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R&M CONSULTANTS, INC. 5024 CURDOVA • BOX 6107 • ANCHORAGE ALASKA 99502 • PH 907 279 0481 • FAX 090 25280

ENGINEERS
GEOLOGISTS
PLANNERS
SURVEYORS

April 25, 1983

R&M No. 350001

Alaska Division of Parks
619 Warehouse Avenue, Suite 210
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Attention: Mr. Neil Johannsen, Director

Re. Alaska Avalanche School

Dear Mr. Johannsen:

Having just attended the 3-day workshop last week on Avalanche Hazard Evaluation in Land-use Planning presented by the Alaska Avalanche School, I wish to commend the efforts made by all the instructors and especially by Doug Fesler and his staff at Chugach State Park in arranging and coordinating the workshop. I feel that a forum of this type is of invaluable benefit in advancing the engineering and planning professions in Anchorage and Alaska with respect to avalanche design considerations.

Another activity of the Alaska Avalanche School which I find is of great benefit to Alaska is presentation of the Back-Country Avalanche Hazard Evaluation workshops throughout the winter. I was fortunate enough to attend one of the Level I workshops this year and found the presentations professional, informative, and recommendable for all individuals involved in work or recreation in back-country areas. Here again, I feel that Mr. Fesler and his staff have performed a very valuable service in public safety and awareness for Alaska as a whole.

Quite a number of my engineering colleagues and fellow cross-country skiers were unable to participate in this year's workshops but have had their interests heightened about the need for avalanche hazard considerations. I hope that both of these programs are available again next year and in the future to continue the cooperative efforts of all of us for rational evaluation of avalanche safety.

Very truly yours,

R&M CONSULTANTS, INC.

Jeffrey H. Coffin, P.E.
Senior Civil Engineer/Hydrologist

JHC/rma



Sheldon Jackson College

P.O. Box 479 • Sitka, Alaska 99835
Telephone (907) 747-5220

A Christian school in spectacular Southeast Alaska

5 May 83

Ester Wunnicke
Commissioner of Natural Resources
Pouch M
Juneau, AK 99811

Neil please respond direct
Thx
NE

Sandy
att 7es

Dear Ms. Wunnicke:

I attended the Alaska Avalanche School in Juneau this February. As an instructor in Outdoor Education here in Sitka, I found the School very valuable in preparing me to teach better and better care for the safety of my classes in the field. I hope these workshops will continue.

Sincerely,
Buck Tilton

RECEIVED
MAY 9 1983
Department of
Natural Resources

FOGGY MOUNTAIN SHOP

Scott Fischer • Betsy Flood

171 SHATTUCK WAY

JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801

PHONE (907) 586-6780

9-30-82

Doug Fesler
Alaska Avalanche School Director
Alaska State Parks
619 Warehouse Dr.
Anchorage, Alaska 99502

DIRECTOR OF PARKS

OCT 04 1982

Dear Doug,

The enclosed list of signatures ^{is} of members of a recently organized Juneau Mountain Search and Rescue Group, interested in having an avalanche workshop in Juneau this winter. We feel that, due to a growing awareness of potential avalanche hazards in our area, a workshop dealing not only with avalanche mechanics and snow evaluation but also avalanche rescue techniques, would be well attended. A number of members of the Juneau Mountain Search and Rescue Group attended your course here in 1981 and found it to be most valuable. We hope to see the program re-instituted in S. E. Alaska this winter and encourage you to consider Juneau for a workshop in light of this area's unique avalanche hazard potential.

Sincerely Yours,
Scott Fischer
Juneau Mountain Search and Rescue
Group

cc: Doug Fesler - Anchorage, Ak.
Cindy Jones - Haines, Ak.
Bob James - Juneau, Ak.
Priscilla Lindh - Juneau Ak.

Sandy R
at 7es



March 21, 1983

Representative Mike Miller
Alaska State Legislature
Pouch V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Representative Miller:

We were fortunate enough to be able to attend the Alaska Avalanche School, Juneau Workshop in February 17-20. I don't believe we are alone in stating that the workshop was very well organized, instructed and very, very valuable in terms of public education.

We have both been involved in backcountry recreational guiding for the past two years in Alaska and have seen, even in that short time, a significant increase in wintertime backcountry use. With sophisticated modern equipment and techniques, this trend is sure to continue. With this in mind, public avalanche education is imperative. Also, with the lack of zoning restrictions at either the state or local level, knowledge of potential avalanche hazards to housing developments and individual homesites could avoid major losses of life and property.

