 2021-22 season.



Pine Knob Ski Patrol

## National Outstanding Large Alpine Patrol

**Pine Knob**

**Division: Central**

**Year Activated: 1962**

**Total Patrollers: 144**

**Total Lifts: 12**

The Pine Knob Ski Patrol is all about sharing its experience and skills with other patrols in the Eastern Michigan Region and Central Division. A significant percentage of the patrollers at Pine Knob are instructors in Outdoor Emergency Care and Outdoor Emergency Transportation. Many are also Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) instructors.

Among the events they have taught in the Eastern Michigan Region are OET Evaluation Quality Assurance, OET Senior Toboggan, Ski Trainers Workshops, and OEC Evaluation QA. They have taught multiple Toboggan Enhancement Seminars and Snowsports Enhancement Seminars. At the division level, the instructors have taught at Women's Program clinics, Ski Trainers Workshops, chair evacuation seminars, and a last-chance OEC refresher held each November for patrollers in the division who missed their patrol's OEC refresher.

In addition to OEC, the Pine Knob Ski Patrol can draw on a broad medical base, as they have two members who are physicians and many more who are physician assistants, nurse practitioners,

registered nurses, and EMTs. Two members of the patrol authored a chapter in the sixth edition of *Outdoor Emergency Care: A Patroller's Guide to Medical Care*. Members of the patrol have also served on the OEC test writing group and the OEC6 Test Bank Review Committee.

"We are thrilled that Pine Knob Ski Patrol was awarded the 2021 National Outstanding Large Alpine Patrol," said Pine Knob Ski Patrol Director Derek Werner. "Clearly, this prestigious award would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of each and every one of our patrollers. As patrol director, I am truly honored to be associated with such a high-caliber patrol, and receiving this award at this moment in time feels especially meaningful considering all the challenges brought on by the COVID pandemic."

Leadership comes naturally to the members of this patrol, as 21% hold National Appointment Numbers. Over a third are Senior, while six hold Certified. A fifth of the patrol also holds a dual registration with a bike patrol. Several of the bike patrollers served on the NSP Bike Task Force, helping create the category of bike hosts and integrating International Mountain Bicycling Association patrols into NSP.

Outside of NSP, the patrol is very active in local events. They helped plan and execute the annual Ski Carnival, a very popular event at Pine Knob for the local ski and ride community that is the busiest

day of the year at the hill. They also organized and choreographed Pine Knob's annual New Year's Eve Torchlight Parade.

Eight members of the patrol are members of the county's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and have volunteered at multiple disaster training events. The patrol also has a relationship with the Department of Homeland Security and coordinated the largest ever mass casualty drill in Michigan, a terrorist attack drill that included federal, state, and local medical and law enforcement personnel. The relationship with Homeland Security helped the patrol during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the department advocated with the state for patrollers to be eligible for COVID vaccinations during the 1B wave.

The patrol has also provided medical support to high school mountain bike races and a bike marathon.

Two of the patrol's members worked with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to get NSP patrollers and hosts recognized as new membership categories in the state database and to get OEC recognized as a first responder training certification. This paid dividends for the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, as members of the patrol worked as volunteers at COVID vaccination sites to help look for adverse reactions in people who received the vaccine.



Great Falls Ski Patrol

**RUNNER-UP:** Great Falls Ski Patrol, of the Northern Division, received a Silver Unit Citation as the runner-up for National Outstanding Large Alpine Patrol.

*Side Note:* When another nearby patrol had difficulty holding an annual OEC refresher, the Great Falls Ski Patrol stepped up and welcomed them. After several years of doing this, the other patrol

*elected to have all their patrollers attend the Great Falls OEC refresher, with one commenting that the visiting patrol doesn't tech many accidents at their hill and that the Great Falls scenarios are hands-on and very realistic. The Great Falls Ski Patrol also involved the high school drama department in the OEC refresher, getting students to be patients and purchasing day passes for the students as a thank you for their assistance.*

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**National Outstanding Small Alpine Patrol**  
**Otsego**  
 Division: Central  
 Year Activated: 1953  
 Total Patrollers: 24  
 Total Lifts: 5

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In terms of progressing to the upper echelons of patrolling, the Otsego Ski Patrol is doing well, as 11 of the 24



Otsego Ski Patrol



Antelope Butte Ski Patrol

patrollers have achieved Senior, two have achieved Certified, and one has achieved Nordic Master.

“What an honor and a privilege it is to be the recipient of the National Outstanding Small Alpine Patrol,” said Otsego Ski Patrol Director Mary Gaffney. “I am very proud of all 24 Otsego ski patrollers who volunteer at the Otsego Resort in Gaylord, Michigan. It was our first year together as a patrol. It’s an amazing feeling being Outstanding. Thank you, all.”

Members of the patrol have also served in Northern Michigan Region and Central Division leadership positions, including two Section 2 chiefs, region treasurer, region refresher registration coordinator, division Avalanche and Mountain Travel and Rescue administrator, and division Senior advisor. One member also served on the NSP board of directors.

Four members of the patrol have PSIA Level 1 instructor certification, two have Level 2, and one has Level 3. There is also an American Association of Snowboard instructors (AASI) Level 1 and Level 2 instructor on the patrol.

Their ability to rebound from challenges is evidenced that when 13 members of the patrol retired, they quickly added 11 new patrol candidates and brought them up to speed. The other challenge came

from the change in operations; the area used to be a private resort but recently opened to the public.

**RUNNER-UP: Antelope Butte Ski Patrol, of the Northern Division, received a Silver Unit Citation as the runner-up for National Outstanding Small Alpine Patrol.**

*Side Note: The Antelope Butte Ski Patrol provided the first avalanche beacon park in the area for local backcountry skiers, snowmobilers, and search and rescue team members. Since the park’s establishment, it has been used by a region avalanche group and multiple other groups to teach avalanche awareness to the community. This is all the more impressive since the patrol’s ski area was shuttered for 15 years before being reopened in fall 2018, requiring the patrol to rebuild from scratch.*

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**National Outstanding Administrative Patroller**  
**Daryl Whitcher**  
**Patrol: Dodge Ridge**  
**Division: Far West**

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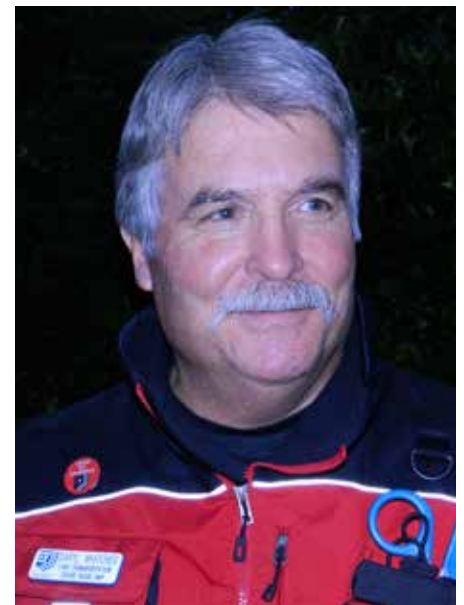
As Far West Division OET supervisor, every season Daryl Whitcher travels up to 650 miles from home to support resorts and patrols with OET training. He also attends OET events in other

divisions and Powderfall to learn more best practices for OET.

On his patrol, he has updated how instructors track candidate progression by adding digital live documents that can be shared and updated to communicate how the candidates are doing and what they need to work on to improve. This allows for a variety of teaching techniques to be employed, bettering the candidate learning process.

Several years ago, Whitcher realized that OET refreshers were the only time most patrollers received toboggan training. He changed the refresher from being a basic skills day to an OET enhancement seminar. Each year, he and the OET instructors communicate on what “new” skill to focus on. Three years ago, for instance, they focused on tail-roping, as they realized many resorts don’t run toboggans with tail ropes and patrollers don’t get to practice that skill very often.

“Safety first” is the mantra Whitcher brings to his teaching. At the start of an event, he considers safety and risk mitigation to get the instructors focused on running the event safely. He mentors the Far West Division OET instructor core throughout the season on safety and on OET skills, ensuring that all candidates get the most out of the training.



Daryl Whitcher

Additionally, he holds short OET clinics regularly so that patrols can create more toboggan classes to keep their patrollers on top of their training.

Outside of NSP, Whitcher is a member of the local rodeo association, serving as president in recent years. He also serves every year at a large bike racing event, bringing his OEC skills to the event.

“I am a simply a product of my environment, and fortunately that environment has exposed me to many, many outstanding patrollers in my career — from all over the country — and their effect on me has been profound. I am humbled to be able to walk in their footsteps,” said Whitcher.



Craig Johnson

**RUNNER-UP: Craig Johnson, of the Wild Mountain Ski Patrol in the Central Division, received a Silver Merit Star as the runner-up for National Outstanding Administrative Patroller.**

*Side Note: Craig Johnson has been a big booster of his patrol's OET program. He has recruited members of the patrol to be instructors, increasing the OET instructors of the patrol from four to nine. He has helped the OET instructors learn to coach patrollers and improve their skiing ability by establishing a solid patrol standard, which has also led to the recruiting of candidates with better skiing/snowboarding skills. His connection with the area's ski instructors has also led to the instructors being*

*integrated into candidate training and OET refreshers.*



Debbi Satterlee

**National Outstanding Alpine Patroller  
Debbi Satterlee  
Patrol: West Mountain  
Division: Eastern**

The West Mountain Ski Patrol has found itself in crisis in recent years, with the future of a volunteer patrol in doubt. Recruitment was not keeping pace with the attrition, and growing race programs were creating conflict with the patrol, as the race program participants seemed to view trail closed signs as optional.

Recognizing these challenges, Debbi Satterlee created outreach programs with the local skier programs and assumed the role of mountain liaison to build on the patrol's relationship with mountain management. To improve recruitment, she started by having an immediate call to interested skiers, followed by a ski-along day and the opportunity to participate in any on-hill trainings. She also instituted an OET-first training policy and the ability for candidates to walk on in the fall to reduce the possibility of candidates losing interest over the summer. Her efforts have resulted in increased retention and recruitment, as the patrol recently added 16 new patrollers.

Satterlee also made it a point to reach out

to potential women patrollers, contacting local EMTs, coaches, and parents. Five years ago, the patrol had only five women on a much larger roster, but headed into this year, Satterlee's efforts have raised the number of women to 17, approximately 40% of the patrol.

Uniforms were another issue, as patrollers had to purchase their own, and some found the cost prohibitive. Satterlee reached out to a patrol director at a large Western resort to take that patrol's gently used jackets and vests off their hands and get them to some of the younger and paid patrol members of her patrol who had trouble purchasing uniforms.

However, Satterlee has promoted the patrol well to mountain management and was recently able to get management to purchase medical supplies for the patrol for the first time. She also arranged for the race team to get two new toboggans. These and other changes have been a huge morale boost for the patrol.

One area Satterlee recognized was weak was in training, as West Mountain patrollers typically did their patrol training at other mountains. Satterlee decided to change this by becoming an OEC instructor and rebuilding the training model. The patrol's 2020 OEC class had participants from other mountains, rather than the other way around. In 2020, she ran an OEC challenge for nurses and EMTs to bring them onto the patrol quickly. Satterlee also became a PSIA instructor and is working toward getting her OET instructor cert.

Through all these challenges, Satterlee has remained humble. She was offered the



Ian Doremus

patrol director position multiple times, but has always turned it down, as she thinks becoming director might hinder her efforts.

**RUNNER-UP: Ian Doremus, of the Willamette Pass Ski Patrol in the Pacific Northwest Division, received a Silver Merit Star as the runner-up for National Outstanding Alpine Patroller.**

*Side Note: In more than half of his 14 years patrolling, Ian Doremus has served as a member of his patrol's board of directors, acting as a key advisor to the patrol director in his role as patrol communications manager. Once during the previous four seasons, the ski area was only able to partially open for a single weekend, but Doremus was active in keeping members of the patrol engaged and connected, and he spent over 165 hours that season training patrol members.*

"I've always enjoyed giving back to the sport I have come to love; I do this to help not only other patrollers, but our many guests at the resorts we serve," said Dennison. "I am both humbled and honored to be recognized by my patrol, region, division, and now nationally. Thank you to all who have believed in me through my years of patrolling. It's a family I enjoy being part of."

She has recently taken her OEC expertise to the Far West Division as its OEC supervisor. She oversees the training and implementation of the OEC Program requirements for over 1,500 patrollers, including the introduction of OEC6 to these patrollers. She oversees quality assurance for over 100 OEC courses annually, including OEC instructor certification events. She personally attended over 40 OEC events in the division, travelling over 1,000 miles, and averages over 100 hours of volunteer work in the division outside her home patrol duties.

She has also brought OEC to organizations outside the NSP, recently getting the National Motorcycle Patrol (NMP) certified in OEC. NMP is an all-volunteer nonprofit that offers course first aid at motorcycle racing events, from club to international events. Learn more about the NMP at [www.motorcyclepatrol.org](http://www.motorcyclepatrol.org).

**RUNNER-UP: Kathee Tyo, of the Bristol Mountain Ski Patrol in the Eastern Division, received a Silver Merit Star as the runner-up for National Outstanding Patroller.**

*Side Note: A nurse who has worked in a local emergency department with both adult and pediatric patients, Kathee Tyo has proven a valuable addition to the aid room team at a busy resort that had 469 patient contacts in the 2019-20 season. With her experience, which includes earning a master's in healthcare leadership and emergency management, Tyo stepped up to take on the role of aid room supply manager. She approached the patrol director about conducting a full inventory of aid room supplies, noting items that were showing wear and age and arranging for repair or ordering of new items for those that could not be fixed.*



Sue Dennison

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### National Outstanding Patroller

Sue Dennison  
Patrol: Sugar Bowl  
Division: Far West

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At her ski area, Sue Dennison serves as duty patrol leader. In that role, she works to set a high bar for care in the aid room, holding everyone to a high standard. She is frequently praised by the area's paid patrollers for her expertise in OEC, something she passes on as an OEC instructor, which she achieved in 2012.



Kathee Tyo



David Olsen

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### National Outstanding Paid Patroller

David Olsen  
Patrol: Jack Frost  
Division: Eastern

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Every year starting in April, David Olsen sets up new candidates with an online OEC course and then monitors each candidate's progress. He creates a 50-question midterm so candidates can measure how they are doing with knowledge retention. He also sets up the

training schedule for hands-on sessions and recruits instructors to be at those sessions.

After OEC, Olsen moves on to OET, mentoring candidates to become successful and monitoring instructors. At the start of each season, Olsen meets with all OET instructors and requests input from them on how to make the trainings better. He then assigns an instructor to be in charge of each candidate class, as well as the Toboggan refresher, Senior OET training, and skills enhancement course.

The enhancement courses are very popular and include skills like “Ski the Bumps,” “Ski the Steeps,” “Ski the Glades,” “Quiet Upper Body,” “Toboggans in the Bumps,” etc. The courses are open to all skill levels.

During the pandemic, Olsen fit-tested all members of the patrol for N95 masks. He also introduced COVID prevention protocols that were being used by a local ambulance squad.

Olsen created and maintains social media accounts for the patrol on both Instagram and Facebook, which help with public relations and recruitment.

As part of the management team, Olsen helps the patrol adjust to and adapt any resort management changes. He also attends most of the line officers’ meetings in the region to bring back information to the patrol.

Outside of NSP, Olsen is a volunteer with an urban ambulance squad, which helps to keep his OEC skills sharp. He also volunteers his time to offer medical services at many sporting events, including a Super Bowl.

“I am humbled to receive such an honor,” said Olsen. “As an OEC and OET instructor, I take the most pride in helping my fellow patrollers achieve their goals and be recognized for their efforts. Thank you, NSP. I am truly lucky to be part of such an amazing family.”

**RUNNER-UP: Brian Ogilvie, of the Dodge Ridge National Ski Patrol in the Far West Division, received a Silver Merit Star as the runner-up for National Outstanding Paid Patroller.**

*Side Note: As a flight medic, Brian Ogilvie brings a lot to his local patrol’s OEC training. He has also been integral to implementing county EMS protocols*



Brian Ogilvie

*for both the paid and volunteer patrols at the mountain, stressing the similarities and differences between EMS protocols and OEC guidelines. He also brings his experiences from being both a ground and flight medic to OEC trainings, enriching the OEC training at the patrol.*

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**National Outstanding Bike Patrol**  
Lookout Pass Hiawatha Trail  
Division: Pacific Northwest  
Year Activated: 2017  
Total Patrollers: 62  
Miles Patrolled: 15

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Lookout Pass Hiawatha Trail Bike Patrol was one of the first bike patrols in the nation to register with NSP, which it did in 2017. The patrol had, however, operated as an ad hoc patrol for several years prior to that. In that first season, the patrol had nine members, but it has been actively growing and currently has 62 members.

That growth has been mandated in part by growing use of the trail the patrol works. In 2019, there were 60,000 ticketed riders; that increased to 69,000 a year later. The typical season lasts 115 days, and the patrol finds itself stretched at times to cover all the operating days. Realizing this, the patrol instituted an active recruitment program, recruiting members from ski areas all around the area.

“Our Hiawatha Trail Bike Patrol is extremely humbled and simultaneously honored to receive NSP’s highest award, National Outstanding Bike Patrol!” said patrol director Denny Burt. “Our mission is to continue to grow our bike patrol with highly trained NSP members that in turn offer our 69k-plus bike enthusiast visitors the highest level of care possible. Our trail with 10 tunnels and seven sky high trestles has received many national awards and the title of ‘crown jewel’ of trails in many publications, but this highest award from our NSP leadership is the most meaningful of all to our individual bike patrol members serving the trail. Thank you all for this Outstanding Bike Patrol Award at



Lookout Pass Hiawatha Trail Bike Patrol



American River Bike Patrol

the national level and the honor bestowed upon us. Please consider coming to ride our trail with us this next season!”

The patrol also created a bike host unit to help meet its obligations. This unit was also one of the first in the country to register with NSP.

To help speed uphill response times to incidents, two of the patrol’s leaders each acquired a Level 1 e-assist bike, and quicker response times were immediately noted.

To showcase the patrol to the public it serves, leadership designed and arranged delivery of a custom bike jersey for all patrollers and hosts. Personalized magnetic name tags were also provided by the patrol for all the patrollers and hosts.

Members of the patrol also participate with a local ski patrol in a ski swap to help raise funds for training and supplies.

Of the patrol’s members, 17 hold Senior certification, one is Certified, 10 hold National Appointment Numbers, and one has received a Leadership Commendation Appointment. Members of the patrol have served as Inland Empire Region director and region OEC and OET administrator.

**Runner-Up: American River Bike Patrol, of the Far West Division, received a Silver Unit Citation as the runner-up for National Outstanding Bike Patrol.**

***Side Note:** With COVID-19 restrictions challenging the patrol’s recruitment and training, the American River Bike Patrol created a COVID Safe Social Interaction Criteria, which allowed it to hold three Outdoor First Care in-person training sessions. These criteria were subsequently adopted by the patrol’s region to ensure that all the region patrols could safely hold training events. As part of the criteria, everyone had to answer and sign a COVID prescreening form, then have*

*their temperature taken at registration. Candidates also had to bring a housemate to be their patient in the training.*

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**National Outstanding Nordic Patrol**  
**Willamette Backcountry**  
**Division: Pacific Northwest**  
**Year Activated: 1986**  
**Total Patrollers: 30**  
**Miles Patrolled: 80**

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Based out of a rustic log cabin on U.S. Forest Service land, the Willamette Backcountry Patrol enjoys a wonderful relationship with the USFS, which built the patrol’s headquarters in 1983. The cabin is outfitted with a generator for electricity and skis in water to supply the hut every weekend. The patrol offers the public complimentary hot chocolate, coffee, tea, and sometimes baked goods. This interaction also allows the patrol to assess the gear of its guests and offer education on clothing and abilities to ensure a good outing.

