



Valdez Avalanche Center

Annual General Membership Meeting Minutes May 3, 2016

Valdez Library Conference Room

Attendance: Sean Wisner, Pete Carter, Greta Palmer, Ryan Chalker, Ben Stolen, Sarah Carter, Kevin Salys, Karen Allred, Kyle Sobek, Rich Loftin

VAC Forecasting Report: Beginning in October, 145 forecasts were published. An average of 300 people viewed the forecast each day with almost 50,000 views this season. Peak days during March and April saw over 800 visits.

We saw six widespread avalanche cycles related to direct action storm snow and rain activity that posed HIGH danger to backcountry travelers. We had 22 storms that accumulated 502" snow with 56.9" water equivalent at Thompson Pass. Valdez town was below a rain line that hovered between 1900-3000' receiving 178.1" snow with 38" water equivalent. Kevin Salys was paid 30 hrs/wk with many volunteer hours, Sarah Carter was paid 2-4hrs/week with many volunteer hours, and Peter Carter continues to volunteer his forecasting time. VAC intern, Kyle Sobek, contributed many pertinent and timely snow, weather, and avalanche obs.

The idea of public flag system like the forest fire signs to denote the avalanche danger during the height of the season (March/April) in Thompson Pass was discussed. Due to some riders not having access to the internet if they are camped in the Pass.

Blueberry Study Plot Observations: Kevin Salys, Ben Stolen, and Ryan Chalker worked diligently to take and record timely observations that augmented our daily forecasts and supplied climate data to NWS. Daily observations including rainfall amounts will be continued at the site through the off-season by Greta Palmer, Jared, and Aidan.

Public Outreach and Education Report:

KCHU PSAs and daily announcements

Valdez STAR newspaper Enviro Box with precipitation numbers

Nov.4-6 VAC volunteers and staff participated in the Alaska Avalanche Summit, Southcentral Alaska Avalanche Workshop, and the Winter Fest in Anchorage

Nov.-Dec. PWSC AIARE Avalanche Level 1 course

Dec.16 Avalanche Awareness at Herman Hutchens

Jan. 22-23 hosted the Valdez Community Snow Safety Workshop in conjunction with Valdez Snowmachine Club and Valdez Parks and Rec

Jan.23 Backcountry Film Festival

Jan. 29-31 Valdez AIARE Avalanche Level 1 course

Feb.2-4 Glennallen AIARE Avalanche Level 1 course

Feb.17 Valdez High School Avalanche and wilderness safety
Feb.23 Copper Valley Telecom Avalanche Awareness
Feb. 23 Alyeska Pipeline Terminal Avalanche Awareness
March 3-6 PWSCC AIARE Avalanche Level 2 course
March 26 Beacons & Eggs hosted in conjunction with Valdez Parks & Rec
April 1-10 Mountain Skills classes at Tailgate Alaska
April 15-17 Avalanche Forecast and Outreach at Hill Climb

AAIC events and education VAC taught elsewhere in the state
Dec.12-14 Backcountry Babes Women's AIARE Avalanche Level 1
Dec. 18-20 Backcountry Babes AIARE Avalanche Level 1
Feb. 13-15 Backcountry Babes Women's AIARE Avalanche Level 1
Feb. 18-21 Backcountry Babes Women's AIARE Avalanche Level 2
Feb.27-29 UAA AIARE Avalanche Level 1
March 14-16 Black Rapids AIARE Avalanche Level 1
March 17-20 Black Rapids AIARE Avalanche Level 2

Karen Allred mentioned KCHU's broadcast area is 46,000 square miles. Next winter on air announcements will include information for Cordova, Valdez, and the Eastern Alaska Range since the broadcast area includes these areas.

Next season Rich Loftin is willing to help host another Slededucation class similar to the snow safety workshop that was held in January in conjunction with the Valdez Snowmachine Club and Valdez Parks & Rec. The idea of hosting a monthly Friday evening/Saturday workshop for January, Feb, March, and April was floated.

We need more avalanche educators, more motorized instructors especially. This is being addressed by mentoring people who are interested in teaching – December 2016 there will be an instructor training course.

An early season event explaining how to use the avalanche forecast and how to submit an observation. This will be planned for the second week of November, coinciding with Avalanche Awareness Month.

VAC is partnering with [Vistas Tours](#) to offer two Avalanche Level 1 courses next March in Thompson Pass.

Finance Report:

2015-16 VAC to date approximations

Income:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| City of Valdez | \$40,000 |
| Private Contracts | \$4,000 |
| Tailgate Mountain Skills | \$12,000 |
| Tailgate fundraiser | \$1,125 |
| Valdez spring fundraiser | \$1,500 |

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|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Membership/Private business donations | \$2,200 |
| Total VAC Income | \$60,825 |
| Expenses: | |
| Blueberry Weather Station | \$900 |
| InReach | \$420 |
| Phones | \$480 |
| VCVB membership | \$100 |
| Postage | \$300 |
| Forecasting Program equipment | \$1600 |
| Outreach/Education program | \$500 |
| Wages | \$23,000 |
| Uniforms | \$150 |
| Fundraiser expenses | \$1000 |
| AAIC admin support/Insurance/website | \$2500 |
| Total VAC Expense | \$35,450 |

Valdez Fundraisers Jan.23 and April 14 for Mike O'Leary Scholarship Fund raised ~\$500

Funding, fundraising, and budget for 2016-17:

Operations will be very similar in 2016-17 to 2015-16. An annual membership drive is increasing local support and donations, Karen Allred and Ben Stolen volunteered to spearhead this. Our membership has grown to 140 individuals, businesses, and community partners supporting the forecast and education programs. **Please renew your membership if you have not already and encourage others to do the same. Thank you!**

Katheryn Peltier has volunteered to help fundraise, taking the lead on November's winter kickoff event. She will also design a thank you letter for members and donors. Ben Stolen suggested looking into bulk mailout option for membership renewal reminders.

We will recommend that AAIC join the PICK CLICK GIVE program.

It was discussed how we can capture a fundraising opportunity on Thompson Pass in the spring when everyone is camped out, riding the Pass. Need more brainstorming.

Steering Committee/Friends Group:

Sean Wisner committed for another 3 year term as center director. Karen Allred committed to another 3 year term as steering committee member. Our other current committee members John Cullen, Erica Shirk, DB Palmer and Will Stark will be asked if they want to continue serving.

Nominations for new Committee members: Katheryn Peltier as fundraising chair.

Your involvement can be tailored to your interests, including outreach, finance, membership and fundraising. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact scarter@alaskasnow.org

Other business:

In July our forecast team will attend the AAIC retreat to train in non-profit business, education updates, forecasting alignment, and more.

In November our forecasting/observer team will convene to review operations and safety as defined in our employee handbook and industry standards. Scheduling will be done on google calendar.

Data management systems will be explored, so we can begin next season with a system that works and is not as frustrating as shared Dropbox xls spreadsheets. Access Microsoft?

Partnership with many entities including the Valdez Snowmachine Club is increasing our outreach and fulfilling our mission of helping Alaskans LIVE TO RIDE ANOTHER DAY!