We are taking the point of view that prevention is the best cure. Not only are avalanche accidents often tragic, and organized rescue efforts (often merely body recoveries) very expensive, but they are in most cases, avoidable if people possess the proper knowledge for basic evaluation of avalanche hazards.

True, public education in this area is expensive, but the returns are high in terms of public safety and avoidance of expensive rescue efforts. In the past, the State of Alaska has been able to offer avalanche education to the public at a cost affordable to most people. We strongly support the continuance of public avalanche education through the Alaska Avalanche School workshops.

It is encouraging to see more and more people enjoying Alaska's wintertime backcountry, but they should have the opportunity to approach backcountry activities armed with the necessary knowledge to avoid potential hazards or, if they are involved in an avalanche incident, to effect rescue efforts for those caught in a slide (buried victims' best chances for survival are the members of the party who were not caught in the slide).

The Alaska Avalanche School workshops are well managed, instructed, and provide an essential public service. They deserve to be continued. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

William Ross Hardwick

Gloria Griffith Hardwick

William Ross Hardwick
Gloria Griffith Hardwick
Box 534
Douglas, AK 99824

cc: Neil Johannsen

FOGGY MOUNTAIN SHOP

Scott Fischer • Betsy Flood

171 SHATTUCK WAY

JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801

PHONE (907) 586-6780

March 4, 1983

Neil Johannsen, Director
Alaska Division of Parks
619 Warehouse Dr.
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

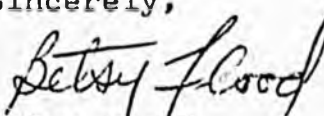
Dear Mr. Johannsen,

I recently completed a four day avalanche workshop in Juneau given by the Alaska Avalanche School. As a backcountry skier and climber of over ten years experience in Alaska, I was very impressed with many aspects of this citizen education program subsidized in part by our state government.

All the instructors at the workshop were experienced, knowledgeable and professional in their efforts to educate a varied group of over thirty students in avalanche evaluation, safety and rescue. The workshop schedule was well arranged for maximum classroom instruction and field work and very proficiently run by coordinator Doug Fesler.

I strongly support continued use of state money for programs such as these. Many Alaskans are involved, or have friends and family involved, in winter backcountry travel. The Alaska Avalanche School is a rare opportunity to educate these citizens in safe winter travel and thus help avoid the comparatively high costs of state funded rescue efforts in the backcountry. Doug Fesler should be commended for his tremendous efforts in this direction.

Sincerely,


Betsy Flood

 Anchorage Community College A Unit of the University of Alaska System

March 28, 1983

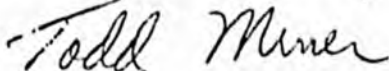
Doug Fesler, Director
Alaska Avalanche School
Division of Parks
555 Cordova Street
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Doug,

I didn't get a chance to thank you Friday night for your fine presentation. The students gained a new insight into the realities of avalanche danger, especially as seen from the field. I can harp and harp but there is nothing like photographs and personal testimony.

I noticed on this weekend's climb students actively commenting on and questioning route selection and snow conditions, a skill that will be valuable when they start climbing on their own. Once again thank you very much for taking the time to come out on a Friday night and provide us with such a professional presentation.

Sincerely,



Todd Miner

for Fred H. Muhs, Director
Division of Community Campus

ac

361 Distin Ave. #4
Juneau, Alaska 99301

03/27/83

The Honorable Ester Wunnicke
Commissioner of Natural Resources
Pouch M
Juneau, Alaska 99811

*Sander
ett Douz
N*

Dear Ms. Wunnicke:

This past February 17-20, 1983, I attended the Alaska Avalanche School's Backcountry Avalanche Hazard Evaluation workshop held in Juneau. I was extremely satisfied with the workshop - the instructors were top notch, the workshop was well-organized, and a wealth of information was very thoroughly disseminated.

The School, the Division of Parks, and yourself are to be commended for seeing that this type of pertinent, quality public education is and continues to be provided. The knowledge taught in the workshop is relevant in a large part of the state - the more people that become knowledgeable about avalanche hazard evaluation, snow stability, and rescue techniques; the less the state will need to spend on expensive rescues (of uninformed victims).