The patrol is composed of 16 Nordic patrollers and 13 alumni who are very active with the patrol. Four members of the patrol are Senior, and four have received National Appointment Numbers. Two members are Nordic instructor trainers, two are Backcountry instructor trainers, and one is a Mountain Travel and Rescue instructor trainer, and they are very active with teaching in the Oregon Region and the Pacific Northwest



Willamette Backcountry Patrol

Division. They also have five new candidates waiting to take OEC and start training. The patrol won the Pacific Northwest Division Outstanding Nordic Patrol in 2020 and received a Forest Service Appreciation Award in 2018 for its service to the public.

“I can’t tell you how thrilled and honored we are to have received this award!” said Willamette Backcountry Ski Patrol Director Crystal Kelley. “The Willamette Backcountry Ski Patrol is a small but mighty Nordic/Backcountry patrol, and to have the hard work we do be acknowledged on a national level is just amazing! This is truly a testament to the dedication and creativity of all our members who serve outdoor enthusiasts in our park. We are proud to be an integral part of NSP. Thank you!”

The patrol assists the public with additional service, such as GPS coordinates for trails, sno-park permits, and more. As part of its community service, the patrol offers a moonlight snowshoe tour every year. The patrol teams up with a local shop that brings in 40-50 participants via bus. The patrol divides the group by ability for short, medium, and a long trip to a backcountry lake to see the moonlight shimmer on the lake. Stops are made at up to a dozen three-sided huts on the trip for hot chocolate and a snack.

Search and rescue is a major component of what this patrol does, and it extends to working with the local sheriff and a

downhill ski area to find missing skiers.

Outside of winter, the patrol offers first aid and refreshments at an ultra-marathon event that travels over three mountain summits. The patrol’s aid station is at mile marker 49.8 of the race, 12 miles from the finish line. As part of its first aid, the patrol helps determine if the runners are fit enough to continue on the final leg.

**RUNNER-UP: High Point Nordic Ski Patrol, of the Eastern Division, received a Silver Unit Citation as the runner-up for National Outstanding Nordic Patrol.**

*Side Note: To help keep patrollers, ski center employees, and guests safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, the patrol created a procedure to better sterilize and keep clean the area and ensured enough supplies were always on hand to do so. HEPA filters were acquired to ensure safety during CPR or rescue breathing, and each BVM the patrol had was outfitted with one. The patrol also created training videos that each patroller could watch to ensure they understood how to fit and use the filters.*

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### National Outstanding Nordic Patroller

**Matt Strauser**  
Patrol: Santiam Pass Ski Patrol  
Division: Pacific Northwest

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With an extensive background in climbing, mountaineering, technical rope work, self-rescue and group rescue, and avalanche hazard evaluation, Matt



Matt Strauser

Strauser has proven an invaluable member of the Santiam Pass Ski Patrol.

He usually looks for the longer and more challenging trails to gain more experience, and while out on patrol shares local avalanche forecasts with any member of the public he encounters. He also talks to the public about snow safety and helps them decide how prepared they are for a potential incident.

“I am surprised, honored, and humbled to get the award,” said Strauser. “I recognize that this really is a shared award, shared with other members of my patrol and my division. They took the time and did the work to write up and submit for the award. It’s a work of service and true care for fellow patrol members.”

As a member-at-large of the patrol board, a patrol which encompasses alpine and patroller level in addition to Nordic, Strauser has been integral to the patrol’s ability to embrace the NSP’s new Nordic/Backcountry standards. He shares any concerns the Nordic branch might have with the rest of the patrol. He also serves as the patrol webmaster and helped revamp the patrol’s website.

While out on the trails, Strauser always carries a full set of supplies and equipment for a possible overnight search and rescue, even when skiing an opening or skiing in the alpine area. He encourages members of the patrol to take off-duty cross-country ski trips on trails outside the area to help the patrollers familiarize themselves with that area by



High Point Nordic Ski Patrol

using GPS and cellphone mapping and location.

Strauser frequently participates in Oregon Region and Pacific Northwest Division clinics and seminars, which has enabled him to learn best practices and share them with his patrol. He has also taught a region MTR course for a non-NSP ski patrol.

Outside of NSP, Strauser has spoken the last three years at a university winter outdoor recreation class. In his talks, he addresses the three branches of patrolling and the time commitment required for typical patrols. He also makes it a recruiting talk by addressing how to join the NSP. The class has had between 40-50



Adam Finkel

students each year, and after the class, Strauser schedules an all-day ski and riding day at the ski area so patrollers can talk to potential candidates.

**RUNNER-UP: Adam Finkel, of the Mt. Pinos Nordic Patrol in the Far West Division, received a Silver Merit Star as the runner-up for National Outstanding Nordic Patroller.**

**Side Note:** Adam Finkel has taken on multiple leadership roles, including participating on a collaborative committee between the USFS, the patrol, and a local Native American committee. The focus is to identify improvement projects and heritage displays of the Native American community in the forest the patrol services. One idea has been

to create new displays that convey that heritage and place them in an area the public can view.



Joseph Calbreath

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**National Outstanding Alumni**  
**Joseph Calbreath**  
**Patrol: Willamette Backcountry**  
**Division: Pacific Northwest**

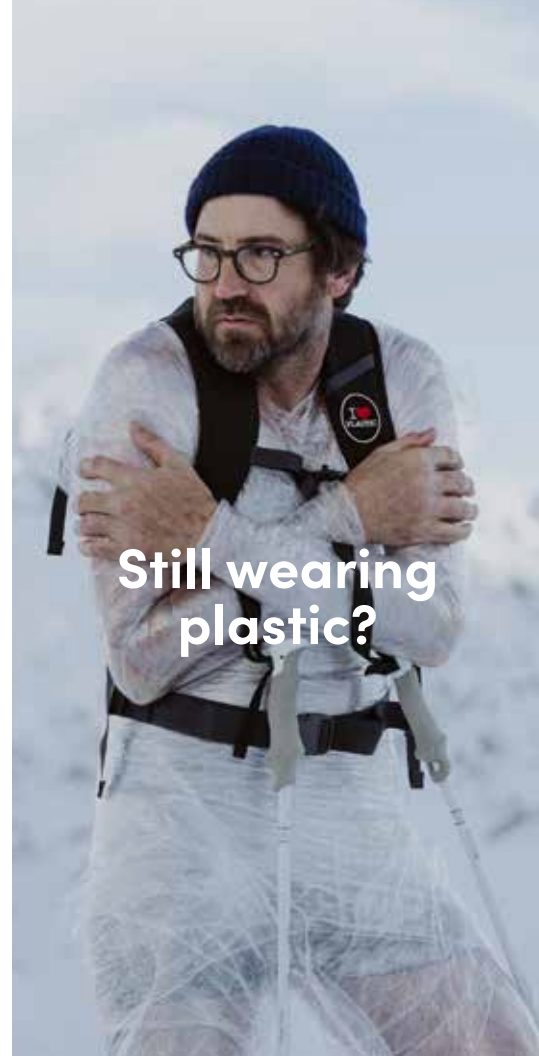
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Joseph Calbreath is an excellent example of how alumni members can stay active with their patrols. Though an alumni, Calbreath is still the patrol training director. He is also a Mountain Travel and Rescue instructor and Nordic instructor and instructor trainer. Further, he acts as patrol secretary and keeps accurate minutes of patrol board meetings.

When his patrol recently hosted a Pacific Northwest Division convention, Calbreath volunteered to set up a GPS brew pub tour for Friday. Many participants in the convention remarked how fun it was to use a GPS to find different brewpubs.

“I am very proud to be a member of our small Nordic patrol,” said Calbreath. “We have 27 patrollers, including 11 alumni; 10 of our alumni are still active in the patrol because we love it so much. To be chosen for this award makes me very proud to represent the Willamette Backcountry Ski Patrol.”

The Willamette Backcountry Ski Patrol has a memorandum of understanding



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with the U.S. Forest Service for patrolling. Calbreath is integral in maintaining that relationship, staying on top of the requirements from both the USFS and the patrol to keep a smooth working relationship. He also works with the patrol and USFS to maintain the ski huts, patrol building, and the ski trails.

As part of his patrol work, Calbreath interacts with the public and promotes the use of correct winter clothing, educating the public on the hazards of using denim in the winter. He also is diligent with trail maintenance to help with the safe enjoyment of the area the patrol works.

Outside of patrolling, Calbreath has worked as a track and field basket



Terry Stevenson

manager supporting a world-class track and field event. He also worked a rest stop at a long-distance marathon, offering medical support.

**RUNNER-UP: Terry Stevenson, of the Northern Division, received a Silver Merit Star as the runner-up for National Outstanding Alumni.**

*Side Note: Terry Stevenson brings a sense of calm to any medical or trauma incident on the hill he serves at, as he is a paramedic. To offer his services, whenever he is on the hill he carries a radio so that he can respond and help as needed. Recently, he was one of the first to respond to a chair evacuation at the hill, offering both his leadership*

*and his rope safety skills. He also assists and coordinates with search and rescue missions outside the resort boundaries.*



Jack Ramsey

**National Outstanding Instructor**  
**Jack Ramsey**  
**Patrol: Crystal Mountain**  
**Division: Pacific Northwest**

After serving as Northwest Region OET advisor from 2017-19, Jack Ramsey is now bringing his talents to the entire Pacific Northwest Division as its OET supervisor. At the region level, he structured the Senior OET Program to better align with division Senior standards. He organized and led calibration clinics to ensure all the Senior OET trainers could teach the Senior curriculum to division standards. He also visited OET clinics in other regions to bring best practices back to the Northwest Region.

Ramsey is a PSIA Level 3 instructor. At his patrol, he instructs candidate classes for six weeks every season, classes that have up to 15 candidates participating. He is also often seen helping a frightened guest navigate their way down the mountain. It's no wonder that Ramsey had the most duty days on the patrol in 2019. He has served as instructor of record for Snowsports Enhancement Seminars, Toboggan Enhancement Seminars, Snowsports Trainers Workshops, Toboggan Trainers Workshops, and Senior Evaluation Skiing and Toboggan clinics and exams.

"I was a ski instructor for a long time

before I joined the National Ski Patrol," said Ramsey. "I love and have always loved teaching and/or coaching. I often comment on how I missed my true calling of being a teacher, but I didn't realize that until I became a ski instructor. There are few things more uplifting to me than the lightbulb moments when someone really grasps a movement or skill that improves their abilities.

"When I joined the Crystal Mountain Volunteer Ski Patrol, I discovered that I also enjoy helping people and being a part of the mountain community. I began helping with toboggan training soon after completing my mentorship, and it has been great part of my ski patrol experience. It has been fun blending my PSIA and NSP skills to teach and/or improve people's OET techniques. I have received a couple awards in the last few years, and it has caught me off guard. It amazes me to receive such honors for doing the things that bring me so much satisfaction and joy."

Outside of NSP, Ramsey served as president for four years of a local nonprofit dedicated to forest preservation and trail maintenance in that forest. He is active in developing and maintaining forest trails for public use, volunteering at least one Saturday every month.

Ramsey, who achieved Senior in 2013,



Timothy Eygabroad

# When pros want injury coverage, they ask for Spot Insurance.

received his National Appointment Number in 2020. He was recognized as Pacific Northwest Division Outstanding Non-OEC Instructor in 2020 and Northwest Region Outstanding OET Instructor in 2020.

**RUNNER-UP: Timothy Eygabroad, of the Bristol Mountain Ski Patrol in the Eastern Division, received a Silver Merit Star as the runner-up for National Outstanding Instructor.**

***Side Note:** A Senior patroller, Timothy Eygabroad has been an OET instructor for more than a decade. He became an Eastern Division instructor trainer two years ago, and after receiving his trainer/evaluator certification in 2014 he began instructing Senior OET Program clinics and events for the Genesee Valley Region. He now serves as OET advisor for the region and attends division OET IT meetings and trainings frequently.*

## National Outstanding OEC Instructor

**Jim Murphy**  
Patrol: Big Bear  
Division: Far West

The COVID-19 pandemic imposed many challenges on patrols, especially with teaching OEC, but Jim Murphy embraced that challenge and successfully mentored 13 students through an OEC class by using

his social network and the wisdom he had from five years as an OEC instructor trainer and 10 years as an OEC instructor.

“This recognition was really a culmination of the perseverance, collaboration, and process that it took to complete two OEC hybrid courses during the pandemic — with the distinction of running the last OEC5 and first OEC6 courses,” said Murphy. “Under the guidance of the county EMS department, and with the cooperation of 13 OEC instructors, including co-IOR Cita Bodea, we successfully developed 31 new OEC technicians. So, I am honored and gratefully accept this award on behalf of those instructors and candidates who were resolute in their dedication to NSP, despite the challenges we all faced.”

Murphy put in place a safety protocol to minimize the risk for both instructors and students. To help make it successful, he reached out to the county EMS advisor for verification that his safety plan met the requirements and safety standards of the city, county, state, and country. He received written confirmation that his safety plan in fact did meet all criteria.

That class was the last class taught under OEC5 in the country. Building on that, he taught the first OEC6 course in the division.

As an OEC instructor trainer, Murphy supervised a record-breaking OEC challenge course for 23 medical professionals. He also oversees up to four OEC refreshers each season for neighboring patrols and serves as an instructor for the region instructor OEC refresher.

Off the mountain, Murphy helped establish a CERT team in his city, working with the local fire department to do so. He recruited 165 residents to take the course, and 137 completed that training in medical, triage, and search and rescue.

In addition to his OEC instruction skills, Murphy provided leadership as patrol director by merging the two largest patrols in the Southern California Region into one patrol that serves two ski resorts. In his final season as patrol director, Murphy oversaw a patrol that had 226 members. After a break from patrol leadership, Murphy returned as assistant patrol director last season when the longtime paid patrol director resigned.

Murphy is a two-time cancer survivor who



Jim Murphy

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continued to meet his on-mountain duty requirements through chemotherapy and radiation treatment. He met his treatment with a very positive attitude, for which he was chosen as a role model by City of



Candace Jacques

Hope National Medical Center in Duarte, California.

Murphy achieved his Senior in 2013 and received a National Appointment Number in 2017. He is currently working toward achieving Certified.

**RUNNER-UP: Candace Jacques, of the Schuss Mountain Ski Patrol in the Central Division, received a Silver Merit Star as the runner-up for National Outstanding OEC Instructor.**

*Side Note: Candace Jacques is known in the Northern Michigan Region for creating fun and engaging scenarios for the region OEC refresher. For instance, she staged a multicar incident with 10 patients, using both live patients and manikins, to give the 300 attendees experience with triaging a mass casualty incident. In another year, she borrowed adaptive sports equipment from a local adaptive program to give the patrollers experience with removing that equipment from an injured adaptive athlete.*

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**National Outstanding Paid Patrol Director**  
Harriet Frawley  
Patrol: National Winter Activity Center  
Division: Eastern

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Harriet Frawley has faced extraordinary challenges in her time as patrol director,

starting in 2013 when the ski area closed operations. There was an uncertain future, and many members of the patrol left to join other patrols, while others drifted away from patrolling entirely. Two years later, when the area reopened, it did so under completely different operations, as it was no longer open to the public, only to members. Frawley faced a shrinking patrol and a mountain operations team that had little understanding of patrolling.

Despite these challenges, Frawley was able to reorganize the patrol and develop a positive working relationship with mountain management, and her efforts have led mountain management to have great respect for, and appreciation of, the patrol.

“To me, receiving this award is all about our patrol,” said Frawley. “I’m grateful to them for the nomination, but more importantly for working with me to face some unique challenges. It’s no coincidence we were named the Eastern Division’s Outstanding Small Alpine Patrol!”

Frawley has worked tirelessly to reenergize the patrol. She has recruited many new candidates and oversees their training, often acting as instructor of record for the OEC course. To ensure success in OEC, she often attends division OEC continuing education events and brings back best practices to the patrol and region. She has also



Harriet Frawley

pushed for more Senior OEC training events in the region, going so far as to teach one.

Frawley has helped keep medical knowledge current for the patrol, introducing new procedures for spinal motion restriction, pelvic slings, tourniquets, and the use of pulse oximeters. She also convinced mountain management to offer training on these topics to ski and race coaches, who are often first on scene of an accident.

She hasn’t limited her efforts to alpine either, overseeing the establishment of a first aid station for a new Nordic area, as well as first aid procedures that Nordic patrol can use.

When the COVID-19 pandemic erupted, Frawley helped secure a supply of masks and other protective equipment for the patrol, as well as staff and patients. She also is a big booster of the Incident Command System (ICS) and has overseen its introduction to not only the patrol but also the area staff and mountain operations.

Frawley is also a big booster of the Young Adult Program, including bringing her two daughters into patrolling, as well as children of other members of the patrol.

Outside of NSP, she helped provide patroller coverage to a Special Olympics event, participating as a member of the team. She also helped bring the Special Olympics New Jersey Nordic Games to the ski area.

**RUNNER-UP: Albert Volk, of the Mt. Ashland Ski Patrol in the Pacific Northwest Division, received a Silver Merit Star as the runner-up for National Outstanding Paid Patrol Director.**

*Side Note: As patrol director, one of Albert Volk’s biggest accomplishments has been to unite the paid and volunteer patrollers and to increase the diversity of the patrol. Before he became the patrol director, the patrol was very unwelcoming to new patrollers, especially women. Since he took over, the patrol has a well-balanced cohort of patrollers of all ages and life experiences. The number of women patrollers has greatly increased thanks to his recruiting efforts, and the patrol also has a greater acceptance of snowboarders.*

**National Outstanding Patrol Representative**  
**Phil Ben-Joseph**  
Patrol: Big Bear  
Division: Far West



Phil Ben-Joseph

Patrolling has been a big part of Phil Ben-Joseph's life. He started patrolling early in his life, patrolling for 10 years at a different mountain before taking a break for 15 years. In the six years since he returned to patrolling, he quickly ascended the leadership ranks, moving first to volunteer coordinator, then to assistant patrol representative, board member, and now patrol representative.

"I've been volunteering with patrol since I was 18 years old, and it's a part of my identity," said Ben-Joseph. "I took some time off to raise a family, and with the support of my wife and two girls they knew I needed patrol back in my life. I give my all to everything I do, and when I'm surrounded by so many caring and loving people that want the best for a common cause, there isn't anything that can stop us. At our resort, you can't tell the difference between paid staff and the volunteers, it's just one patrol family. This ski that I'm holding was signed by everyone on our patrol in recognition of 'our' national recognition."

In addition to serving as patrol representative, Ben-Joseph is active

as an OEC and OET instructor. He has taught at the spring OEC course the last four years.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Ben-Joseph helped ensure the OEC course was able to safely continue by helping implement the precautions suggested by the county and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He also re-upped his CPR instructor and integrated CPR training into the OEC candidate class to make sure the candidates were ready to go on the hill.

As part of the COVID-19 precautions for his large patrol, Ben-Joseph implemented a virtual refresher weekend without compromising the standard of training. It was so successful that the paid patrol used the same training materials. The training was placed on the patrol learning management system on the patrol's website and serves as a reference source for the patrol during the season. Patrols across the Far West Division adapted Ben-Joseph's training ideas to successfully run their own refreshers.

One of the additions to this virtual refresher was a question and answer session with area management that Ben-Joseph hosted. This Q&A addressed many of the concerns patrollers had about COVID and procedures for the upcoming season. It was a mandatory session but was recorded so patrollers could reference back to it during the season.

Adding to his logistical challenges, Ben-Joseph oversees patrollers who serve two resorts that are run by the same management. He maintains strong communication with area management and confirms patrollers' CPR and Incident Command System status, placing this confirmation online so management can easily check it.

The new COVID dynamic and another management change challenged the patrol, as it brought on a decline in membership. Ben-Joseph went into active recruiting mode to solve this problem, recruiting at trade shows and local radio spots. This allowed the patrol to recruit 25 candidates and transfers. Then at midseason, the paid patrol director resigned, and Ben-Joseph was called upon by area management to



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assist the transition and make sure there was enough volunteer coverage on the mountain to finish the season.

Outside of NSP, Ben-Joseph coordinates local patroller involvement with merit badge activities for the Boy Scouts of America. He also coaches soccer for girls age 6-14.