Authorizations and allocations to the Alaska Avalanche School have, are, and will continue to be well spent. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Joe Lacy

cc: Judith Marquez, Director Alaska Avalanche School
Neil Johannsen, Director Division of Parks
Rep. Mike Miller - I understand you introduced funding legislation for the Alaska Avalanche School. Thanks. It's an important program.

Boston

March 23, 1983

Bob Bell
S.R. 30462
FAIRBANKS, AK. 99701

RE: Alaska Avalanche School
DIVISION OF PARKS

Dear Governor Sheffield,

I attended the Level II avalanche workshop offered by Alaska's Division of Parks this past weekend. This course is quite well run. The study of snow and avalanche is fascinating, and the knowledge obtained from these classes is of a good deal of benefit to anyone living or traveling in the mountainous regions of our state. This program is highly recommended and I would like to see more funding funneled it's way. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bob Bell

RECEIVED
MAR 29 1983

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

Dear Governor Sheffield:

I recently attended a Level I Backcountry Avalanche Hazard Evaluation Course, presented by the Alaska Division of Parks. Commendation of this course and its organizers and supporters is definitely in order. It was the best organized and most thorough exercise of its type that I have been exposed to. My five years of recreational skiing and mountaineering and my five years of participation with volunteer Mountain Rescue Groups have lead me to believe that this type of training is essential to the safe use of our wilderness areas in winter. This enhanced safety level results in lives saved, greater value of our recreational areas, and reduced costs to society for rescue efforts of avalanche victims. Training is also essential for all people involved in rescue efforts. This need has been demonstrated at Algeska Ski Area and on avalanche incidents along Alaskan Highways.

I urge you, as the leader of state directions in spending to support an adequate level of funding to maintain and enhance this program. A permanent line item in the State's budget would certainly be warranted. Hunters, snowmobilers and most other users of our snow covered wilderness need the availability of this program. The benefits will surely outweigh the costs.

Sincerely,
Riordan J. Daugherty

Riordan Daugherty
1412 Richardson Driv
Anchorage, Ak.
99504

STATE OF ALASKA

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

POUCH M
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
PHONE:

January 4, 1983

Mr. Doug Buchanan
Executive Director
Alaskan Alpine Club
3641 Sandvik
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Dear Mr. Buchanan:

I appreciate receiving your thoughts on the avalanche education and safety program in the Division of Parks. I have studied your concerns and do not believe that there is any basis for your allegations of impropriety in management of the program, nor do I believe that the program provides undue public competition with private business.

The Division of Parks has already responded to some of your specific points, but please allow me to address them generally.

The avalanche program, administered by the Department in response to statute (AS 18.75.010) and public need, serves an important public function. Many interested groups and citizens participate in the program; your organization is certainly invited to participate as well. The Department recognizes the contributions of participants and donors in its public advertisements.

The accounts for the State program are kept separately from those of the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group, whom you should contact for information on AMRG programs. The Department synchronized its programs with those of the AMRG to improve public awareness, and public preparedness, in avalanche safety. There is no need for a formal agreement for this cooperation, which is handled at the staff level. I understand that an employee of the Division of Parks has been on the Board of the AMRG, an arrangement which has improved the overall avalanche program rather than presented any conflict of interest.

I was disappointed that your remarks about the need for avalanche safety programs reflected such antagonism toward State involvement. The State is a reliable source for public information and programs of many types. Government exists in part to serve such functions as protecting and educating members of the public who need certain services. This does not, in my opinion, qualify as "empire-building," as you allege.

Please feel free to contact the Division of Parks with further specific comments. I assure you that the Department is not "hiding or ignoring" impropriety in its programs, and that we are continuing the avalanche program on the basis of proven public need.

Sincerely,

B. Arnold, Deputy

F Esther C. Wunnicke
Commissioner

cc: The Honorable Bill Sheffield
Governor
Neil Johannsen, Director,
Division of Parks

13 December 1983

DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

DEC 15 1983

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
JUNEAU

Esther Wunnicke, Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources
Pouch M
Juneau, Alaska 99811

SUBJECT: ALASKA STATE PARKS AVALANCHE SCHOOL

Dear Commissioner Wunnicke,

The enclosed response from Division of Parks reveals improprieties that must be rectified, either by DNR, the State Legislature, or the public.