Frey Aarnio

**RUNNER-UP: Frey Aarnio, of the Bromley Ski Patrol in the Eastern Division, received a Silver Merit Star as the runner-up for National Outstanding Patrol Representative.**

***Side Note:** Perhaps Frey Aarnio's greatest contribution to not only his patrol but the NSP has been his ability to recognize and train patrollers to advance both personally and to leadership positions. As an example of his success in these efforts, 21% of the patrol has National Appointment Numbers, 47% are Senior, 18% are instructors or instructor trainers. He also spreads the wealth to the region, helping other patrols with recruiting efforts.*

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**National Outstanding Young Adult Patroller  
Torin Welch  
Patrol: Bristol Mountain  
Division: Eastern**

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Torin Welch has managed to dedicate a substantial amount of time to patrolling,

despite being a high school student. In each of the last three seasons, he logged over 180 hours on the hill, as well as 90 off-duty hours to help with fundraisers, fall and spring festivals, safety day, patrol picnics and events, and shadowing trainer/evaluators in the Senior OET program.

His patrol career started by being named candidate of the year in 2018. He works a Friday night shift and every other weekend and is one of the leaders on the patrol in transports by toboggan, averaging 30-plus annually.

His OEC skills are also strong. One example is when he was helping a patient with a fractured femur. The patient was found off the trail in the woods during closing sweep. After applying the Kendrick Traction Device, he helped keep the patient calm, then came up with the best plan for moving the patient to a backboard and up the hill 25 feet to a waiting toboggan.

Welch attended Eastern Division Young

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Torin Welch

Adult Program Seminars in 2018 and 2019; he was going to go a third and final one in 2020, but it was cancelled due to COVID-19. He has also attended Patroller School, multiple enhancement seminars, and the OEC Module of the Senior Program. He completed the Senior Program at the age of 16, becoming the youngest patroller ever in the Genesee Valley Region to achieve Senior.

Welch completed Instructor Development and then became an OET instructor for his patrol. He is already planning to become a trainer/evaluator in the region Senior OET program. Outside the patrol, he also trained on snowboarding and telemark skis and is now proficient in OET on all three forms of equipment. In the 2019-20 season, he spent 68 hours beyond his normal duty hours instructing OET classes and recertification classes.

"I love the challenge that ski patrol provides," said Welch. "It's a multifaceted opportunity. Nothing beats being outside the handles in some gnarly bumps."

Outside of NSP, Welch served as a lifeguard for two busy municipal beaches and a water park over the last two summers. He also dedicates six hours weekly as a student assistant

coach at a local CrossFit gym, leading youth classes.

He was inducted into the National Technical Honor Society after participating in a vocation-based technical program training on heavy equipment. He also played for his high school varsity golf team, and for three years assisted with his school district's middle school ski club.

After high school, he traveled across the country to complete lineman certification training, which included 180 hours of classroom work and 320 hours in the field. Welch ultimately completed the program, one in which 25% of students usually drop out.

**Runner-Up: Devon Newman, of the 49 Degrees North Ski Patrol in the Pacific Northwest Division, received a Silver Merit Star as the runner-up for National Outstanding Young Adult Patroller.**

*Side Note: Devon Newman excelled during his OEC class and was the first member of the candidate class to become an on-hill patroller. His OEC skills were then tested in a serious incident that he was first on-scene for, a patient who suffered a hip fracture and displacement, as well as a shoulder and arm injury. Newman managed the scene very well, and the patient and his friends have complimented the patrol and Newman's family on the care he rendered and the way he managed the*



Devon Newman

## UNIT CITATIONS FOR DIVISION AWARDS

### **OUTSTANDING LARGE ALPINE PATROL**

Dodge Ridge National Ski Patrol – Far West  
Fairbanks Ski Patrol – Alaska  
Gore Mountain Ski Patrol – Eastern  
Hyak Ski Patrol – Pacific Northwest  
Wintergreen Ski Patrol – Southern

### **OUTSTANDING SMALL ALPINE PATROL**

Diamond Peak Ski Patrol – Far West  
Magic Mountain Ski Patrol – Pacific Northwest  
National Winter Activity Center Ski Patrol – Eastern

### **OUTSTANDING NORDIC PATROL**

Des Plaines River Nordic Patrol – Central

### **YELLOW MERIT STARS FOR DIVISION AWARDS**

#### **PATROL REPRESENTATIVE FOR OUTSTANDING LARGE ALPINE PATROL WINNER**

Derek Werner – Central

#### **PATROL REPRESENTATIVE FOR OUTSTANDING SMALL ALPINE PATROL WINNER**

Mary Gaffney – Central

#### **PATROL REPRESENTATIVE FOR OUTSTANDING NORDIC PATROL WINNER**

Crystal Kelley – Pacific Northwest

#### **PATROL REPRESENTATIVE FOR OUTSTANDING BIKE PATROL WINNER**

Denny Burt – Pacific Northwest

### **OUTSTANDING ADMINISTRATIVE PATROLLER**

Justin Data – Northern  
Richard Murphy – Pacific Northwest

### **OUTSTANDING ALPINE PATROLLER**

John Davis – Southern  
Justin Grohs – Northern  
Sonja Borelli Kivley – Far West  
Tricia Mencin – Central  
Charles Workman – Alaska

### **OUTSTANDING ALUMNI**

Roger Johnson – Central

### **OUTSTANDING PATROLLER**

Phyllis Mauntel – Central

### **OUTSTANDING PAID PATROLLER**

John Doyle – Southern  
Gwendalynn Macander – Alaska  
Thomas Murton – Central

### **OUTSTANDING INSTRUCTOR**

Bartek Drewnowski – Southern  
Robert Maxim – Far West  
Bridgett Paddock – Northern

### **OUTSTANDING OEC INSTRUCTOR**

Patrick Arnold – Pacific Northwest  
Jeffrey Detwiler – Eastern  
Linda Humphries – Southern

### **OUTSTANDING PAID PATROL DIRECTOR**

Craig Cox – Southern

### **OUTSTANDING PATROL REPRESENTATIVE**

Brian Beattie – Northern  
Eric Ewing – Pacific Northwest  
Steve McCarragher – Southern  
Lee Anne Stoddart – Central

### **OUTSTANDING YOUNG ADULT PATROLLER**

Olivia Data – Northern  
Campbell Fields – Southern  
Claire Landberg – Central  
Isabela Otero – Far West

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# JOINING SKI PATROL

## REMEMBERING A ROOKIE SEASON

BY RICHARD BASILE JR.

LIVING IN NORTHEAST OHIO, I WAS INTRODUCED TO SKIING AT A YOUNG AGE. OUR WINTERS CAN BE ROUGH HERE, BUT IN MY HOMETOWN OF YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, WE HAVE THE BENEFIT OF HAVING FIVE SKI RESORTS WITHIN ABOUT AN HOUR'S DRIVE. WHILE NONE OF THEM ARE HUGE, THEY CAN CERTAINLY FILL A SKIER'S NEED FOR A WINTER'S DAY RETREAT.



The author (at right) in uniform working on the hill with hill captain Eric Scheider.

During a typical winter day in January 2019, my son was injured on the ski slope while we were skiing together. As a skier of over 30 years, and now enjoying skiing with my young children, I was always aware of ski patrol. However, until seeing them in action in an incident, I certainly took them for granted. My son went over a small jump and wiped out. In the process of falling down, he clucked his head with the handle of his ski pole, causing a small cut. Seeing my son laying on the snow with a stream of blood coming down his forehead, I immediately thought the worst, like a fractured skull or some other horrible injury. Other skiers on the ski lift saw the incident and shouted that they were calling ski patrol.

While it seemed to be an eternity, ski patrol was there within two minutes. One patroller arrived quickly and three more shortly thereafter. From what I know now after joining and being a trained patroller, they did everything by the book. I was able to see an entire ski patrol scenario as they helped my son from fall to haul. While my son sustained only a slight gash from his pole hitting him in the head, it was still recommended by the patrol that he be taken down the hill to the patrol room at the bottom for a thorough examination. They did everything to help him, even though the injury ultimately required only a little Band-Aid. From the beginning to end, the ski patrol treated it just like they were helping somebody with a major injury. After the incident was over and I knew he was OK, I spoke briefly with the patroller who was first on scene to ask about what it takes to be involved in ski patrol. I found out that the local resort had a "Meet the Patrol" day coming up, so I signed up for it.

At that event, I sat with about 40 other people and listened to the patrol director talk about the patrol, what it took to join, and the requirements to be an active patroller after the classes and training. We even went out on the slopes with members of the patrol so they could evaluate our ski skills and help us understand what type of skills and skiing ability it took to be a part of the patrol. This was an exciting experience because hearing the director and active patrollers explain being on the patrol was nothing like I had ever experienced before. I am a schoolteacher and am used to helping people; this was helping people in a different way, though. It was thrilling having the veteran patrollers share stories, scenarios, and experiences that were an explanation of why it is important and exhilarating to be on the ski patrol. You would be helping people that were very vulnerable, and you were there for them when they need you the most. They told stories from kids needing a Band-Aid to performing CPR on downed skiers out in the middle of a snowstorm.

Also, the camaraderie was amazing. There are people who have been on this patrol for 50 years and people in their second year, but they were brothers and sisters. They explained how it was being part of something bigger than yourself and being instant friends, how through patrolling with people you become a family. The benefit was not just being a member, it was all the other members you get to spend your time with.

While we were out on the slopes showing our ski skills to the members involved in this “Meet the Patrol” day, we were able to see new patrollers being trained on toboggan handling and practicing taking a patient down the hill, with instructors teaching them the proper maneuvers and handling of the sleds. Seeing that firsthand and imagining being the lead or tail on a toboggan was the most exciting part of this captivating day.

Even though this was a volunteer organization that required a great deal of time and commitment, I was very motivated and wanted to be asked to take part in the Outdoor Emergency Care classes that started right after the ski season ended and the resorts closed for the year.

Seeing the importance of ski patrol in action with my son made me quickly realize this was something I wanted to be a part of. Although I am married and a father of three and the 120-hour training requirement for the OEC classes was a lot, this was definitely something I felt I wanted to do. After approval from my very supportive wife and working out a feasible schedule with her, discussing who would help with our three kids during the 6-plus hours a week I would be at class and she at work, and my acceptance by the patrol to take part in OEC, I started OEC classes in March 2019.

I was 39 years old and very knowledgeable in education, as I am a schoolteacher with a bachelor’s and two master’s degrees. However, OEC was extremely challenging for me because aside from basic biology classes I had in high school and college, I had no medical background whatsoever. I found it fascinating, and I loved every part of the classes. There were two veteran patrollers that were the main instructors of record, and every week we would have numerous other patrollers come in to teach particular chapters from the OEC textbook and lead us on scenarios with hands-on training right from the beginning.

I was initially shocked at the dedication of all these patrollers. Over the course of 10 weeks, there were probably at least 50 or more patrollers volunteering their time to help train this new class. I understand the dedication now that I am part of the patrol, but at the time it really surprised me that so many people could be so dedicated to a volunteer organization. These were people just like me with careers, families, kids, and other commitments, yet they made this organization an important part of their lives.

Over this first half of the training and the 10 weeks of classes, we were preparing for the final written exam. I felt like I learned so much about anatomy and physiology. I never missed one class and



“*Seeing the importance of ski patrol in action with my son made me quickly realize this was something I wanted to be a part of.*”

spent hours outside of class studying, not only because the material was so thoroughly covered, but because I never had any medical training and was fascinated by the material. I thoroughly enjoyed this part of the training. I spent a great deal of my free time reading and re-reading the textbook, preparing before and after each class on assigned chapters.

I was particularly interested in the musculoskeletal sections of the text. Having been through chiropractic care and physical therapy in the past, it was interesting to learn how all the systems work together in our bodies. Some other areas of interest were the heart and circulatory system. This has always been an interest for me, and not being in the medical field I had my first in-depth instruction on it. Finally, learning about CPR was particularly enriching. Obviously, every member of the patrol is CPR-certified, and we had to take a separate CPR class, but the subject of CPR was integrated into the corresponding chapters in the textbook where it was an appropriate topic. We learned not only how to perform it, but how the body functions when it is needed.

Ten weeks of classes seemed like three, as time flies when you are enjoying yourself, but then it came time for the written exam. The instructors had the cafeteria at the lodge in the ski resort set up with rows of tables spread out evenly like a lecture hall in a college for the test. This was one of the top 10 most nervous situations in my life. The good thing was the exams would be graded as soon as we were done so we would know if we passed or not. Everyone was extremely nervous all through the classes because we were told that you must pass on your first try to move on, but we were

given the reassurance that everyone from the previous year’s class passed and their goal as our instructors was for us to succeed. The patrol director, instructor of record, and all the volunteer patrollers helping were very supportive, putting as much effort into teaching us as we were in learning that material.

After two hours of sweating and a heart rate probably at a steady 120 beats per minute, I finished the exam and passed with an 89%. Although I was extremely happy I passed, I mentioned to my instructor as we hugged on the news of my score that I was a little disappointed I did not receive a 90%. She laughed and said it was the teacher in me striving for excellence, as her day job was an elementary school principal.

I was making great friends with my classmates, the instructors, and other patrollers and extremely happy to be part of the program. We now had June, July, and August off and started the second half of OEC training in September, focusing on skills. In what was one of the most challenging yet satisfying programs I was ever part of, I was only halfway through, and the real hands-on, more challenging situations were still ahead.

The day after Labor Day, our skills classes began. This was less

intense anatomy and physiology learning, but more intense learning in choosing the right way to handle a scenario, injury, or health problem. Much of this learning and practice was done on the slopes. Ironically though, many of the Saturdays we spent on the ski slopes in September and even into October were very hot. I remember many scenarios with sweat dripping down my head blurring my vision. It was all a good experience because we knew there could be real scenarios in our future taking place in the blustery cold or in the middle of an intense snowfall. So, it was good to practice what we learned with distractions to learn to overcome any possible obstacle.

The skills I enjoyed were what I would later learn are the most common that I would deal with on the patrol: attending to a downed skier with an injured arm, leg, hand, finger, etc. I personally have never broken a bone in my body and so far, neither have any of my children. So, learning the stabilization process and how to properly prepare a patient for transport in the toboggan was new and exhilarating. There were multiple ways to attend to every possible type of injury, and some instructors had different preferences on how to bandage, wrap, move, stabilize, hold something, or even how to lead a scenario. One was not better than the other, and I enjoyed learning how to use my best judgment to help get the job done in the quickest and safest way possible.

A skill I found quite challenging was working with hip-related injuries and using pelvic binders or traction splints. This was very complicated to me during instruction because there were so many ways to do things and every situation would be different. It was always a question of how to move the patient based on how many patrollers were present to help, if there should be rolled blankets used or not, and if they were used how would they be placed. It was exciting to learn these techniques, but a little scary because you would not want to do the wrong thing with such a serious injury.

After another 10 weeks of intense learning, it was time for another test. During the skills learning, we had to perform periodic skills check-offs. We had to demonstrate the skills we were learning in a simulated situation and have the instructors check off that we successfully performed them correctly. This all led up to the final day of evaluations. It was a full day with stations set up all over the ski resort with at least 30 volunteer patrollers attending that day to help assess us. It was a unique and challenging, yet exciting day. There were 13 of us in the class, and we were all very nervous.

Leading up to the exam, our instructors and the patrol director told us multiple times that their goal was for all of us to be successful. That was very reassuring, but we still had to successfully demonstrate the skill. After all, we were being prepared to possibly save an injured individual's life, if that was what the situation called for. So, there was a great deal of pressure. However, we all did it! After a six-hour day of skill demonstrations and simulated scenarios, we all passed our assessments and were basic patrollers. It was Nov. 2, 2019, and the ski season in Ohio was hopefully a little over a month away.

Our Ohio winter did not disappoint. Just as expected, a little over a month after OEC ended the weather turned cold. The local ski resorts



*I had to put my alpine status to use the first day I patrolled after obtaining it.* ”

wasted no time and fired up the snow guns; within a week of snowmaking beginning, the ski season started and the shift I signed up for was the second day of the ski season. I'll never forget Dec. 16, 2019, my first official day of being a ski patroller. I was very excited to be part of the National Ski Patrol and my local patrol, the Boston Mills/Brandywine/Alpine Valley Ski Patrol, which was named the 2018 National Outstanding Large Ski Patrol by the NSP.

On my first day on shift and my first run down the slopes as a ski patroller, I stopped at a downed skier to ask if he needed help. The young man yelled, "I think I broke my wrist." Then and there, nine months of training kicked in as I immediately followed all the assessment procedures and then called for help and a toboggan, using my training to provide the best on-slope prehospital care I could. Everything came back to me as I remembered medical terminology on wrists, tendons, muscular/skeletal systems, and everything I needed to help this young man.

After the initial interaction and a call for help, I assessed his entire body to make sure there wasn't anything else besides the injury he was saying he had. When I called for assistance, my hill captain and assistant hill captain were there within five minutes with

a toboggan. However, that five minutes felt like forever as I assessed and proceeded to create a splint and properly treat the young man to stabilize his arm with a sling and swathe and prepare him to be brought down the hill in a toboggan by my fellow patrollers. I was not yet trained in Outdoor Emergency Transportation and alpine certified to bring him down the hill in the toboggan. It was OK, though; I was able to do everything else and let my fellow patrollers take over in bringing him down the hill.

My first day and first run with a radio, hill pack, and cross on my back I became baptized as a ski patroller. I put in 112 hours of patrolling and training for alpine certification that first 82-day season and loved every minute of it. Even though I took part in a great deal of toboggan training, by the end of the season I was not ready to test for my alpine certification. That was OK with me, as I felt the next ski season would allow me more training to feel confident in transporting an injured person down the ski slope in a toboggan. Right at the end as spring was starting to turn the temperatures warm in Ohio, the pandemic hit, and the season was quickly over.

My first off season had a lot of unknowns. With the pandemic hitting right at the end of the season, the patrol didn't even know if there would be a season the following year, but through summer and fall the patrol was able to do multiple Zoom meetings and refreshers online. As such, the 2020-21 season was able to go forward, albeit with many restrictions for COVID-19.

We had to wear N95 masks whenever we came in contact with a guest. We had strict rules and regulations on shifts, interactions with others before, during, and after skiing, and specific rules for the chairlifts, just to name a few. As a new patroller, it was not an ideal situation, but I was just happy to have a ski season, period. I was still able to ski, patrol, and do the toboggan training toward alpine certification. Obviously, the biggest inconvenience was the masks during the whole season, but again, at least there was a season! Through a

great deal of additional training and almost three months, on the last day of training in March, near the end of the season, I successfully obtained my alpine status with ski patrol.

The most exciting thing was the very next week. It was the last day of the ski season, as my local resort announced it was closing for the year. I had to put my alpine status to use the first day I patrolled after obtaining it. It was a great day for skiing in northeast Ohio. There was still good snow left, and it was a warmer, late winter day, with temps in the 40s. My hill captain and I had been skiing together most of the afternoon, as we did most of the season. We had a season with many incidents here and there, but nothing particularly serious. This last call of the season was different, though.

We received a call from one of the lift operators that there was a downed skier about halfway down the hill. The lift operator's tone in the call was one of urgency and not one I had heard all season. That made me have a feeling this was going to be a case needing a transport in a toboggan. I was ready. As an official alpine patroller, I knew that if necessary, I would not have to step aside if this particular scenario required transport. In the past, I would always lead or assist with on-hill care, but when it came time to transport all I could do was offer to carry skis and poles down the hill while fellow patrollers had to take my place in the handles or tail rope of a toboggan.

We were on another lift across the hill and were able to ski down to the area the downed skier was at quickly. I was first on the scene. After my initial examination, I called for help and a toboggan to another patroller on duty; he was on scene with the toboggan within minutes. The guest was OK overall, but worried about the fall he took and his knee. We all decided it was an injury requiring a transport down in a toboggan to the patrol room for first aid. As we were

prepping him and loading him into the toboggan, I asked my fellow patrollers if it was OK with them if I was lead on the toboggan down the slope. They both smiled, and one said, "I had a feeling you were going to want lead on this transport." They both had been there to help me hone my toboggan skills all season long for the OET test I had the week before. They knew how excited I was to have passed and become a fully certified alpine patroller.

All in all, it was my most exciting day as a ski patroller to date and certainly a huge coincidence that my last day of the season I needed to use all the skills I trained all season for. I feel it was meant to be. By the time the patient was transported down the hill and we properly cared for him in the aid room, my last shift of the year was over. Because of COVID restrictions, the patrol rules were they didn't want you overlapping your shift into the next one unless you needed to stay with a patient. My second year of being a ski patroller was over.

When I finally had a moment of free time, I immediately sent a text to my wife and two older kids who ski with me that I just experienced one of the most exciting situations in my life. They all expressed how proud they were of me. My wife always says how happy she is that I am so willing to help others in the sport I love, and my kids are very proud of their dad. They love to ski with me while I wear my red jacket, and my 15-year-old daughter is already asking when she can join and become a ski patroller.

Every day I see my skis in my garage just waiting for the new season to begin and year three as a patroller and my first full season as an alpine patroller. I love being a part of this organization and my local patrol. +

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Skier: Colter Hinchliffe Photo: Eric Parker/Teton Gravity Research

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**P O W D E R F A L L**  
2022

# [ Q&A ]

## With Katie Champoux

ASSISTANT PATROL DIRECTOR AT BRECKENRIDGE SKI RESORT



*When I first started patrolling, it was something I only planned to do for a few years. However, working with the Breckenridge Ski Patrol for the last 20 years has allowed me to combine my passion and profession. I am currently serving as the assistant patrol director and am very thankful to be a part of this patrol family.*

**Q** What should we expect for weather and snow conditions in April at Breckenridge?

**A** It's typically fairly warm and sunny in April. Temps in the 30s and some snow. Be prepared for anything, as winter is still lingering here.

**Q** Where is your favorite place for après ski?

**A** The Maggie.

**Q** What is your advice for a first-timer at Breckenridge?

**A** Hydrate, hydrate, and hydrate. Don't forget the sunscreen.

**Q** What's your go-to run on a sunny groomer day?

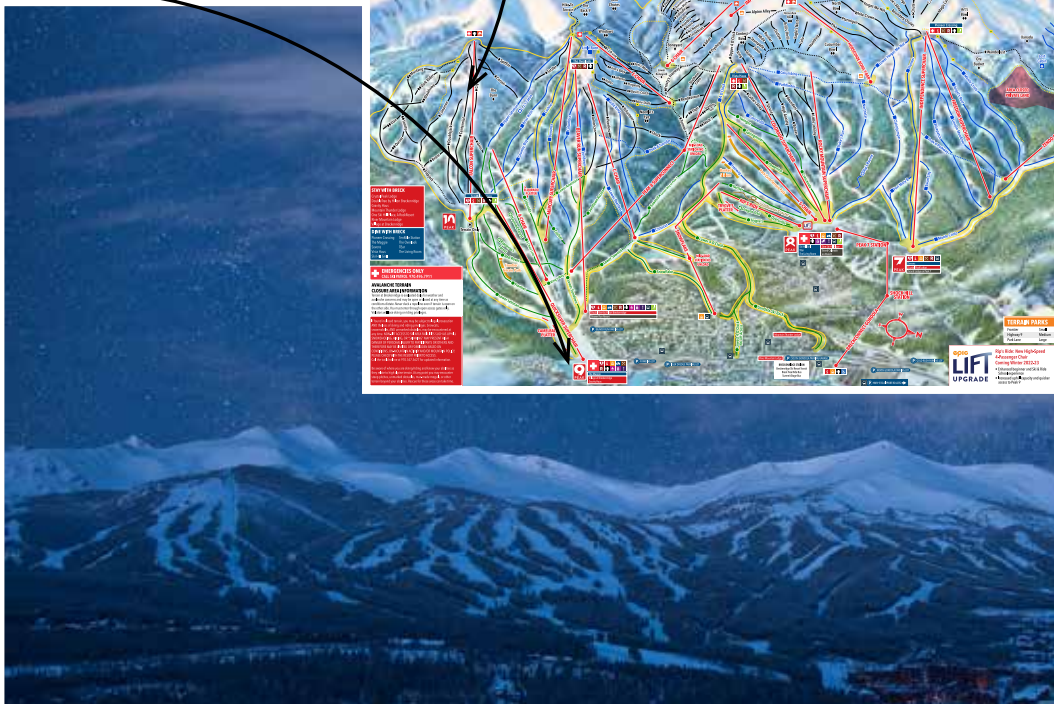
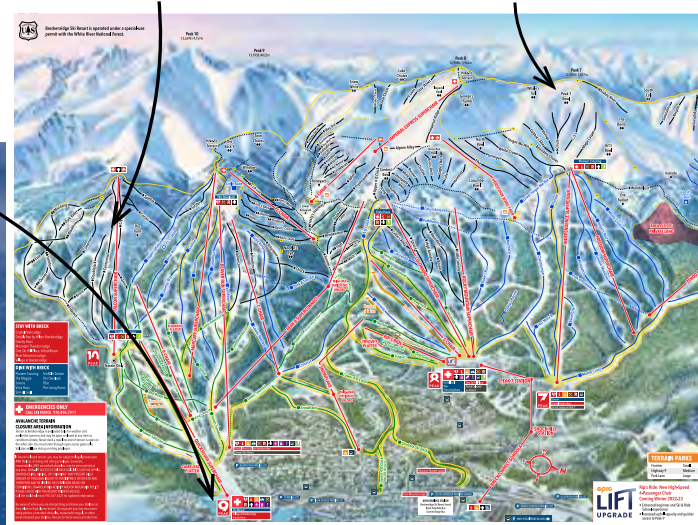
**A** Doublejack.

**Q** What are you most excited about for Powderfall?

**A** Looking forward to meeting folks from across the country, sharing new ideas, and networking.

**Q** What's your go-to location on a powder day?

**A** Peak 7 Bowl.



### **B** **BRECK** BY THE NUMBERS

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- LIFTS: 35
- LONGEST TRAIL: 3.5 MI
- HIGH ALPINE TERRAIN: 40%
- BASE: 9,600 FT
- SUMMIT: 12,998 FT
- VERTICAL DROP: 3,398 FT
- PATROLLERS: 164

# Powderfall

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FULL AND HALF-DAY ON-HILL

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and on-hill training

BEAVER RUN CONFERENCE CENTER

##### TRAINING

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updates from the National Ski  
Areas Association

ON-HILL

##### LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS

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a Colorado Rapid Avalanche  
Deployment team

ON-HILL

Lift evacuation demonstration  
with Breckenridge patrol

ON-HILL

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# MEET YOUR AMBASSADORS



## ZAK BLOOM

*KEYSTONE SKI PATROL, COLORADO*

I spent my childhood in Telluride falling down steep mountains on a bike or skis. I was very fortunate to grow up in such a beautiful area spending my time outdoors. I love being outside and having the freedom that ski patrol affords me. I began ski patrolling in 2010 at Keystone and have been lucky to ski patrol internationally as well. I spend my time on ski patrol helping our avalanche team and snowmobile team training new members, as well as training my dog, Maia, for rapid avalanche rescue deployment.



## ORLA WALSH

*JAY PEAK SKI PATROL, VERMONT*

I came to the NSP and Jay Peak in ski patrol in 2009 with no money and little to no experience in the prehospital environment as a new grad nurse, but the moment I stepped foot inside Jay Peak Ski Patrol I knew it was where I belonged. I earned my OEC, I became an EMT, then became a paramedic before realizing that I wanted to become a MediEvac flight nurse. I found a badass community and a quirky, loving family that has supported me along my wild journey, and hope to provide the same for others!



## PETER GANNON

*RED LODGE SKI PATROL, MONTANA*

I was born on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in South Dakota. All in all, I'm very new to skiing and even newer to ski patrol. For most of my life, I assumed skiing wasn't for me and it wasn't a place I belonged. However, I find myself here now, and with more work in the scope of diversity, equity, and inclusion who knows how many more people we can raise up to find their place in skiing. Skiing is for everyone.



## HEATHER STADNISKY

*MT. BACHELOR SKI PATROL, OREGON*

After 16 years of nursing, I pivoted my focus to prioritize spending time in the outdoors with my family. Part of that transition involved pursuing my dream to volunteer with the National Ski Patrol. Being able to facilitate that pursuit of a recreational skill and passion has been the highlight of my life since I joined NSP in 2019. Skiing on a trail in the middle of the national forest is a very intimate encounter with the fragile and beautiful outdoor playground we are blessed to have.



## ALLISON GORDON

*SANDIA PEAK SKI PATROL, NEW MEXICO*

Currently, I am a chief emergency medicine resident physician in New Mexico, and I dedicate a large portion of my time to working with underserved populations in between adventures in the mountains. Outside of working in the emergency room, I am usually climbing rocks or ice, highlining/slacklining, mountain biking, trail running, yoga, doing races in a tutu, and of course skiing! Before ski patrolling, I was a full-time adaptive ski instructor, which I still get to do as a volunteer.



## GARY PORTER

*CANNON MOUNTAIN SKI PATROL, NEW HAMPSHIRE*

My interest in patrol stems from an avalanche incident in 1989 that took the life of a good friend of mine. I've since lost two others to deadly slides. I've moved from Wilderness First Responder 20-plus years ago to EMT/OEC, finally settling in pro patrol a decade ago. The mountains, though they've shown me their dark side more than I'd like, are my church. My peace and freedom are here, and within the couloirs and on the ridges is where I'm most at ease.



## KOLINA COE

*NORTHSTAR SKI PATROL, CALIFORNIA*

Originally a snowboarder, I converted to skiing eight years ago after patrolling while earning my degrees in college. I have been immersed in women's programs for the past five years, having been the Pro Women's liaison for NSP, the co-chair for POWDER (Providing Opportunity for Women through Diversity, Equity, Respect), and now am very proud to serve as the vice president for Women of Patrol. My passion is to help women grow together in the most amazing and rewarding career there is, patrol.



## MIKE SCHONS

*PINE KNOB SKI PATROL, MICHIGAN*

I'm an outdoor enthusiast and a car guy by interest and profession. Patrolling, to me, is an adventure. The excitement of skiing first tracks or backcountry, an opportunity to find adventure where others only wish they could go. I started skiing at 12 and working with my father and grandfather on their race cars even earlier than that, so combining the opportunity to work with a great car manufacture like Subaru and representing the National Ski Patrol is a match made in heaven.



## DREW KNEELAND

*JACKSON HOLE SKI PATROL, WYOMING*

I live with my wife and two kids in Victor, Idaho. We like to spend most of our time outdoors, and we're raising our kids to appreciate an active outdoor lifestyle. I have worked at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort since 1989 and am the patrol director at the resort, and I also serve as the Pro Division director for NSP. I feel very fortunate to have been able to make a career out of ski patrolling, and my focus is to help the next generation of patrollers enjoy the gratifying work that is ski patrolling.



# SUBARU NSP AMBASSADORS

The Subaru National Ski Patrol Ambassador program promotes our shared values of service, safety, and reliability. As part of the historic partnership, each year National Ski Patrol (NSP) and Subaru choose nine active ski patrollers from across the country to be members of this team. Each Ambassador supports the partnership by sharing stories and images of their life as an active ski patroller on one or more platforms. Of the nine ambassadors, three are social media influencers, three are bloggers and storytellers, two are event or leadership representatives, and one is a year-round/bike patroller.

The ambassadors are chosen based on their social media following and content, unique stories, photography skills, involvement with NSP, and other factors. Storytellers are responsible for creating written and video blogs to post on NSP's website, social media platforms, and emails. These blogs tell their unique ski patrol story. Social media ambassadors are responsible for creating unique social media content that reflects their lifestyle and how Subaru and NSP shape it. They also participate in NSP national account takeovers. Event/leadership ambassadors attend local and national

outdoor industry events whenever possible. Finally, the year-round/bike patroller falls into a combination of all categories.

Based on their ability to fulfill the requirements, each ambassador receives a 2022 NSP-wrapped Subaru vehicle for personal and professional use over the course of a year. It is meant to help patrollers get to their mountain safely and support their life's adventure. While the vehicle does not have to be featured in the content the ambassador produces, it should facilitate the lifestyle and activities that are central to the ambassador's story.

## SOCIAL MEDIA AMBASSADORS



**ALLISON GORDON** *SANDIA PEAK SKI AREA*



**ZAK BLOOM** *KEYSTONE RESORT*



**ORLA WALSH** *JAY PEAK RESORT*

## LEADERSHIP AMBASSADORS



**MIKE SCHONS** *PINE KNOB*



**DREW KNEELAND** *JACKSON HOLE MOUNTAIN RESORT*

ACROSS THE COUNTRY



**YEAR-ROUND AMBASSADOR**



**KOLINA KOE** *NORTHSTAR CALIFORNIA*

**STORYTELLER AMBASSADORS**



**PETER GANNON** *RED LODGE MOUNTAIN*



**HEATHER STADNISKY** *MT. BACHELOR*



**GARY PORTER** *CANNON MOUNTAIN*

# NSP WELCOMES

More New Staff

AS THE SEASON KICKED OFF, THE NSP NATIONAL OFFICE WELCOMED TWO MORE STAFF MEMBERS TO SUPPORT NSP MEMBERS.



**ROBIN LEWIS**  
**ACCOUNTING MANAGER**

Robin joined NSP in December. Originally from Wichita, Kansas, she recently relocated to Colorado from New Orleans, where she'd lived for 21 years. There, she worked for 13 years at a CPA firm, specializing in outsource accounting and tax. At NSP, she will be supporting all things accounting.

**What are three words that describe you?**

Sincere, fun, and loyal.

**What are your outdoor interests?**

I love to paddleboard, hike, snowshoe, and camp. I try to spend as much time as possible in the outdoors.

**How about non-outdoor interests?**

All sports, and spending time with family.

**Why are you excited to be at NSP?**

I'm excited to work for a company that is providing education and training for emergency care and safety service providers so they can provide the best possible response and care for people in need.



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\*OEC-Certified ski patrollers wanting to purchase a FirstNet Responder plan as a Subscriber Paid User must be a verified current employee of, or active volunteer for, a qualified public safety entity who is providing services or performing functions in the area of law enforcement, emergency medical services and emergency assistance to the public. Your eligibility for FirstNet service requires your OEC-Certified patrol director to submit your name to AT&T for verification. Once verified, you will receive an email asking you to complete your profile and follow the steps in subsequent emails to buy FirstNet service. You will be subject to periodic re-verification. You must have an AT&T Wireless Customer Agreement and an individual FirstNet account. If you are not a verified Subscriber Paid User, AT&T may suspend, change or terminate your FirstNet service. See [firstnet.com/firstnetresponder](http://firstnet.com/firstnetresponder) for verification and other details.  
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**MADDIE MILLER,  
EDUCATION MANAGER**

Maddie Miller graduated from Colorado College in 2017, having studied mathematical economics. In college, she worked as a sponsored athlete for Eddie Bauer and Microsoft, where she broke the world record for climbing the 50 U.S. highpoints the fastest, in 41 days, 16 hours, and 10 minutes. Prior to joining NSP, she worked in Idaho as a mountain guide, volunteered at a women's empowerment nonprofit in the Himalayas, and ultimately worked for the Colorado Mountain Club in a variety of capacities, from membership to marketing to events. She finished her three-year stint there running the education department as the adventure and education manager. Her proudest achievement is building, marketing, and delivering a brand-new intro to backcountry skiing and splitboarding class to members of the CMC (in which she taught a session herself), as well as helping five different disciplines move their content to an online format.

**What are three words that describe you?**

Passionate, driven, and kind.

**What are your outdoor interests?**

Backcountry skiing (and alpine skiing), mountain biking, trail running, and mountaineering.

**How about non-outdoor interests?**

Cooking, singing, hot sauce making, knitting, and writing music.

**Why are you excited to be at NSP?**

I'm excited to be a part of an organization in the midst of growth. I want to help nourish that growth with my skillset with nonprofits and the outdoor industry. I'm excited to work for an organization dedicated to one discipline, skiing, and to work for a larger nonprofit on a national scale. Finally, I like big projects, as you can probably tell. Helping migrate the course catalog that NSP has onto an LMS is a HUGE project, but I am so excited to help see it through and support in any way I can to create real and tangible change in the organization.

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*-Anne Nethery, Ski Patrol*

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# SPOTLIGHT ON ALUMNI

## FINDING WAYS TO STAY ACTIVE IN NSP

BY TIM VIALI, NSP NATIONAL ALUMNI ADVISOR

**O**ur Alumni members enrich the National Ski Patrol and hundreds of NSP member ski patrols, bike patrols, and mountain host units, with many of our almost 5,400 alumni active at patrol, region, and division levels.

Alumni members bring a deep history of the NSP, along with experience and talent, to our organization. They provide a vast resource of needed skills and expertise to supplement the efforts of the “active” membership. With the COVID-19 pandemic, many have found new ways to remain active, assist their former patrols, regions, or divisions, and take on renewed activity as mountain hosts or bike hosts.

Several reasons cause members to leave active status: family or job responsibilities, educational options, relocating to a new part of the country, health issues, and more. Many alumni eventually rejoin as active members or find new NSP duties as bike patrollers or mountain hosts.

Here we highlight active alumni and their contributions to NSP!

### Joseph Calbreath

Joseph Calbreath was profiled in the fall issue but deserves additional kudos as NSP National Outstanding Alumni of 2021! He joined his patrol in January 1991. In his 30-year tenure, he has earned the NSP National Outstanding Nordic Patroller and Gold Merit Star (2002-03), received a National Appointment (2004), a Yellow Merit Star (2009), a Meritorious Service Award (2013), and numerous division, region, and local awards. Joseph has also served on the division, region, and local patrol boards as Mountain Travel and Rescue advisor, Nordic advisor, search and rescue coordinator, and training director.

In 2017, after 25 years of Nordic patrolling, Joseph joined the ranks of NSP alumni. He continues to serve his local patrol as the training director and the



Joseph Calbreath

Oregon Region as the Nordic advisor. Even in this uniquely challenging year with the COVID-19 pandemic, he has managed to log training on snow with snow shelters and toboggan handling. He has been successful at following Centers for Disease Control recommendations and the patrol COVID-19 protocols to continue to refresh patrol members, train new prospective candidates, and to keep the skiing public safe.

As a dedicated patroller for 25 years and now a dedicated NSP Alumni

member, Joseph brings a tremendous amount of knowledge, skill, and leadership with him and is truly an outstanding alumni. Congratulations Joe! As we get into winter, help nominate other deserving alumni for patrol and regional recognition!

### Alumni make fine mountain hosts and bike hosts

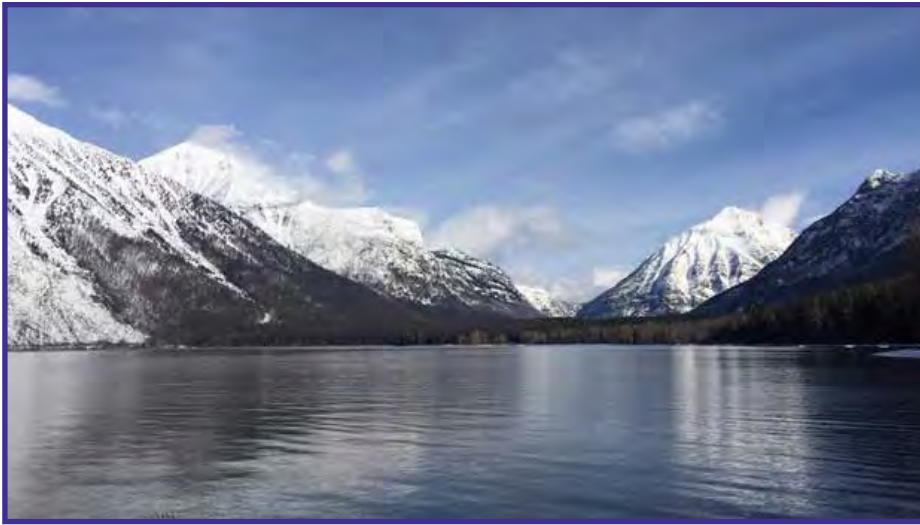
More and more NSP alumni are coming back into active roles as bike hosts or mountain hosts across the U.S. Many alumni find that these roles offer a new opportunity to offer service to the bicycling or skiing public, perhaps in a bit mellow way than as their former Outdoor Emergency Care patroller status required. Leaders of various host programs are encouraged to solicit new hosts from among your region or division alumni members. Contact your division Alumni advisor for help in reaching out!