Please note the shortcomings and improprieties by the numbers listed on the Parks Division response.

2. (a) What are the workshop expenses? (b) To whom are they paid? (c) Of these, who are Division of Parks employees and/or Alaska Mountain Rescue Group members? (d) How many people, and whom, are both Division of Parks employees and Alaska Mountain Rescue Group members? (e) What are their current and past positions in A.M.R.G.?

3. The Division of Parks is using public funds to enter into a financial/service agreement with a private entity; without any written agreement for public monitoring or scrutiny. Division of Parks thus demonstrates contempt for public accountability. This contempt might very well pervade the Division of Parks.

(a) What did the agreement entail, by detailed item?

4. There is literally no end of perceived public and special interest "needs" that exist in a perceived "vacuum" that self-serving government bureuacracies could "fill" with the use of public funds. Accountability and limiting criteria are absolutely imperative. These criteria and accountability are apparently absent in the Division of Parks.

(a) "It is determined...": How? (b) "...it was decided...": By whom (names)? (c) With three civilian volunteer mountain rescue groups in Alaska, why was no contract or agreement offered to the non-Anchorage groups for this public service? (d) *WHY WERE THEY NOT EVEN CONTACTED?!*

continued

ALASKAN
ALPINE
CLUB
3641 SANDVIK
FAIRBANKS
ALASKA
99701



(e) If, as stated, the need was in Southcentral, how was it determined that it was not equally needed in Southeast and Northcentral? (f) Is not the Alaska State Division of Parks a statewide agency? (g) What is the relationship of the Applied Mountain Rescue Technology class to the co-advertised Avalanche classes?

Either this statement of need is false (an attempt to appeal to some "strong" specific need that remains factually nebulous/questionable) or the public money was involved in self-serving Parks Division waste/corruption.

Using the same illusions and lack of standards the same vacuum exists throughout the United States. The alluded-to "reason" is without any foundation. (h) What factors made the Division decide to fill the "vacuum" in one area only, with preselected personnel?

(d) What caliber of mountain rescue training capabilities must be present in the private/volunteer sector to preclude your initiating a public funded State Parks program to fill that "vacuum"? It is clear by the Division of Parks statements that this had to be determined, else the statements constitute lying to camouflage either an arbitrary decision or self-serving corruption. The validity of this point is underscored by the regional application of this favored status, among other conflicts. Certainly the Division anticipates applying these standards in other regions if this program is more than a scam arrangement with local pro-parkies seeking public money for their hobby.

5. But people are being paid public funds for services that are not necessary. I would like to be paid for the considerable mountaineering and mountain rescue expertise I have acquired through my avocation. (a) Rather than compete in the private market for a need proven genuine by the private market, why don't you and I get together and run us a little plausible-sounding mountaineering safety scam with public funds, through the Division of Parks? That is a question I would like an answer to so we can relate it to the facts of the current issue.

We needn't tell any of the other mountaineers in the state about this scam. We'll just determine that no one else could provide a better service, more efficiently or less expensive. We'll work this between the Division of Parks and the Mountain Rescue Fund of the Alaska Alpine Rescue Group. This group is a non-profit, tax exempt (501c3) independent association (articles of association filed with IRS). I just happen to be the Chairman of this Group. Among other mountain rescue programs, two years ago AARG established the Mountain Rescue Fund, earmarked to encourage private, long range solutions to mountain rescue expenses. The object is to relieve the public burden of funding mountain rescues through the National and State Parks entities, among other public entities.

13 December 1983
Commissioner Wunnicke
page three

How coincidental it is that certain government agencies and their environmentalist allies have worked to subvert this fund.

I'm sure you will readily facilitate my proposed scam since your Department has now engaged in an almost identical, but less credible scam.

6. (a) Is this answer to imply that the Division of Parks entered into an agreement involving public funds, with a non-person entity that has no articles of incorporation, articles of association, company charter, business license, constitution, by-laws, or statement of purpose? If so, the Director of the Parks Division must be replaced, and the Division audited.

8. The use of public funds and resources by a government agency to lobby the public for additional funding support, jurisdiction, and/or power can no longer be tolerated. This practice has become too common and significantly contributes to public disrespect for government. Your Department's self-serving lobbying has rendered elected officials nothing more than mindless rubber stamps to fund the special interest support you use the funds to generate. (a) Why should we pay for legislators? They are superfluous to the Governor and his Commissioners.