### Return to normal

By now, most of us have received our COVID-19 vaccinations, and likely many have added the booster shot. Time for a return to near-normal, even while maintaining precautions. Why not create an alumni ski day at your old ski



Alumni gathering at Whitefish. Photo c/o Tim Viall.



Glacier National Park. Photo c/o Tim Viall.

area this season? Perhaps your region or division would host a bigger alumni event and find a resort which might comp lunch or a lift ticket? Reach out to your patrol, region, or division Alumni advisor and put together a reunion gathering!

### Do you have suggestions as an Alumni member?

If you are already an NSP alumni, what are your questions or suggestions? With

your help, additional value and enthusiasm can be added to a well-established alumni program. Don't overlook alumni perks such as access to the NSP Online Store and NSP pro deals. Alumni retain their ongoing years of service! If you want more involvement, let those leaders at the patrol, region, or division level know your interest — be the squeaky wheel; speak up, and help to build your own patrol's alumni program!

After consulting with several

NSP-member doctors, Flathead County, and Montana Public Health, our concerns about the rise in COVID-19 in Montana and elsewhere has caused us to postpone our Alumni Celebration Week until Feb. 26-March 4, 2023. We are exercising an abundance of caution, with the health of our NSP alumni, members, family, and Montana citizens in mind.

Happily, Grouse Mountain Lodge will honor or accept your reservations for the 2022 dates, and Whitefish Mountain continues to tout fine ski conditions and is happy to see you on their slopes.

We have rebooked the Alumni Celebration Week, with similar activities, and a great room rate of \$89/night, for Feb. 26 to March 4, 2023.

To our many NSP alumni, we welcome your continuing involvement in your local patrol, region, or division. Please share your comments with NSP National Alumni Advisor Tim Viall at [tviall@msn.com](mailto:tviall@msn.com) or (209) 969-3875. +



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# NSP BIKE PROGRAM GROWS BOTH IN NUMBER OF PATROLS AND IN PATROL MEMBERS!

BY TIM VIAL, NSP BIKE COMMITTEE AND AMERICAN RIVER BIKE PATROL BOARD MEMBER



Rider on the Hiawatha Bike Trail.

**T**he Bike Program of the National Ski Patrol continues to grow quickly across the country. Tied to exponential growth of bicycling during the pandemic, more and more alpine ski areas looking to max their investment by extending their seasons into the summer and fall, and more urban patrol development in hills and mountains surrounding small to large cities across the country, bike patrols are growing in numbers and in membership. Here are updates from several bike patrols and from the NSP Bike Committee.

## HIAWATHA TRAIL BIKE PATROL, IDAHO/MONTANA

The Hiawatha Mountain Bike Trail is patrolled by 62 NSP bike patrol members and six NSP bike hosts on a 15-mile



Hiawatha Trail Bike Patrol

trail on U.S. Forest Service land on the Idaho/Montana border. The Hiawatha Trail is known as the “crown jewel” of

all rails-to-trails. It runs through 10 train tunnels (the Taft Tunnel is 1.6 miles long) and over seven sky-high trestles.

The patrol provided premium first aid care for 57 of the 68,000-plus ticketed guests during the 2021 summer season, with the trail open all seven days a week. Patrol members consist of NSP “secondary members” from four region ski patrols, along with “primary” patrollers.

The Hiawatha Trail Bike Patrol is proud to be the first sanctioned bike patrol registered with NSP in the nation. Thanks to the help of then-CEO Phil Edholm and founding Hiawatha Trail Bike Patrol Director Denny Burt, the Hiawatha Trail Bike Patrol took top region/division awards and was just announced as “NSP National Outstanding Bike Patrol” for 2021. For more information, contact Denny Burt, patrol representative, at (208) 661-8151 or [Denny-HiawathaPatrol@tds.net](mailto:Denny-HiawathaPatrol@tds.net).

### SNOWSHOE BIKE PATROL, SNOWSHOE, WEST VIRGINIA

The Snowshoe Bike Patrol has a response

coverage area of 11,000 acres owned by Snowshoe; the patrol maintains an average of 25 Outdoor Emergency Care-trained bike patrollers, with half being volunteers. The basin has advanced level freeride trails and entry/intermediate level flow trails. The Western Territory has downhill-specific and flow trails, and the area sports several miles of singletrack cross-country trails in the backcountry that extend out to the outermost property boundaries. A core group of bike patrollers handles the daily operations of bike park opening and closing sweeps, incident response/rescue, and assisting with general trail/signage maintenance and downed tree removal. The patrol also provides medical coverage for races, concerts, festivals, search and rescue, and general non-bike-related injuries/illness.

The Snowshoe Bike Patrol was established with two OEC bike patrollers in 1993. In the early days, the trail system consisted of cross-country trails utilizing

abandoned log roads and railroad grades located within the Snowshoe property boundaries. These trails were established by dedicated employees, mostly during their time off work. Original operations included a bike shuttle that would load up riders/bikes at the base and whisk them up Snowshoe, then drive six miles to the top of Western Territory. The bike shuttle ran a continuous loop during operational hours, operating like this until 2003. In 2003, the Snowshoe Bike Park was born with purpose-built freeride trails and downhill trails. During the first or second year as a bike park, they started utilizing the Ballhooter and Western Territory lifts in the summer to transport bikers and bikes back to the summit.

Since the inception of the bike patrol, they have provided medical/rescue coverage for the National Off-Road Bicycling Association Nationals, USA Cycling Junior Nationals, USA Cycling Nationals Finals, GNCC Rally West

*Snowshoe Basin bike patroller.*





Snowshoe Basin bike patrol group.

initial response process as the weakest link in the chain and focused on building capacity to quickly get trained responders on-scene to stabilize and assist in extracting injured riders that may be miles from a trailhead.

In 2021, CHPB trained 11 new OEC bike hosts with help from Mont Ripley Ski Patrol and provided medical response for two multiday skills clinics and two full weekends of assorted races during Copper Harbor's Memorial Day and Labor Day events. CHBP OEC and Outdoor First Care patrollers assisted in multiple extractions over the course of the summer and received high marks from the first responder community. This coming year will see further collaboration with the existing first responder community, including integrated radio communications and joint training exercises. For info, contact Ben Ciavola at [btciavol@mtu.edu](mailto:btciavol@mtu.edu).

### AMERICAN RIVER BIKE PATROL, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Born in spring 2019, this new bike patrol covers the American River Parkway, from Sacramento to Folsom, California, with 50 miles of paved trail and about 100 miles of fire road and singletrack. The patrol has grown to 90 members who serve as trail safety ambassadors, delivering first aid and CPR as needed. Membership includes 40 OEC-trained secondary members from nearby alpine and Nordic ski patrols and 50 new-to-NSP primary members, recent graduates of OFC with additional training focused on stopping the bleed, basic splinting, trail etiquette, and more. Land managers include Sacramento County and the state of California; the patrol works closely with Parkway rangers in bringing enhanced safety to one of the busiest trails in the United States. For info, contact James Cheng, patrol representative, at [jimarbp@yahoo.com](mailto:jimarbp@yahoo.com) or (916) 832-3100.

### NSP BIKE TASK FORCE

For the past four years, the Bike Task Force of the NSP has been working hard laying the groundwork for the development of the Bike Program. In 2020, the NSP board of directors approved the Request For Action for the bike discipline to become an official program of the NSP.

In September 2021, members of the new National Bike Committee attended the Sea



First aid training for the Copper Harbor Bike Patrol.

Virginia, 24 hours of Snowshoe cross-country races, Pro Mountain Bike Gravity Tour races, Downhill Southeast races, West Virginia Epic Enduro Finals races, numerous Snowshoe-sponsored gravity races, and Mercedes Benz UCI World Cup DH, XCC, and XCO races. For information, contact patrol representative Shane Bradley at (304)572-5693 or [sbradley@snowshoemountain.com](mailto:sbradley@snowshoemountain.com).

### COPPER HARBOR BIKE PATROL, KEWEENAW COUNTY, MICHIGAN

The patrol was formed in 2020 by the Copper Harbor Trails Club to help address the growing need for first responder personnel in the trail system and surrounding areas. CHBP operates at the far end of Keweenaw County, population 2,116, with only a handful of state-licensed first responders and a 45-minute, one-way drive to the nearest hospital.

Work establishing the CHBP began more than a year before through repeated conversations with local emergency management officials, first responders, law enforcement leadership, and local government officials. These talks identified the



American River Bike Patrol

Otter Classic in Monterey, California, the largest outdoor cycling event in the country. This event had over 50,000 attendees over the four days and was supported by NSP patrollers and host members providing medical and first response coverage as part of the chain of response with local fire and EMS.

At this event, the members of the National Bike Committee attended a bike leadership meeting with 18 leaders representing bike patrols from all over California. A wide, diverse patrol representation from NSP was there, including resort-based, lift-served bike park, urban/suburban bike patrols, and host units, with a history of patrolling from decades to a new startup patrol/host unit. We also had the opportunity to talk to several bike patrols that are not associated with the NSP. All this was to discuss and learn how the NSP Bike Program can help them and their patrollers.

The committee will take what we learned to develop and provide curriculum and non-curriculum-based based training for our members. For additional insight into the NSP Bike Committee, contact Jeremy Verbeke, NSP National Bike Program director, at [bike@nspserve.org](mailto:bike@nspserve.org). +



Newman family bike patrollers on the Hiawatha Bike Trail.



# THE NSP YOUTH PROTECTION PROGRAM

DO NSP INSTRUCTORS NEED THIS TRAINING CERTIFICATION?

BY DOUGLAS HILL, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR, AND LORETTA O'BRIEN, FAR WEST DIVISION INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SUPERVISOR

*Young adult patrollers at Winter Park Resort, Colorado.*

In early 2018, the U.S. Congress passed the “Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017” in response to the recent abuse scandals that have shaken the youth sports world. Also known as “The Safe Sport Act,” this legislation expands existing mandated youth abuse reporting laws and requires abuse awareness training for youth sports organizations. In 2020, the National Ski Patrol launched its own updated youth protection policy to comply with the Safe Sport Act. Youths, also known as “protected parties,” are persons under the age of 18.

While all NSP members should become familiar with this training program and its reporting procedures, the NSP requires certain members to complete the youth protection training that is now mandated for those designated groups by the *NSP Policies and Procedures*. As an NSP instructor, this requirement may apply to you.

The following NSP members must complete and document training in a recognized youth safety program:

- National leadership, including national program directors and advisors, national board members, national legal advisors, and national Safety Team members.
- Division directors, assistant division directors, and division legal advisors.
- Region directors, assistant region directors, and region legal advisors.
- Patrol representatives, patrol directors, and unit representatives in any patrol or other unit in which protected parties are members of the patrol/unit.

Additionally, the following members must complete and document youth safety training in which protected parties participate in NSP courses or events in their division or region:

- Division program supervisors or advisors, region program administrators or advisors, and section chiefs. It will be the responsibility of region and division program supervisors, advisors, and administrators to ensure that all instructors subject to the training requirement have completed youth protection training.
- Instructors of record and/or at least one assisting instructor for NSP courses or events in which protected parties attend or participate. It is the responsibility of the IOR or event leader to assure that the youth protection training requirement has been completed by those adults subject to the training requirement, including NSP members and nonmembers, and that proof of training has been received and provided to the division director or designee prior to the event.

NSP recommends one of the following three training resources to satisfy NSP youth protection program requirements:

- Armatus free online training through Praesidium. To enroll, contact [memberrecords@nsp.org](mailto:memberrecords@nsp.org) with your name, member number, and email address. It should include the following modules:
  - Duty to Report
  - Preventing Sexual Activity among Adolescents
  - Meet Sam



Young adult patrollers enjoy a break from hill duties.

- The Scouts' free BSA Youth Protection Training (<https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/>)
- Safesport.org Training (\$20.00 fee) (<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/training-and-education/safesport-courses-for-all/>)

You should plan on at least two hours to complete the online training. Other youth safety training programs are available (check with [memberrecords@nsp.org](mailto:memberrecords@nsp.org) for other options), and many members may already have completed the training through other organizations or because their ski area requires it. Check with your division director or designated division youth safety representative to see if your program meets the NSP requirements for youth safety training. Your division youth safety representative is listed on the NSP website under the Member Resources tab and “Youth Safety” on the pull-down menu.

When you complete your training, you should send your completion certificate to your division youth safety representative, who will make sure it is posted on your education record. The free Armatus/ Presidium training offered by NSP is valid for three years (other programs may only be valid for two) and must be renewed prior to its expiration for continued participation in activities where protected parties are present.

The NSP is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, and it is imperative that every participant in NSP-sanctioned courses or events actively takes part in the protection of youth. In the event that anyone participating in any capacity during an NSP-sanctioned event or course observes suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations on the part of other participants, the individual must immediately report their observations to the instructor of record or event leader and must complete a youth protection report form.

The instructor of record or event leader will assist the reporting

individual in completing the form and with the submission to the [youthsafety@nsp.org](mailto:youthsafety@nsp.org) email. Report forms should be handled confidentially and should not be discussed among uninvolved individuals. The form will be reviewed by the NSP chief executive officer, national board chair, and national legal advisor. Appropriate action will be determined by the national legal advisor and the NSP Code of Conduct policy.

The youth protection report form and additional information are available to view and download from the “Youth Safety” section under the “Member Resources” tab. You can find the full text of NSP’s youth protection policy in the *NSP Policies and Procedures* in Chapter 13. You can find the *Policies and Procedures* in the “Governance” section under the “Member Resources” tab of your NSP page. Failure to comply with any provision of the NSP youth protection program and Chapter 13 is a violation of the NSP Code of Conduct, and violations should be reported to the appropriate NSP leader as specified in Chapter 6 of the *NSP Policies and Procedures*.

If you are not currently an NSP instructor and have thought about teaching in one or more of the NSP disciplines, take the challenge and begin your NSP teaching career by enrolling in an Instructor Development course in your region. You can change patrollers’ lives, and I think you may change your life as well.

For more information on the Instructor Development Program, or if you would like an Instructor Development course offered to your patrol, contact the Instructor Development Program administrator in your region or the Instructor Development Program supervisor for your division. If you have questions or comments regarding this article or ideas for future articles related to the Instructor Development Program, you may contact me at [dch@cadwest.com](mailto:dch@cadwest.com). +





## 2. SUN PROTECTION SYSTEM

- Sunscreen
- Lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Sun hat
- Goggles

**Comments:** A serious sunburn can end your trip early. For over-snow travel on sunny days, wear wrap-around sunglasses or glacier glasses to avoid snow blindness. Goggles are essential for safe travel in snowstorms.

## 3. INSULATION SYSTEM

- Rain gear
- Down or synthetic puffy
- Spare gloves or mittens
- Spare warm hat
- Spare pair of socks

**Comments:** Carry these items in addition to your normal layering system, which will depend on the season. Avoid fabrics, such as cotton, that fail to insulate when damp. In remote settings, you must prevent hypothermia. Rain gear is essential, and a puffy is a superb insulating layer when you really need to get warm.

## 4. ILLUMINATION SYSTEM

- Headlamp with spare batteries

**Comments:** Without these items, you flirt with misery. A lightweight headlamp can help you avoid an unplanned night in the woods and assist you in managing one if it happens.

## 5. RESCUE SYSTEM

- First aid kit (pocket mask, Band-Aids, tape, SAM splint, roller gauze, sanitary pads, large safety pins, large plastic garbage bag instead of cravats — emphasize multi-use equipment)
- Waterproof notepad
- Mobile phone
- Satellite-based personal locator beacon or satellite messenger
- Clothing or gear with RECCO® reflectors
- Handheld two-way radios

**Comments:** The first aid kit depends on how remote your party will be and your level of training. For severe injuries or illnesses, communication with emergency services is the key to rapid evacuation and transfer to more advanced care. For large parties, handheld two-way radios promote effective group management. Personal locator beacons only send out SOS messages with no additional detail or ability to cancel the SOS. Satellite messengers are useful for both SOS messages and communicating with loved ones in remote areas. Satellite messengers on the same system can also communicate with each other. Some satellite messengers can serve as a GPS navigation and map device. In some areas, lightweight amateur radio transceivers (and the required license) give you access to a wide range of frequencies, repeaters, and power levels.



## 6. FIRE SYSTEM

- At least two lighters
- Fire starters

**Comments:** A lighter lives in every waterproof shell I own. For legitimate esthetic reasons, many backcountry users avoid building campfires for cooking or pleasure in the pristine wilderness, but when you need a fire for survival, don't dither. Get a fire going. Use chemical fire starters if necessary.

## 7. REPAIR SYSTEM

- Multitool knife
- Whistle
- Repair kit (steel wire, strong tape, threaded sewing needle, ski-pole or tent-pole splint, binding parts, plastic straps)

**Comments:** A multitool with pliers is remarkably handy. A 10-gram plastic whistle, like those found on some sternum straps, can "repair" unplanned group separations before they become intractable. For ski trips, bring a binding-compatible screwdriver (often Pozidriv), a few screws, and a tuft of steel wool to fill stripped screw holes.

## 8. NUTRITION AND SANITATION SYSTEM

- More food than you think you'll eat
- Small bottle of sanitizer
- Toilet paper and a plastic bag to pack out what is used

**Comments:** Calories help you avoid hypothermia. Toilet paper is a supremely desirable backcountry amenity. A small bottle of sanitizer helps keep you and your companions healthy. Consider carrying a 13-gram trowel unless you're carrying an ice axe.

## 10. SHELTER SYSTEM

- Lightweight tarp
- Snow saw
- Reflective plastic bivy sack

**Comments:** If you have a large enough tarp and ski poles or trekking poles, you can craft a comfortable emergency shelter. Use your pack and the large plastic garbage bag in your rescue kit for insulation. A snow saw adds weight to your pack but can help you make a shelter if timber is unavailable.

If you choose your gear carefully and pack efficiently, these systems will fit into a 35-liter pack. Use the large plastic garbage bag in your rescue system as a pack liner.

Certain types of trips require additional, specialized gear. Of special interest in the mountains of North America are avalanche rescue, snow travel, and high-angle travel.

## SNOW TRAVEL SYSTEM

- Helmet
- Ice axe
- Crampons
- Pickets, ice screws, rope, locking carabiners, and lightweight harness
- Hiking spikes

**Comments:** Often, these are summer tools. Ice axe and crampons are the sharps of the backcountry, so carry them safely in your car and on your pack. Snow travel requires training. There is no sense in carrying an ice axe if you don't know how to use one. Crampons can enhance safety, but they can also break ankles. Glacier travel, not taught in NSP courses, requires a rope, harness, climbing hardware, protection, and knowledge of how to read the terrain and how to use the gear. Hiking spikes are useful on icy trails.

## 9. HYDRATION SYSTEM

- Wide-mouth water containers
- Water disinfection system
- Metal cup

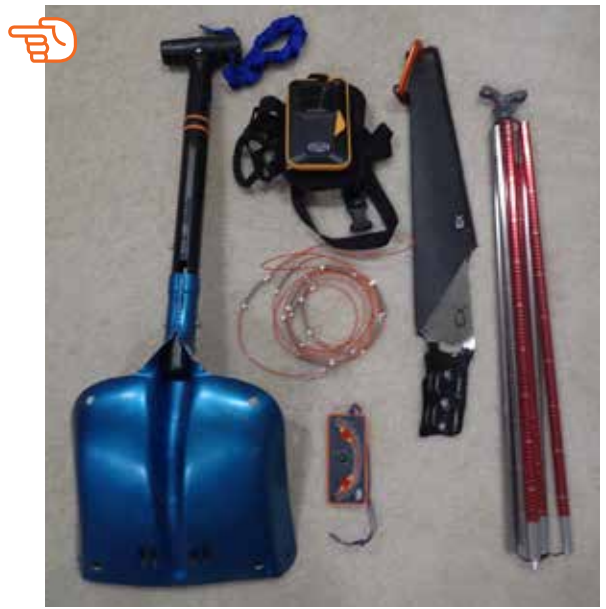
**Comments:** Wide-mouth water containers are less likely to plug with ice. If you leave some air in them and load them upside down in your pack, the sloshing will delay freezing, and the freezing will occur away from the mouth of the container. Having the capacity to make safe drinking water enables you to travel with a lighter pack, at least in terrain where water sources are readily available. A metal cup allows you to melt snow for drinking water in an emergency, provided you have an adequate fire-starting system.



## AVALANCHE SAFETY SYSTEM

- Lightweight collapsible shovel
- Transceiver
- Probe pole
- Clinometer
- Snow saw
- Rutschblock cord
- Avalung
- Avalanche airbag

**Comments:** A shovel, transceiver, and probe are non-negotiable gear for anyone venturing into avalanche terrain. Take a Level 1 avalanche course to learn how to use them and how to avoid needing them. A clinometer helps you make good terrain selection decisions. Consider bringing shovels on any trip into snow-covered terrain — they are emergency shelter tools. Practice using your transceiver at every opportunity. Make opportunities! A snow saw and Rutschblock cord are useful in digging and evaluating snow pits, and the cord can help you make an emergency shelter. Many people wear Avalungs and avalanche airbags to improve their survival odds if caught in an avalanche.



## STEEP-ANGLE SYSTEM

- Helmet
- 30 meters of 8-millimeter rope
- Lightweight harness, belay device, locking carabiners, prusik loop, and sling

**Comments:** These items help you manage unexpected difficulties in scrambling terrain. True high-angle terrain — Class 5 on the Yosemite Decimal System — requires more gear and more expertise. The high-angle environment places subtle yet formidable demands on mountain travelers. This spectacular, high-consequence terrain requires a degree of training, skill, mentorship, experience, mountaineering judgment, and awareness that exceeds NSP course work. Wearing a helmet is a good idea in forests with an abundance of standing beetle-killed trees. Selecting a lightweight, well-ventilated model will encourage you to leave it on.

## LONGER TRIPS

The systems listed above will get you through day-length trips. Multiday trips, such as those required for NSP's Mountain Travel and Rescue 1 and 2 courses, require additional gear. The following list briefly summarizes these needs. If you are inexperienced in this type of adventure, take an MTR course!

## CAMPING SYSTEM

- Season-appropriate tent
- Full-length insulated pad
- Season-appropriate sleeping bag
- Toiletries
- Stove and fuel
- Spoon
- Cooking pot with gripper
- Bowl or cup
- Personal medications

**Comments:** You'll be miserable without a spoon. Isobutane-propane canisters are incredibly convenient in the backcountry, but white gas stoves work better in frigid winter conditions. If you plan to camp on snow, consider using two pads.

Experienced backcountry travelers may have different opinions about which items are truly essential, and these opinions tend to evolve as new technologies and materials emerge. For this reason, thinking in terms of systems, instead of items, helps ensure that you have the right gear to keep yourself safe in the mountains and to handle emergencies, should they arise.

**Acknowledgment.** Many thanks to Bill Cotton, the new NSP national program director for Mountain Travel and Rescue, for valuable improvements to this article. +



# Hip, Hip Foray

## MANAGEMENT OF A CRITICAL, UNSTABLE INJURY

BY CHARLES ALLEN, D.O., NSP NATIONAL MEDICAL ADVISER

### Introduction

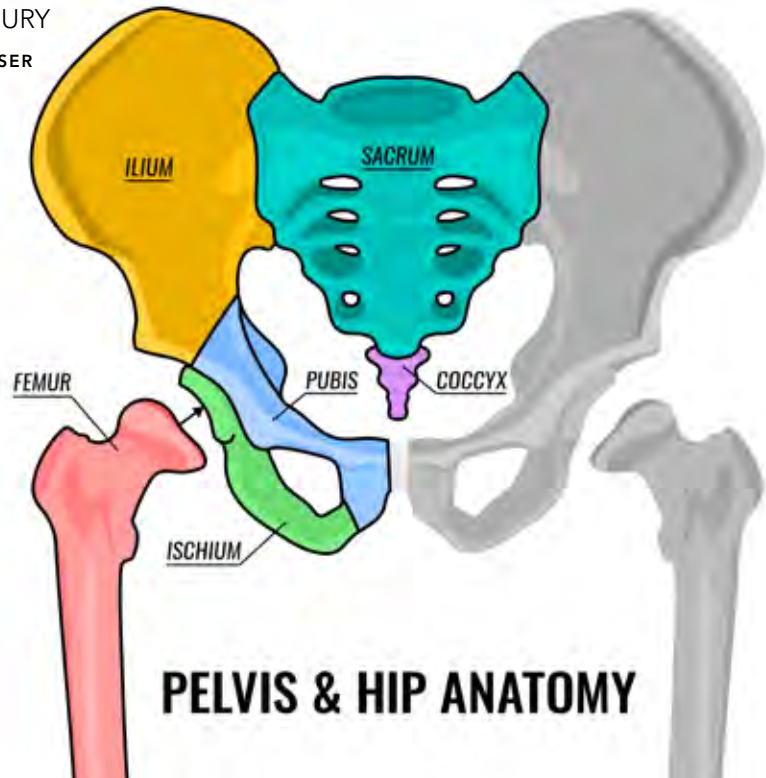
Patrollers become comfortable with the common injuries experienced by bikers, skiers, and snowboarders on a daily basis. Hip and pelvic fractures are an uncommon injury that require rapid transport and special handling, and they have outcomes that can turn deadly. *Outdoor Emergency Care: A Patroller's Guide to Medical Care*, 6th ed., (OEC6) provides the standard in training for patient assessment, management, and transportation of the injured patient in an outdoor setting. Table 1.1 in OEC6 provides a reference of these injuries.

The National Ski Areas Association's 10-Year Interval Injury Study found in the year 2000 that skiers had 2.63 incidents/1,000 visits, while snowboarders had a higher rate of 6.1<sup>1</sup>. Mammoth/June Mountain ski patrols saw 929 snowboard and 8,046 skier injuries between 1989-1993 with a 1-1.5% incidence of hip/pelvic injuries<sup>2</sup>. The Enduro World Series in 2017-18 had 179 injuries out of 2,029 mountain bikers, with seven hip fractures and one pelvic fracture<sup>3</sup>. Pelvic fractures can range from benign to life-threatening, with many due to high-energy blunt trauma associated with concomitant injuries. Overall mortality from pelvic fractures ranges from 5-16%<sup>4</sup>.

Reduced mortality can occur with advance preparation and use of local ski-area specific algorithms. A focused review of pelvic and hip fractures is presented with assessment, management, and transportation issues discussed. We found some areas of confusion and controversy that will also be addressed. For purposes of this article, only specific findings on assessment for a particular injury will be noted. The referenced pages in OEC6 should be reviewed for overall patient assessment.

### Case

A ski patroller witnessed a 65-year-old ski instructor tomahawk over 1,500 feet vertical down a 52-degree slope. The patient



The structure of the pelvis and hip. Image by iStock.com/newannyart.

landed upright with both legs stuck in the snow and complained of severe groin pain. On arrival, the patient is diaphoretic and pale with a heart rate of 130 and a palpable blood pressure of 70.

### Hip Injuries

**Anatomy:** The hip joint consists of the head of the femur (the ball) and the acetabulum (the socket) (figure 31-8, OEC text). The bones of the pelvis are the ilium, ischium, and pubis, which fuse to form the acetabulum. The joint has a cartilage lining the surface of the acetabulum and strong fibrous tissue called the labrum to hold the femoral head in place along with ligaments. The patroller should palpate the entire lower extremity and pelvis by compressing the iliac wings medially or inward along with palpation of the pubis. You should never press downward or outward on the iliac crests.

**Femoral Neck Fracture:** Also known as a surgical neck fracture, fig. 31-8 shows a

fracture through the femoral neck that is usually found in older adults when they fall directly on the lateral side of that hip. The injury may occur in a younger individual due to major trauma. Pain in these injuries will usually be in the groin, and you will likely find the affected leg shortened and externally rotated. The patient will likely have significant pain with any light rotation of the lower leg. If the patient can lift their leg on their own, it would be doubtful that a hip fracture exists. The blood supply to the neck is relatively poor compared to the intertrochanteric area, with concerns of healing and avascular necrosis where the blood supply is cut off from the bone. Treatment consists of immobilizing the injury, most often using a backboard as a transportation device, and prompt arrangement for ALS transfer to a hospital.

**Intertrochanteric Fracture:** This fracture crosses between the lesser trochanter and greater trochanter, again, usually occurring in an older adult with the exception of major trauma in a younger individual. The

blood supply here is much richer and may suffer a large volume loss, but not to the extent of an open book pelvic fracture. There may be concomitant injuries. Treatment is the same as the femoral neck fracture.

**Trochanteric Fracture:** This type of injury is usually from a strong forceful muscle contraction pulling off a piece of the greater trochanter. This might be thought of as when strong tape is pulled up from particle board with pieces of the wood stuck to the tape. The injury can be quite painful with any muscle contraction, palpation, or movement of the leg. Treatment on the hill remains the same.

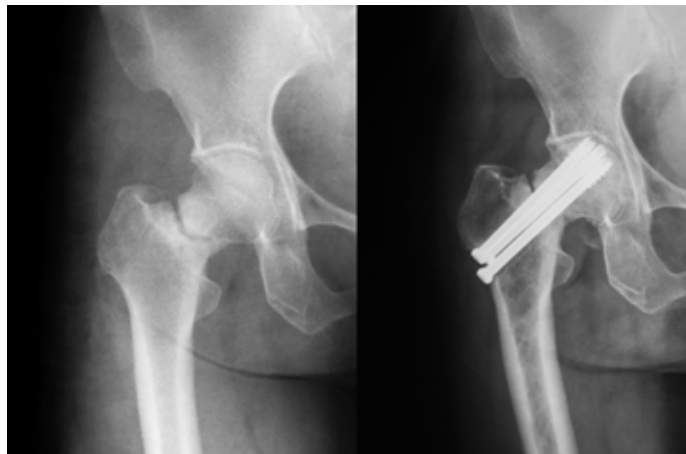
**Hip Dislocation<sup>5</sup>:** A traumatic hip dislocation takes a great deal of force and may dislocate anteriorly in a forward direction or posteriorly in a backward direction. Approximately 90% of dislocations are posterior, and a patient will likely have their lower leg in a fixed position with the knee and foot rotated toward the middle of the body. A direct force such as the knee striking the dashboard in a motor vehicle crash can cause this injury. A patient with an anterior dislocation will likely have the hip only slightly flexed with the knee and foot rotated away from the midline. A hip dislocation is a medical emergency, and treatment requires immobilization in a position of comfort with ALS transport to a hospital. There can be associated fractures of the femur and pelvis, along with nerve and blood supply disruption with avascular necrosis a big concern, so a physician needs to reduce the dislocation as soon as possible. Reducing a hip requires significant relaxation of the muscles with medications in the ER or OR and is not an OEC skill.

## Pelvic Fractures

**Anatomy<sup>4</sup>:** The pelvis consists of the coccyx, sacrum, ilium, ischium, and pubis. The strength and stability of the pelvis rely on strong ligaments connecting the sacrum, pubis, and lumbar spine to the other bones of the pelvis. It takes a great deal of force to fracture the bony structures and disrupt these ligaments, which ultimately creates pelvic instability. There is extensive vascular and nerve supply in the pelvis, along with structures such as the rectum, urethra, uterus, ovaries, vagina, and prostate that may also be injured. Hemorrhage is a leading cause of mortality in pelvic fractures. The exam should be the same as mentioned with hip fractures. You may examine specifically for a space over the symphysis pubis that suggests an open book or unstable pelvic fracture.

**Pelvic Ring Fractures:** These injuries can vary from relatively benign to unstable. Older adults may have an isolated fracture of the pubis rami from a low-energy fall. Athletes may develop an avulsion fracture similar to the discussion above with trochanteric hip fractures. The open book fracture is a term describing an injury that disrupts the symphysis ligaments and involves either a posterior pelvic fracture or ligamentous injury of the sacroiliac joints that produces an unstable pelvis. This instability causes shearing forces to the vascular structures, resulting in hemorrhage; the widening increases the potential space for blood loss. Open book fractures are painful and associated with many other potential injuries noted above. Further movement of the pelvis such as can occur with examination or log-rolling can potentially lead to rapid deterioration of the patient. Placement of a pelvic binder early can be life-saving for these patients. Rapid transport and ALS notification is crucial for the care of these patients.

**Sacral Fractures:** These fractures may result from a low-energy fall in the elderly to a fall from height in a younger individual. They can be quite painful in the posterior pelvis and groin. There is



Femoral neck fracture (left) and hip compression screw repair (right).  
Photo by iStock.com/sutthaburawon.

significant blood and nerve supply that may be involved, as well as the pelvic organs. Assessment, management, and transportation would be the same as any femur fracture, with immobilization and transportation.

**Acetabulum Fractures:** Fractures to the acetabulum may affect the anterior or posterior elements of the socket. They may have a simple transverse fracture like an egg cracking or may have significant displacement associated with hip dislocation or protrusion. (The femoral head pushes through the socket into the pelvic cavity.) There may be isolated pain with rotation of the leg like a hip fracture due to the femoral head rotating against the fracture, or it may involve significant pelvic and hip pain. Patient presentation may be similar to a dislocation, hip fracture, or pelvic fracture. Assessment, management, and transport would be the same with immobilization, rapid transit, and notification of ALS.

## Case Update

Ski patrol is able to lift the patient out of the snow and lower them to a backboard; a pelvic binder is placed on the board ahead of time. The patient was secured to the backboard with the pelvic binder applied appropriately. There was noted lower abdominal pain on palpation and ecchymosis noted bilaterally on the lower flank area and scrotum. Ski patrol initiates rapid transit down the hill to a waiting ALS unit. The patient's vitals were 100 systolic on arrival to the ER, a heart rate of 110, and diaphoresis resolved. X-rays revealed an open book fracture, and the patient was then transported to a trauma center. He had an uneventful hospital stay after surgery and was walking a few months later, with plans to ski again.

## Pelvic Circumferential Compression Devices (PCCDs)

PCCDs may include a commercial pelvic binder or sheet with the goal to stabilize fracture fragments and decrease the chance of an exsanguinating hemorrhage. Movement of fracture fragments can shear blood vessels and formed clots with increased bleeding. PCCDs have been well studied and show promise to reduce a disrupted pelvic ring with short-term positive results on blood pressure<sup>6</sup>. Long-term benefits lead to some controversy. It should be noted that application of a PCCD can have complications, with skin breaking down if it is left on longer than 24 hours<sup>7</sup>.

It should be clearly understood that they are beneficial in unstable



A commercial pelvic binder.



Showing proper placement of a SAM Pelvic Sling.



Proper placement of a pelvic binder on a patient.

or open book fractures. A low-energy fall with a pubic fracture would not benefit from its use, nor would a femoral neck fracture. There has been some concern of misdiagnosis by EMS and inappropriate placement of the device. There is no evidence to suggest any significant negative movement of hip bone fragments if a PCCD is applied to a hip fracture instead of a pelvic fracture, and it should not prevent its placement. The proper placement is at the greater trochanters.

The use of a PCCD is supported by the NSP Medical Committee, the American College of Surgeons in their Advanced Trauma Life Support course (ATLS), and the Department of Defense in their 2016 protocols of Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC). The TCCC course recommends application of a pelvic binder in any case of suspected pelvic fracture or severe blunt force or blast injury with pelvic pain, major lower extremity amputation, if the physical exam suggests a pelvic fracture, or with unresponsiveness or shock.

If a patroller is reluctant to apply the PCCD, then strong consideration should be given to placing the device on the backboard early with application of the PCCD at any sign of decompensation such as hypotension, tachycardia, diaphoresis, or mental status change. The device can truly be lifesaving and has little downside.

### Log Roll

In the patient with a hip fracture, using the log roll with injured side up is useful to examine the patient's back and to place the patient on the backboard as a transportation device. There are significant cautions in patients with an unstable pelvic fracture using the log roll, and it should be avoided if at all possible<sup>8</sup>. The bridge or BEAN lift is the choice for placing a patient with an unstable pelvic fracture on the backboard (errata sheet for OEC6, page 92, corrects as "There should be no suspicion of spinal injury.").

### Spinal Motion Restriction

A hip or pelvic injury may be a distracting injury, but in the case of a low-impact fall fracture this may not be the case. It is important for thorough assessment and to follow the SMR guidelines.

### Oxygen

A traumatic hip or pelvic injury is a significant trauma that may be associated with

many concomitant injuries. Similar to the note with SMR, if this is a severely injured patient oxygen should be applied. When in the aid room with the ability to measure pulse oximetry, we can titrate to a saturation of 94% or above and may be able to remove the oxygen altogether.

### Summary

Hip and pelvic fractures are an uncommon injury with potential catastrophic outcomes in any recreational resort setting. Thorough patient assessment with recognition of the sick or injured patient is critical. The use of the bridge lift and avoidance of log rolling a patient in severe pelvic injuries should be strongly considered. Always follow your local protocols. Strong consideration should be given to the use of a PCCD for any trauma patient who you suspect has a pelvic fracture. The fear of placing a PCCD because a patroller is not sure if it is a pelvic fracture or hip fracture has little merit. +

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# Perfect in the Powder



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## TIPS TO ENJOY THE DEEP AND FLUFFY

BY MARC BARLAGE, NSP NATIONAL OET PROGRAM DIRECTOR

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**P**owder skiing is the highlight of action-packed skiing films and how most patrollers imagine themselves gracefully conquering the mountain. While the powder is never guaranteed, if you're lucky your next powder day is just around the corner. Here are a few tips for skiing powder.

### 1) STAY CENTERED

You'll want your weight balanced over your skis. Sitting too far back will put you in the backseat and prematurely wear out your thighs; too far forward and you'll take a face plant.

### 2) WEIGHT BOTH SKIS

It's time to forget what you learned on the groomed slopes. On groomed packed slopes, we are taught to weight the outside ski. In powder, this will result in you plunging one ski straight into the snow, tipping you off balance and ending in a twisting, awkward fall. Stay more equally weighted on both skis.

### 3) FLEX AND EXTEND

In powder, there is an up-and-down movement that you can create by extending and retracting your skis with each turn. This up and down helps to release the pressure from the ski and makes it easier to move into the next turn and get your body into the right position. It allows you to ride the snow, rather than sink into it.

### 4) ROUNDED TURNS

Your aim in powder is to make smooth, rounded "S" turns.

This will allow you to maintain your speed. Slowly rotate the skis when they are unweighted between turns. Avoid the temptation to rush your turns. You'll have plenty of time to control your speed at the end of the turn. You can hold a rounder turn to control your speed if needed. Think of a rhythmic ski run where one turn blends into another.

### 5) LOOK AHEAD

Avoid the temptation to look down at your skis. Instead, look downslope and make a mental plan of the next few turns.

### 6) MAINTAIN SPEED

Powder slows you down, so it's important to maintain your speed throughout your turns. While turning, try to keep the same speed throughout. If you ski too slowly, your skis will sink and it will be more difficult to initiate the next turn. Note: This tip is summarized by "Maintain your speed," not "Ski fast and out of control."