Rather than being impartial, serving the public interest at the direction of elected officials, appointed bureaucrats are constantly using their authority and funding to advocate the growth of their own tax funded empire: An empire now so powerful that it is above public or legislative accountability. It pays its public support leaders with mountain rescue scams and the like.

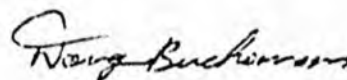
Consider all the by-line statements appropriate for a public land managing agency. Then consider the one chosen by the Alaska State Division of Parks. This statement clearly demonstrates that, above all else, the Alaska State Division of Parks is self-serving!

And it is confident that it need not be accountable.

I stress that I would like answers to each of the questions I presented. I will follow up on this matter.

Thank you for your cooperation in not hiding or ignoring not fully considered programs within your department.

Sincerely,



Doug Buchanan
Executive Director

cc: Governor Sheffield
several state Legislators
file for news media distribution

ALASKA STATE PARKS' ALASKA AVALANCHE SCHOOL

NOV. 18 7-9 PM

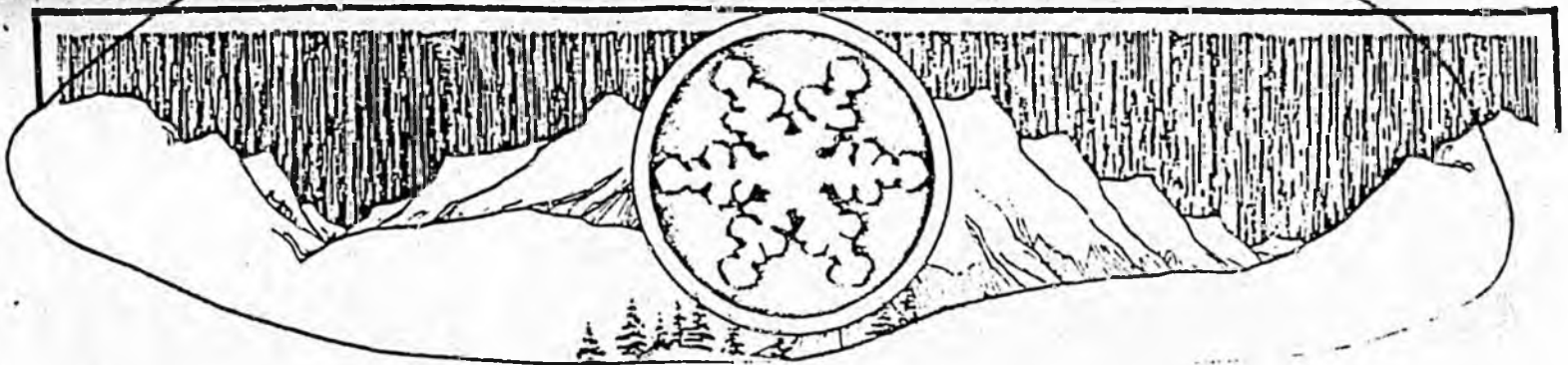
INTRODUCTORY AVALANCHE AWARENESS:
Designed for the recreational public, this evening program will focus on recognition of avalanche hazard and safe travel procedures for backcountry travelers. Limit: 150 participants.

DUCKERING RM 317
U OF A FAIRBANKS

AVALANCHE CONSIDERATIONS IN MOUNTAINEERING: Oriented toward experienced mountaineers, the mini-workshop will look at who is getting caught in avalanches and why. It will review key concepts associated with terrain analysis, snow stability, and weather factors affecting avalanche hazard and focus on a decision making process designed to reduce avalanche accidents. Group participation is encouraged.