No matter how good a skier you are, when you hit powder for the first few times you are going to take a tumble or two. Luckily, powder is soft and more forgiving than hardpack to fall in, but be aware that you can still hurt yourself. There are hidden dangers just under the snow, like rocks and logs. Be especially careful during early-season low-coverage areas or when venturing into the sidcountry or backcountry. Hopefully, these tips enhance your powder skiing experience. +

xxx



# Snowmobiles on the Mountain

THE WHYS AND THE HOWS OF USING SNOWMOBILES SAFELY

BY STEVE BARNES, NATIONAL SKI PATROL EASTERN DIVISION REPRESENTATIVE - OUTDOOR RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE; JEANNINE MOGAN, NATIONAL SKI PATROL CENTRAL DIVISION REPRESENTATIVE - OUTDOOR RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE; MARK PETROZZI, NATIONAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR - OUTDOOR RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE; AND JIM SINDT, LEADERSHIP TEAM OUTDOOR RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
PHOTOS BY MARK PETROZZI



Here and facing page: Different types of snowmobiles ready for use on the mountain.

Outdoor Risk Management (ORM) is a new, in-development National Ski Patrol educational program that is currently being developed by a committee of risk management professionals (who are also NSP members), ski industry veterans, and representatives of NSP's divisions. The ORM Program is designed for the basic patroller and will provide patrollers a baseline of risk management information and skills to apply to their daily patrolling activities. The anticipated rollout of the program will be the fall 2022. *Ski Patrol Magazine* will highlight various program modules in upcoming issues to familiarize readers with selected program topics.

This issue's article focuses on snowmobiles and their operation on-hill by ski patrollers. The sources for this content include National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) resources and over 100 years of collective industry experience of the authors.

During the course of their day, patrollers may be asked to conduct certain activities that include operating snowmobiles. Snowmobiles are often the tool of choice for moving equipment, transporting people, or more specifically (patrol-wise), pulling rescue toboggans (sleds) at many resorts. While the benefits of snowmobile use are many, there are also potential risks to the operator, other area employees, and the skiing and riding public. Collisions, rollovers, and other incidents may result in injuries and property damage. While all risks associated with snowmobile use cannot be eliminated, this article will outline several

strategies to help reduce some of these risks.

## Authorization

Authorization for the operation of snowmobiles at many resorts may not include all patrollers. Policies identifying who is authorized to operate snowmobiles often include:

- Authorizing only those patrollers who have successfully completed their resort's snowmobile operator's training program.
- Restricting operators to those over the age of 18. The Fair Labor Standards Act does not allow for those under 18 to "operate machinery" in the workplace. Checking your state's regulations (if any) or, when on federal land (most often, the U.S. Forest Service), those regulations or requirements concerning snowmobile operation. Some states require specific training for snowmobile operators.
- Conducting annual driver's license checks. Some resorts require operators to have a valid driver's license. This may be combined with other types of background checks.
- Authorizing only specific patrollers to operate snowmobiles for certain specific purposes. Some resorts authorize only paid patrollers to operate snowmobiles, while others authorize all trained patrollers to do so.



## Training

Many resorts conduct a training and/or licensing program for operators, as well as annual required refreshers for returning operators. These programs often include both classroom and practical, on-hill demonstration of skills components and may also include a written testing component. Following is a list of topics that may be included (as applicable):

- The features and controls of the machine
- Pre-operative mechanical check operational guidelines, such as operator stance and positioning on the snowmobile (standing, kneeling, sitting), fueling procedures, starting, daytime parking, and overnight parking
- Recommended routes (if any)
- Speed and manner of operation
- Towing toboggans, trailers, and tubs
- Towing patrollers
- Guidelines regarding hauling equipment
- Guidelines regarding courtesy rides for uninjured persons who are tired or intimidated
- How to ascend and descend
- How to ride with passengers
- Applicable sections of the manufacturer's operating manual (if any)
- Procedures for reporting mechanical issues
- Maintenance guidelines
- Carrying a radio, shovel, light, and wearing a helmet
- Operating around snowcats

## Limiting Snowmobile Use

In patrol operations, as in other departments, tactics that limit the amount of time that snowmobiles are operated on-hill during operating hours may be considered as they will naturally reduce the potential for incidents to occur. Following are some considerations that may help limit the use of snowmobiles.

### *Prior to any use:*

- Determine whether the use of the snowmobile is a necessity or a convenience, meaning can it be done without a sled or is it essential to do with a sled. One classic "necessity" when addressing patrol operations is delivering personnel or vital medical equipment to the location of a serious injury.
- In non-urgent situations, consider requiring a radio call or other communication describing the task, route, and operator prior to proceeding on-hill.
- Purchase fewer snowmobiles overall.

## Operating Around Snowcats

At many ski areas, snowmobile operators may be called upon to escort or otherwise work around grooming equipment. Following are some considerations when working with and around snowcats:

- Alert the operator of the snowcat of your presence; when possible, use radio communication.
- Assume the snowcat operator may not see you.
- Approach from the front when possible, signal the operator through hand gestures, and wait for their acknowledgement.
- If needing to approach the snowcat, wait at a safe distance for the operator to signal when it is safe to approach (usually after the tiller is stopped, the blade is on the ground, the engine is at idle speed, and the door is open).
- When escorting a cat (a typical activity) confirm the cat is ready to proceed and lead the cat along the route at a slow rate of speed, being prepared to stop in the event a skier/ rider or other person is either in or entering your path of travel.
- Consider using a whistle/siren/horn (if so equipped) to make your presence and that of the snowcat known to skiers/riders and others nearby or in the intended route.
- Drive for the conditions, snow, visibility, skier/ rider density, etc.
- When encountering a snowcat on a trail, give it a wide berth, reducing your speed and yielding the route.
- Never cross under, over, or in close proximity to a winch cable.



## Collisions

Whenever snowmobiles operate on open terrain or in the base area, the potential for collisions, however remote, exists. Following are some practices that may be considered to help operators avoid collisions:

- Designate a general speed limit (for open terrain, during operational hours).
- Require slower speeds in and near areas of higher skier/rider/pedestrian density, such as base areas, lift load and unload areas, and whenever people are or may be within a certain distance of the snowmobile.
- Help oncoming skiers or riders understand the best way to pass by using hand signals such as pointing or holding up a flat hand signaling “stop.” Hand signals may help overcome certain language barriers and may be better understood at greater distances than audible signals when it is windy/noisy (snowcat operating or snow-making in progress).
- Label each snowmobile with a large number on the sides of the cowling so that each machine is identifiable from a distance.
- Purchase highly visible traffic vests with large numbers on the back so that each operator is identifiable from a distance.
- Only operate the snowmobile when all lights are operable and a flag is mounted and visible.
- Make the snowmobile “BLT.” No, not the sandwich! Make it Brighter, Louder, and Taller by using brightly colored flags on whip antennas mounted on the front and/or back of the machine and adding additional lights or audible horns or sirens to make snowmobiles more noticeable.
- Consider equipping snowmobile operators with a whistle as well.

## Conclusion

This brief overview of snowmobile operations for patrollers is quite obviously not all inclusive. As a patroller, it is important to know and adhere to your resort’s snowmobile operators’ policies, guidelines, and practices that have been developed that best suit its specific operation, trail layout, terrain, prevailing weather, visibility and snow conditions, trail densities, and a host of other factors. +



# Connecting Smartphones to Ski Patrol Radio Systems

## NEW TECHNOLOGY CAN BENEFIT PATROLS IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS

BY DICK WOOLF, NSP NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR

Imagine this: your patrol is participating in a search and rescue for a lost hiker adjacent to your ski area. Off-duty patrollers have responded from home to assist the on-duty staff, who also must maintain normal coverage at the ski area. The off-duty patrollers do not have patrol radios with them but need to remain in touch with other searchers as well as with the ski patrol dispatcher. These patrollers are carrying their personal smartphones.

When the ski patrol dispatcher transmits a message, not only is it heard over the ski patrol radios, it is also heard by all the off-duty patrollers who are carrying their personal phones.

Suddenly, one of the off-duty patrollers locates the missing hiker, who is injured and unable to move. Over her cellphone, the patroller advises the other searchers that the patient has been located. Simultaneously, the ski patrol dispatcher and the on-duty patrollers hear this message over their patrol radios.

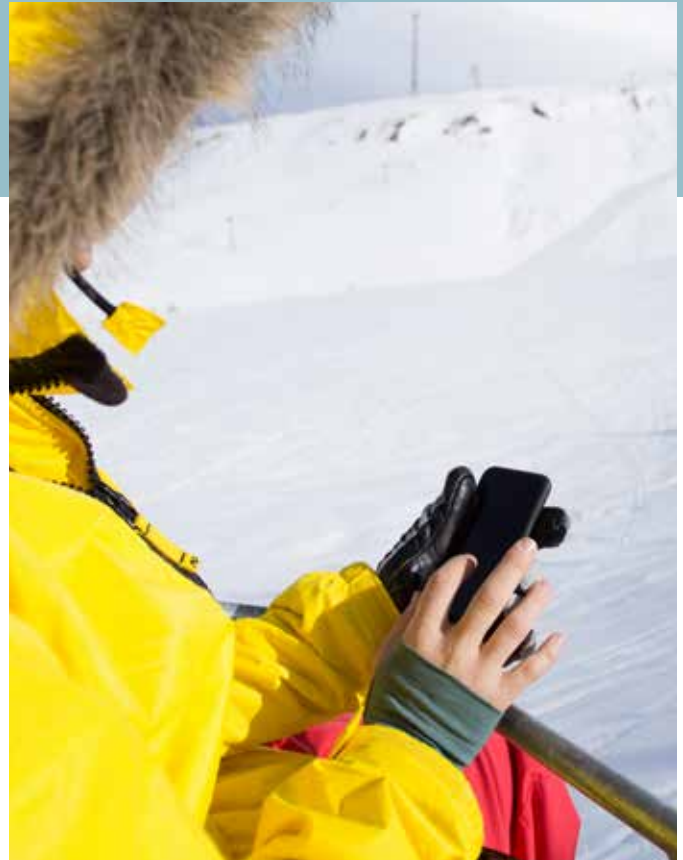
The location of the patient is determined, the coordination of rescue and transportation are quickly arranged, and the patient is evacuated for further treatment.

Sound farfetched? It isn't. This technology is available today, and it involves a several components:

- Radio base station
- Radio gateway device
- Laptop or desktop computer
- Internet connection
- Smartphone application

These components are integrated into a system that permits patrollers who are away from the area to have full connectivity with the patrol radio system. Of course, the system also works at the ski area. Are you off-duty and skiing with family and come across an accident? Call it in over the patrol radio system. Don't have a patrol dispatcher? You don't need a dispatcher to make this system work — the base station works in unattended mode.

All patrollers who wish to be part of the network download a specific application to their phone. When the application is enabled (you can select when it is on or off), you will hear all patrol radio traffic over your phone. There is a button on the phone display that serves as a transmit button (some phones



have a side button that can be used for this purpose). When you press the button and speak into your phone, that signal is transmitted over the patrol radio system. All other patrollers who have the app enabled will hear your message as well.

Since this system works wherever the patroller has cellphone coverage, you could even stay in touch with your home patrol while on vacation at the beach.

The cost to set up this type of system is very reasonable but varies depending on the type of radio base station (or vehicle radio with a power supply) compatible with the patrol radio system. The computer doesn't need to be very sophisticated. The gateway device is a small "black box" that's not very expensive.

Obviously, you'll need an internet connection. The smartphone app is free.

The Telecommunications Program will be preparing a technical bulletin with additional details. This will be posted on the Telecommunications Program page of the NSP website.

Questions and comments on this topic may be directed to [telecom@nspserver.org](mailto:telecom@nspserver.org). +



# WOMEN'S CLINICS AND *Their Value*



WHY YOU SHOULD SIGN UP FOR A WOMEN'S CLINIC THIS SEASON

BY TANYA THOMAS, NSP NATIONAL WOMEN'S PROGRAM ADVISOR

*A women's clinic during the PSIA Women's Summit. Photo by Candace Horgan.*

**A** lot of patrollers ask what's different about the NSP Women's Program. I've heard questions such as, "Why do you need women-specific toboggan courses?" and "It's just regular toboggan lite."

Well, first, it's not ALWAYS toboggan, and it's definitely not toboggan lite! Just because you can do toboggan "heavy" doesn't mean you should; toboggan "regular" is just enough. The Women's Program focuses on techniques to work smarter, not harder, in the handles and on the tail rope. We practice positioning our bodies so they are more efficient at maneuvering the toboggan, and we utilize the tools provided, like the chain, to put less stress on our bodies so we can maintain the stamina needed to bring a patient safely down the mountain.

In my time as the NSP National Women's Program advisor, I have been fortunate enough to ski and instruct with NSP National Outdoor Emergency Transportation Program Director Marc Barlage, and he teaches toboggan very similar to how we do in the Women's Program. Just because you CAN use brute force to get the

toboggan down the hill doesn't mean you SHOULD, does it? All patrollers need to work toward efficiency in toboggan handling to allow our bodies to continue this work we love long into the future!

The other part of women's clinics is the camaraderie that takes place during times of instruction and during breaks, including chairlift rides, lunch, dinner, and overnights. When women patrollers — paid and volunteer — get together, we start chatting and asking how others balance work and patrol, what we do with our children while patrolling, how we manage to get it all done and still have fun. There's a lot of brainstorming on how to stay patrolling during our busy lives. We discuss other programs we've attended and welcome our patrol sisters to join us on the next adventure. Leaders mentor others how to become instructors and evaluators. We play games, watch [ski] movies, and have belly-aching laughs!

So, if you CAN attend a women's clinic, you definitely SHOULD! We can't wait to show you what it's all about! +

## Dick Barron



Dick Barron

Dick Barron, a 50-year patroller and retired patrol director at Seven Springs Mountain Resort in the Western Appalachian Region, passed away at the age of 73 at his home on Oct. 11, 2021.

Dick served in the U.S. Army 32nd Artillery and was active duty in Vietnam in 1968 and 1969. He served 13 months in Vietnam as a communications specialist with an artillery unit in Dau Tieng, about 10 miles from the Cambodian border. He was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service.

Dick got into the snow business when Pittsburgh-based Kaufmann's Department store at Seven Springs hired him to work part-time in its ski shop. Dick had thought about a career in technology, but after graduation he soon found that the office environment was a bit too confining. He longed for open spaces.

Dick joined the Seven Springs Ski Patrol in 1970 and went on to become an Outdoor Emergency Care instructor, Senior patroller, Outdoor Emergency Transportation trainer/evaluator, and was the first Certified patroller from what was then the Western Pennsylvania Region. He mentored nearly every other Certified candidate from the region (now Western Appalachian) since then and served on the Eastern Division Certified staff for several years.

He loved sharing his knowledge and passion for skiing and patrolling. His enthusiasm was infectious. His support, guidance, and encouragement were always welcomed.

When he became director of ski and snowboard operations at Seven Springs, he oversaw the ski patrol, safety rangers, snow-makers, snow groomers, and lift attendants. He supported the Western Appalachian Region, hosting numerous training events, Senior and OEC clinics and exams, Patroller Schools, and more for the region.

Dick was also proud to be an active supporter of the Wounded Warrior Patrol organization. He was an initiator of the Wounded Warrior Patrol Program at Seven Springs, inviting veterans and their families to the resort for vacations.

Dick received nearly every NSP award available, including the Yellow Merit Star, Purple Merit Star, Patriot Star, National

Appointment, and Distinguished Service Award. In 2014, at the culmination of many years of service to Seven Springs and the National Ski Patrol, Dick was inducted into the Pennsylvania Winter Sports Hall of Fame.

Longtime friend and fellow patroller Imy Rosenblatt said, "We all were so proud when Dick was inducted into the Pennsylvania Winter Sports Hall of Fame. His achievements were as big as his heart, and he leaves behind an incredible legacy. We came to affectionately call him Mr. B, and everyone knew who we were talking about."

Everyone who met Dick became his friend, and he was a mentor to many. When he would walk around the resort or through the hotel and ski lodge, he would say hello to everyone he passed, calling them by name and asking what was happening in their lives, making everyone feel special. He would always stop and put wood on the fireplace in the hotel lobby to keep it burning for the guests — little things that made a difference.

Dick was always the eternal optimist. He always saw the good in people and things.

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**Marty Silverman**  
*Former Region Director, Western Appalachian Region*

## Philippe Clerc

Philippe Rene Andre Clerc, 73, passed away peacefully from cancer with his family by his side on Nov. 14, 2021.

Philippe was born Oct. 2, 1948, in Suresnes, France, to Maurice and Vivienne (Serra) Clerc. His adventurous spirit took him to the U.S. in 1972, where he explored the Lower 48 states. The call of Alaska brought him to Fairbanks in 1974, and he began his new adventure working on the pipeline out of the Alaska Laborers Local 942. The beauty of the 49th state captured his heart, and Alaska became his forever home. He started his career in public transportation in the farthest north city of Barrow in 1979, retiring in 2016 from Metropolitan Area Commuter System Transit in Fairbanks.

Most days you'd find Philippe outdoors, exploring any trail he could find with his dog, Jolie, his constant companion. He was an avid cyclist and spent the summer months riding his bike all over Fairbanks. One of his memorable journeys (and a source of many stories), was when he cycled from San Francisco to Jacksonville, Florida.

On winter days, you'd find him skiing, either



Philippe Clerc

downhill or cross-country. He joined the Fairbanks Ski Patrol at Ski Land in 2000, which quickly became his second home. Philippe had a great passion for ski patrol and skiing. He relished

learning skills that empowered him to help those who were struggling to ski or were injured. He also enjoyed interacting with his peers and colleagues while being outside in a place he truly loved. Even while battling cancer, he still came up to put in full patrol days and pull his share of the load. Philippe was entering his 21st year of service as a ski patrol member, and his 20-year service pin was presented to his children at his celebration of life.

One of Philippe's most identifiable qualities was his wonderful French accent. It gave him a unique voice, one to be remembered. Combined with his great sense of humor; that accent meant that you had to listen intently to ensure you understood the meat of the joke and its punchline. When asked to repeat a particular sentence, he would smile with an expression that said, "Silly, I pronounced that perfectly, you know!" He was known and loved for his quick wit, corny jokes, infectious smile, and kind and compassionate spirit.

Despite his patrolling skills and love of skiing, Philippe's biggest accomplishment and source of pride and joy was being a father and grandfather. He is survived by his children, Sebastien Ahyakak-Clerc, Fabienne (Abe) Siddall, and Philippe Clerc; grandchildren, Kristen, Burnell, Avrianna, and Avila; sisters, Elisabeth (Philippe) Quesnay and Sylvie Clerc; and nieces and nephews, Julie Quesnay, Caroline Quesnay, Antoine (Florence) Drancey, and Celine Drancey and their children in France.

Philippe loved to ski a fresh groomer, catch some powder in one of his secret stashes, or to sit on the Possenti Bench, which is situated to catch the first direct rays of sun in the early Alaskan spring. The view looks out over the ski area and surrounding hills; you can feel that first warmth of the sun after the long dark winter and reflect on the blessings and challenges in your life. You are also reminded that after the darkness, the sun always comes back. Philippe, rest in peace, enjoy the sunshine, and know we will all take a run for you, of course after you get first tracks!

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**Heidi Strader**  
*Fairbanks Ski Patrol Representative*

## David Collins

David Merritt Collins, a 40-year member of the Bogus Basin Volunteer Ski Patrol in Boise, Idaho, passed away on March 8, 2020, after a long, debilitating battle with Parkinson's disease. He was 78 years old.

David was born in San Francisco on July 1, 1941. He remembered having to shade the windows in his home at night to avoid being targets of bombs during World War II. His family moved to Boise in the late 1940s, where he attended local schools, graduating in 1959, a member of the first graduating class of Boise's newest and only second senior high, Borah High School.

He met and married the love of his life, Jane Ann Richardson, and for 53 years they shared their life together. Dave enjoyed an active lifestyle running marathons, river rafting, hunting, fishing, rock climbing, camping, and many other outdoor activities. David was an avid outdoorsman and always put family first amongst all his other outdoor passions.