NOV. 19 1-5 PM

- PLEASE POST -



ALASKA STATE PARKS ALASKA AVALANCHE SCHOOL WINTER 1983-84 SCHEDULE

DATE	LOCATION	TYPE OF WORKSHOP	*PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS	COST
Nov. 18, 7-9 pm	U of A/FBKS, Duckering Bldg, 317	Introduction to Avalanche Awareness	AF	Free
Nov. 19, 1-5 pm	U of A/FBKS, Duckering Bldg, 317	Avalanche Considerations in Mountaineering	AF	Free
Jan. 6-9	Independence Mine, Talkeetna Mts.	Backcountry Avalanche Hazard Evaluation and Rescue Techniques, Level I	ABCD	\$75
Jan. 20-23	Thompson Pass, Chugach Mts.	Same as Jan. 6-9 (Level I)	ABCD	\$75
Feb. 3-6	Juneau/Eaglecrest, Coast Mts.	Same as Jan. 6-9 (Level I)	ABCD	\$75
Feb. 17-20	Girdwood, Chugach/Kenai Mts.	Same as Jan. 6-9 (Level I)	ABCD	\$75
Mar. 2-5	Kenai Lake, Kenai Mts.	Avalanche Forecasting & Hazard Evaluation Techniques for Mountaineers, Level II	ABCDE	\$75
Mar. 16-19	Haines, Coast Mts.	Same as Jan. 6-9 (Level I)	ABCD	\$75
Mar. 30-Apr. 2	Thompson Pass, Chugach Mts.	Same as Mar. 2-5 (Level II)	ABCDE	\$75
Apr. 11-15	Turnagain Arm, Chugach Mts.	Applied Mountain Rescue Technology	AG	\$125

*PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS: (A) Must have an eagerness to learn, the ability to think and the desire to participate. (B) Be in good physical condition, able to ski uphill and down in variable terrain and changing snow conditions and be prepared to remain outdoors in foul weather all day. (C) At least intermediate level of winter mountaineering or ski experience. (D) Pre-registration and pre-payment of tuition fee required to register. (E) Previous attendance at the Alaska Avalanche School's Backcountry Avalanche Hazard Evaluation and Rescue Techniques Workshop. (F) Register at the door, no cost. (G) Must have skills and equipment appropriate to intermediate level mountaineering, rock climbing or mountain rescue capability.

December 19, 1983

Re: Letter of November 26, 1983

Doug Buchanan
Alaskan Alpine Club
3641 Sandvik
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Dear Doug:

The commissioner has asked me to respond to your letter of November 26, 1983. The Alaska Avalanche School fulfills the statutory requirements of the Alaska Avalanche and Fire Weather Forecasting System through an Reimbursable Services Agreement (RSA) with the Department of Public Safety.

Our goal is to provide the opportunity for the best possible avalanche training of Alaska's citizens in the hope that the number of avalanche incidents, injuries, and fatalities can be reduced. This reduction in accidents can be directly correlated to a reduction in tax funded rescue expenses. The helicopter expenses alone from one Taylor Creek or one Matanuska Glacier rescue are enough to pay for an entire year's schedule of workshops for 200-300 people.

The concerns you have expressed in your letters have no basis in fact. There is no "self-serving corruption," nor "incompetence," nor "empire building," nor "tax waste" as you have alledged. Quite to the contrary, we are endeavoring to serve the public with maximum services on a limited budget.

I'm always willing to listen to helpful suggestions or criticisms which have a factual basis.

Sincerely,

Neil C. Johannsen
Director

By: Doug Fesler, Coordinator
Alaska Avalanche School

DF:clk

ALASKA STATE PARKS --
Lets' Put Them on the Map!

4, E1, 2 R3

26 November 1983

DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

DEC -6 1983

Ester Wunnicke, Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources
Pouch M, M/S 1000
Juneau, Alaska 99811

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
JUNEAU

SUBJECT: ALASKA STATE PARK'S AVALANCHE SCHOOL
THE NEED FOR ACCOUNTABILITY
SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

Director of Parks

DEC 12 1983

Dear Commissioner Wunnicke,

More widespread expressions of concern among mountaineers have prompted this follow-up to our 10 November 83 letter.

ISSUE

1. The State Park Avalanche School's association with non-state entities has apparently become politically oriented.

A State Park Avalanche School workshop, held in conjunction with the Alaska (no "n") Alpine Club, was openly used by that club to enhance its own credibility and status. That club is an environmental activist organization having only periferal association with mountaineers. It is widely known to be politically pro-park without regard for park program accountability or impacts on mountaineers.

2. Advertisement of State Park Avalanche School support for private groups is unaccountable and inappropriate.

While the Avalanche School director stated he has made his availability for workshops known to many people, no record of that claim exists. No such notice was received at the office of the Alaskan Alpine Club or Alaska Alpine Rescue Group.