Dave joined the Bogus Basin Ski Patrol in 1976. He was a longtime night patroller as well as an instructor in winter camping. He taught many mountaineering and map and compass classes for the patrol throughout his tenure. While on the patrol, Dave earned the distinction of Nordic Senior.

Dave was an engineer in the Boise Valley, working for the county and then for himself designing and constructing numerous subdivisions around the Boise Valley. He employed his children and loved teaching them practical applications of geometry as well as making them drag surveying equipment up steep mountains and muddy fields!

Dave is survived by his wife, Jane, eight children, 12 grandchildren, a sister and brother, and many nieces and nephews.

**Pam Carson and Carol Peterson**  
*Bogus Basin Ski Patrol, Idaho*

## David Conger

David Conger, lifelong patroller, passed away on Dec. 2, 2020, at age 82.

Dave joined the National Ski Patrol in 1971, passed his Senior test a few years later, and earned his National Appointment in 1986. He served as section chief within the North Central Region for eight years and taught Outdoor Emergency Care and Mountain

Travel and Rescue courses. Dave retired from the Ski Brule patrol in 2015 and continued as an alumni member.

Throughout his 49 years of NSP service, Dave was an outspoken advocate for volunteer benefits, continuous learning, and resources for patient care. He was dedicated to positive relationships with hill management and approached his leadership roles with caring and good spirit. Dave passed his love for skiing and patrolling to his family. His daughter and grandson followed in his footsteps as patrollers.

Dave was a true outdoor enthusiast. Many of his NSP friends joined him in backpacking, cycling, fishing, and hunting adventures. From hiking across Isle Royale and the Smoky Mountains to canoeing the Boundary Waters and skiing the American Birkebeiner, Dave was always up for a challenge. He was loved for his knowledge and appreciation of nature just as much as his festive après ski gatherings and lively sense of humor.

Dave truly represented the sense of service, camaraderie, and love of skiing that NSP embraces. He is survived and dearly missed by his wife, Carol; daughter, Amy; son, Matthew; and grandchildren, David and Natalie.

**Amy Conger**  
*Alumni, Ski Brule Ski Patrol*

## Merl Filler

Merl "Bud" Campbell Filler, 86, of Boise, Idaho, succumbed to cancer in the comfort of his own home surrounded by his family on March 26, 2020.

Bud was an avid skier, backpacker, hunter, writer, and adventurer. He became a U.S. Forest Service smokejumper in the 1950s when the dangerous profession was still in its infancy developing aerial firefighting techniques, tactics, and procedures. He partook in the famous Clearwater River Log Drives as



*Dave Conger*

a young logger, became a pilot and authored two books — one of them recalling the adventures and lifelong friendships formed in his smoke-jumping days, the other a modern thriller novel set to the rugged backdrop of the Idaho wilderness.

Bud was a member of Bogus Basin Ski Patrol in Boise from 1969 until 1983. He served as patrol leader for the 1975-76 season. As a volunteer National Ski Patroller, he was first on the hill and last off. If any errant skier went lost, he and his fellow patrollers would pursue until found, often well after dark.

Bud had a high regard for the U.S. armed forces and served as artillery officer in the U.S. Army's 9th Infantry Division. He earned a degree in forestry from Pennsylvania State University and a master's from the University of British Columbia. Throughout an exemplary career in forest products, Bud worked for several major forest products manufacturing companies and later co-founded Filler King Company, a highly successful manufacturer of structural engineered wood products. Bud never lost his logging roots though. Any dead or dying tree that caught his attention was frequently destined for a chainsaw workover, then yielding to the axe, and eventually ending up in a neat woodpile.

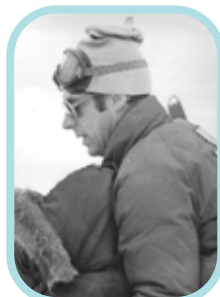
Throughout his life, Bud's love and appreciation of nature was unbounded. He was never happier than when running the ridges or roaming the deep forests or fishing in the many high mountain lakes of Idaho with family, friends, or sometimes, alone. Many wild creatures and lunker trout fell to his hunting and fishing prowess. Above all else stood Bud's love for life. This love, and the love for hard work, family, and adventure, he passed on to those around him.

Bud is survived by his wife of 64 years, Ellie; sons, Jeff, Ted, and Andy; daughter, Sue; daughter, Gwen; sister, Judy Bright; and nine grandchildren. Bud was a loving father, husband, grandfather, and friend to many.

**Pam Carson and Carol Peterson**  
*Bogus Basin Ski Patrol, Idaho*

## Elaine Gingold

The Labrador Ski Patrol of the Central NY Region said goodbye to its friend and primary Outdoor Emergency Care instructor, Elaine Gingold, who passed away on Aug. 23, 2021. Elaine began her NSP career in 1966. She literally trained hundreds of new and existing patrollers



*Merl Filler*

in NSP's first aid courses at patrol and region levels.

Her skill and enthusiasm transcended to patrolling from her chosen profession as a teacher in the North Syracuse

School District. She taught first, second, and seventh grades. Additionally, she was a teacher of other teachers in reading and writing. Her kindness and creativity shone through in whatever classroom setting she was in.

Her tenacity came through in fundraising for our patrol. She sought gift donations from shops and stores in the area to be used in raffles and gift baskets for sale. She provided food for the visiting West Point Cadet Patrol over the years. Our financial success as a patrol was enhanced by her efforts. Her love of Labrador Mountain was further personified when she purchased and renovated her lodge at the top of the Badger lift.

In 1987, the year she completed Level I Avalanche training, she received her National Appointment Number 6801. In the early 1990s, she became focused on teaching Winter Emergency Care and later OEC for candidates and at our refreshers. She was the recipient of a Yellow Merit Star for her lifesaving efforts, and she served on our board of directors for the last six years.

She saw the need for "fresh legs" and kept in contact with new recruits. One new patroller wrote, "Elaine called and emailed during my training to see how I was doing and give me advice and encouragement, which I greatly appreciated. I never met her in person, only on Zoom meetings, by email, or over the phone, but she left a lasting impression and made an impact!"

Other descriptions and remembrances: "One of a kind, naggy and loving at the same time. Great follow-up and follow-through. Good sense of humor (she put up with me). Always willing to lend a hand. A mother hen of sorts. Class act. I will miss her." Said another, "My two words to explain Elaine were momma bear! I started in the patrol and absolutely loved everything about her. She was sharp, direct, loving, and most of



Elaine Gingold

all she cared for us. She listened and advocated for us. As I continued on patrol, she always stayed in touch, and I made sure to also check in with her. She was the most dedicated, caring patroller I have met, and I will never forget her."

Another patroller said of her, "Elaine helped form part of the core to our group, which makes us feel more like a family. A sense of home, where we know we have good and bad days, but are always welcomed, appreciated, and thanked. Elaine was quite a lady and someone you could always count on to do her best with a positive spirit. She was simply a great example and is already missed so much."

She surely is.

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**Scott Launt**  
*Labrador Mountain Ski Patrol,*  
*New York*

## Barrett Kane

It is with deep sadness and heavy heart that Mountain Creek Ski Patrol of New Jersey announces the passing of our friend, mentor, and senior patrol leader, Barrett Kane. Barrett passed away unexpectedly on Sept. 12, 2021, at Morristown Memorial Hospital. He is survived by his loving girlfriend, Nanette Snook-Gilmore, his mother and father, and two sisters. He was 59 years old.

Barrett's passion for his job as a physical therapist for over 20 years was evident in all he brought to the patrol. Barrett joined patrol in January 2001. He took a Level 1 Avalanche Module in 2001, Instructor Development in 2002, became a patrol leader in 2006, and became an Outdoor Emergency Care instructor in July 2011. Some years after that, Barrett became a senior patrol leader.

Barrett has been teaching OEC to our candidates for many years now and has benefitted many of us with his vast knowledge of anatomy and physiology. His expertise and style made his lectures interesting, to say the least. His jokes were referred to as "Barrett jokes." You could always count on Barrett to bring in Entenmann's cakes and pastries on Sunday mornings when he reported in to patrol. Preparations for Sunday's lunches were coordinated with Barrett and other patrollers and rangers as early as Friday to see who would bring in

what for Sunday's feast.

In addition to loving skiing, he was an active scuba diver and PADI-certified divemaster.

We will all miss Barrett, his friendship, his dedication, and his contributions to the patrol. Rest in peace Barrett; your patrol family will miss you.

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**Cindy Griffenkranz**  
*Mountain Creek Ski Patrol, New Jersey*

## Charles Kempner

It is with a great deal of sadness that we announce the passing of Charles "Chuck" Kempner. Chuck passed away Nov. 5, 2021, following a heart attack. Chuck was a "spry" 92 years old at the time.

At our recent 2021 Northern Division meeting at Fairmont Hot Springs, Montana, it was a true honor to see Chuck inducted into the National Ski Patrol Hall of Fame. He and his lovely wife, Mona, were the stars of the evening at that special time. As Chuck told me that night, "It is just so wonderful to see all of my ski patrol friends."

Chuck joined NSP in 1969 as a member of the Kelly Canyon Ski Patrol. In 1976, he was awarded National Appointment Number 4890. In 1980, he was a member of the Lake Placid Olympic Nordic Patrol. For a number of years, he maintained dual certification as both a Nordic and alpine patroller.

In his 40-plus years of patrolling, Chuck helped organize two different patrols and served in various patrol jobs at the patrol, region, division, and national levels. He was a multidiscipline instructor in Outdoor Emergency Care, CPR, Avalanche, and Mountain Travel and Rescue.

While Chuck was never one to toot his own horn, his work did not go unnoticed. Over the years, Chuck received several Yellow Merit Stars, a Green Merit Star, and a Purple Merit Star. He was the Northern Division Outstanding Nordic Patroller in 1994, received a Distinguished Service Award in 2000, was the first recipient of the Mark Behan Outstanding Northern Division Instructor Award in 2008, and most recently was inducted into the National Ski Patrol Hall of Fame in 2021.

All of us in the Northern Division extend our prayers and condolences to Mona and their family. Chuck, may you be blessed with endless, effortless deep powder turns. Your final sweep is complete.

#### Rusty Wells

*Flathead Nordic Backcountry Patrol and Northern Division Region Advisor*

#### Steve Thompson

*Montana SnowBowl Ski Patrol and Northern Division Historian*

## Wendell Liechty

Wendell Liechty, an icon of the Intermountain Division and the Beaver Mountain (Utah) Ski Patrol, passed away on Sept. 1, 2021. Wendell was one of the earliest members of the Beaver Mountain Ski Patrol, which he joined in 1952 as a 16-year-old. He was a fixture in the Beaver Mountain Ski Patrol both before and after it affiliated with the NSP. He was a member of the committee that managed that affiliation in 1954, along with developing the Beaver Mountain Ski Patrol's bylaws, policies, and procedures, most of which are still in force.

He was drafted by the military in 1958 and spent 1958-60 in the U.S. Army in Germany, where he patrolled for what is now the European Division. Wendell returned and resumed patrolling for Beaver Mountain in 1960. He was elected assistant patrol leader in 1961 and served as the patrol director during the 1965 season. He was the Southern Region section chief (assistant division director) in 1966-68, and he served on the Intermountain Division Awards Committee for six years. Wendell was well known to the Intermountain Division and to other legends of the ski industry in Utah, including Stein Erikson, with whom he skied often. As such, Wendell was a well-liked and effective representative of the Beaver Mountain Ski Patrol to the Intermountain ski industry. He often served as a mountain guide to Beaver Mountain for visiting dignitaries.

Wendell received National Appointment Number 2918 in 1963, a Yellow Merit Star in 1971 for helping direct a successful overnight search for two lost children, a Distinguished Service Award in 1998, and a 60-year membership award in 2014. He was named

Beaver Mountain Ski Patroller of the Year in 1975 and received Beaver Mountain management's Herold Seeholtzer Outstanding Patroller award, given for years of dedicated service, in 1989.



Wendell Liechty

Wendell suffered a stroke in 2013, and despite his efforts to the contrary, ended his 61-year career as an active patroller in 2014. Nevertheless, he would visit the patrol room often and attended patrol functions when he could.

While he did not officially hold offices in the Beaver Mountain Ski Patrol after 1965, he was an active supporter of the patrol. He was a member of the planning committee for the development of a new Beaver Mountain Ski Patrol building in 1999-2001. He committed many hours of his time and expertise in plumbing, as the owner of a local plumbing supply business, to the construction of the building, which is considered one of the best in the Intermountain Division. He was also a significant monetary contributor. He was always present on mountain workdays, usually helping new patrollers accomplish the tasks of preparing and shutting down the mountain. Wendell more than fulfilled his obligations to the patrol for every year of the 61 years that he was a member until his health forced him to retire.

Wendell was well known for his road-kill wild game jerky (sometimes of unknown origin), which he shared with the patrol after sweep on many occasions, along with a "road soda" or two. He was an avid hunter and fisherman, fishing in Alaska every year for 30 years and hunting in the Utah marshes and mountains.

Wendell's dedication to the patrol was exceptional, and two of his sons, Mike and Steve, followed his example and joined the patrol as soon as they were of age. Mike had to retire due to back problems, but Steve is still an active member of the patrol. Wendell's daughter, Tonya, is a ski instructor at the mountain, and his other daughter, Julie, is an avid skier. His wife, Cheryl, accompanied Wendell skiing until he was felled by the stroke, at which time she dedicated herself to his care. Wendell was very

proud of his family, which includes 15 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, many of whom "ski the Beav."

We will miss Wendell greatly.

**John Keith and Dale Hansen**  
*Beaver Mountain Ski Patrol, Utah*

## Terry Lofsvold

Terry Lofsvold was born on Feb. 15, 1938. From the very beginning, Terry had a big love of the outdoors. He also loved sports, specifically football, running, snow skiing, and waterskiing. Throughout high school and his time at Whitman College, Terry played football and ran track. Upon graduating from Whitman College, Terry received two offers to play professional football: one from the Baltimore Colts and the other from the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. Terry declined both offers. He held the Whitman College record for the 880 meters from 1956-1974. After graduating from Whitman, Terry moved to Boise, Idaho, to be with his family.

Terry was a member of the Bogus Basin Ski Patrol from 1962-73. When Bogus wanted to expand operations from weekends only to include Wednesday through Friday, they needed weekday patrollers, as the volunteers only patrolled on weekends. Terry became the first paid ski patroller at Bogus. Bill Everts, whom Bogus' Coach lift is named after, trained Terry on toboggan handling. He was also a member of the Bogus Basin Ski Club for many years.

Because of his love of the outdoors, Terry worked as assistant recreation director for the city of Boise and spent his winter months at Bogus Basin supervising the youth ski school instructors. This presented him with the opportunity to become a management trainee for Bogus. Terry worked at Bogus Basin for 20 years, serving as the mountain's general manager from 1984-91.

During his tenure at Bogus Basin, Terry was responsible for lowering the cost of season passes, making skiing more affordable to residents of the Treasure Valley. His mantra was, "Skiing is a lifetime sport," and he focused much of his time encouraging people of all ages to come give skiing a try. Terry's biggest accomplishment was having lights installed on the backside of Shafer Butte (Superior Chair), providing more night

terrain for expert skiers.

While living in Boise, Terry contributed some of his time to philanthropic activities. He served as a member of the Idaho Travel Council, president of the Idaho Ski Areas Association, and was a board member of the Boise Area Chamber of Commerce. In 1998, Terry and his wife moved to Grand Junction, Colorado. Terry continued his love of skiing at new mountains, including Powderhorn, Aspen, and Telluride. He decided to work part-time for FedEx in the mornings so that he could ski the rest of the day at Powderhorn.

Terry was a natural-born storyteller. He loved to go into full detail to make sure you would know everything about the subject in question. His favorite hobbies were watching Boise State Broncos football games, reading the newspaper or auto magazines, eating cinnamon rolls, and all kinds of jam and syrup!

Terry passed away in his sleep on March 9, 2021, at the age of 83. He is survived by his wife, Carol, a daughter, two grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

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**Pam Carson and Carol Peterson**  
*Bogus Basin Ski Patrol, Idaho*

## Kathleen Quijano

Kathleen Marie Quijano, 79, a former patroller of the Bogus Basin Ski Patrol in Boise, Idaho, sadly passed away of complications of COVID-19 on Oct. 30, 2020.

Kathleen was born in Boise on June 24, 1941. The only child of Bill and Thelma Mulvania, she was raised with love, guidance, and encouragement, qualities which gave her the self-confidence and determination to cultivate an adventurous spirit and a can-do attitude that became the foundation of her life.

Kathleen graduated from Boise Junior College as a registered nurse in 1961. While in school, she went on a blind date with a charismatic University of Idaho student, Cesar Quijano. Kathleen and Cesar married on Oct. 12, 1962. They settled in Boise, where Kathleen began work as a young nurse, eventually becoming a head nurse and later moving into hospital management.

Her true joy, however, was bestowing upon her three children the same blend

of independence and determination that characterized her own upbringing. In the winter, the family skied together, and in the summer, they packed up the car and went to the lake for boating outings. Kathleen was always the first waterskiier of the season in their family!

Kathleen patrolled at Bogus Basin, volunteering countless hours in the aid room while Cesar, a 44-year member of the BBSB, was out patrolling the slopes. Kathleen also served on the board of the Bogus Basin Ski Racing Alliance and chaired their yearly ski swap for many years, always with good cheer, kindness, and effective leadership.

Kathleen's enthusiasm and industrious nature were hallmarks of her professional commitments. She retired as the director of safety and risk management for St. Luke's Boise Medical Center, leaving a legacy of fellowship and achievement over her long nursing career.

She enjoyed travelling, appreciating things that stimulated her sense of curiosity and cultivated an appreciation for others, a combination that could also describe her golf game, another beloved activity. Kathleen loved her many dogs, drank her coffee black, and could be persuaded by the charms of a good glass of red wine or vodka. All those things, however, were secondary to her devotion to her husband and children.

Kathleen was preceded in death by her husband of 51 years, Cesar. She is survived by her children, Rene Quijano, Carma Burnett (Paul Mangiantini), Christopher Quijano (Megan), and three grandchildren, Bridget Burnett, Gabriella Quijano, and Dominic Quijano.

Kathleen might no longer be of this Earth, but her family will never forget that she is with them wherever they go, whether it's looking out over the lake in her beloved McCall, Idaho, or simply encouraging us to visit those places where our better angels can take us.

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**Pam Carson and Carol Peterson**  
*Bogus Basin Ski Patrol, Idaho*

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# WRITE A CAPTION FOR THIS PHOTO

Send *Ski Patrol Magazine* your captions for the photo to the right. Scribe of the winning caption will receive a \$25 gift certificate to the NSP Online Store and recognition in the next issue. Send entries to [editor@nsp.org](mailto:editor@nsp.org), or mail them to 133 S. Van Gordon St., Suite 100, Lakewood, CO 80228. Only NSP members are eligible. Remember *SPM* if you have a humorous photo for next issue's caption contest. Send it in high resolution (at least 225 dpi) to [editor@nsp.org](mailto:editor@nsp.org).



Congrats to our winner, Mark Stoeger of the Pine Mountain Ski Patrol, and thanks to everyone for their submissions. Thanks to Robert Vandenboss, of the Buck Hill Ski Patrol in Minnesota, for the photo.

## WINNER

"Would someone tell the newbie that this is not what we mean by sweeping the hill." "

— Mark Stoeger, Pine Mountain Ski Patrol, Michigan

## HONORABLE MENTIONS

"Looking to go the extra mile on his first day, Jeff vacuums the trail his hill captain asked him to sweep."

—Nic Heshelman, Blue Mountain Ski Patrol, Pennsylvania

"Jamie had hoped that the COVID protocols would be relaxed a bit this season."

— James Wight, Bittersweet Ski Resort, Michigan

"The next technological innovation in the end-of-day sweep."

— Keenan Herlocker, Soldier Mountain Ski Patrol, Idaho

"When the dispatcher runs out of tasks for the YAPs to do."

— Ben Swenson, Copper Mountain Ski Patrol, Colorado

1<sup>st</sup>





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