The free State Park's Avalanche School workshop recently given in Fairbanks was given at the University of Alaska and could have been directly scheduled through the University. Instead, an activist environmental group was allowed to "sponsor" the Avalanche program to enhance its own status while offering nothing more than University facilities. Total expenses were borne by the State. That organization used both days of the workshops to advertise its activities and programs. Both the State and that organization's advertisements of the workshops

one, continued

26 November 1983
Ester Wunnicke
page two

were used to effectively enhance that organization's credibility and status. The State participation attracted a much larger and broader attendance than than club could otherwise attract.

3. There are gross contradictions involved with the State Park Avalanche School's association with this environmentalist organization.

A The Avalanche School workshop directly appealed to mountaineers. The School director, knowing of the existence of the Alaskan Alpine Club and the Alaska Alpine Rescue Group (organizations of active mountaineers), and of the existence of a controversy over representation of mountaineers in Alaska, chose to work with a non-mountaineering environmentalist organization known to be politically pro-park. The School workshop was scheduled to directly conflict with the pre-scheduled, annual mountaineering class of the Alaskan Alpine Club. The workshop specifically conflicted with the field class on mountain rescue techniques. To accommodate the desire of some of the local mountaineers to attend the avalanche workshop, the mountain rescue field class was cut from two days to one, seriously detracting from its effectiveness.

A Further irony was demonstrated by the environmentalists using the State Park's Avalanche School workshop to advertise a (commercially available) mountaineering slide show which is part of their ongoing program to undercut the Alaskan Alpine Club's formal program of using mountaineering slide shows to raise money for mountain rescue responsibilities.

A *THROUGH EITHER INCOMPETENCE OR SELF-SERVING CORRUPTION, A NON-MOUNTAINEERING STATE BUREAUCRACY CHOSE TO WORK WITH A NON-MOUNTAINEERING ENVIRONMENTALIST ORGANIZATION TO PRESENT MOUNTAINEERING SAFETY INFORMATION THAT DIRECTLY UNDERCUT NON-PROFIT PRIVATE MOUNTAINEERS' EFFORTS TO TEACH MOUNTAINEERING SAFETY AND PROVIDE FOR MOUNTAINEERING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.*

THIS EXAMPLE DEMONSTRATES THE REASON UNACCOUNTABLE BUREAUCRACY CAN GROW AT THE TAX EXPENSE OF THE PUBLIC, AND AT THE SAME TIME DESTROY THE PUBLIC'S ABILITY TO MEET CITIZEN RESPONSIBILITIES THROUGH THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

THIS STATE PARK EXAMPLE PARALLELS THE NATIONAL PARK EXAMPLE OF OUTLAWING ALASKAN NON-PROFIT MOUNTAINEERING SAFETY EDUCATION CLASSES IN DENALI NATIONAL PARK WHILE GIVING EXCLUSIVE MOUNTAINEERING CONCESSION PERMITS TO POLITICALLY PRO-PARK NON-ALASKANS.

THE ALASKA STATE GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF REACTION IS AN INDICTMENT OF THE SELF-SERVING CORRUPTION OF GOVERNMENT ITSELF. CITIZEN DISRESPECT FOR GOVERNMENT IS JUSTIFIED.

4. Other State Park Avalanche School actions need investigation.

The State Park Avalanche School's sale of certain Avalanche books through the Alaska (no "n") Alpine Club offered further State recognition/support for this political environmentalist group. This action should be investigated and redressed.

continued

26 November 1983
Ester Wunnicke
page three

FUTURE OF THE ALASKA STATE PARK'S AVALANCHE SCHOOL

Isolated, an avalanche warning system/education system has merit, within accountable limits, in Alaska.

The fact that the State Parks Division could build an unrelated empire to the unaccountable and counterproductive extent it did indicates the need to investigate Parks Division policies and programs.

Avalanche education has no pertinent relationship to the State Parks Division.

It is fully appropriate to ask, as a result of this incident: Will next the various other land/resource managing divisions get into the business of publicly teaching unrelated or periferally related courses of information? Division of Lands might teach real estate selling techniques or earthquake detection. Division of Forestry might teach log cabin building or land-slide detection/avoidance. Division of mines might teach minerals marketing or basic geology. Fish and Game might teach cold water swimming classes or taxidermy.

As both the National and State Parks agencies continue their budgetary flights into unrelated programs, tax waste and public controversy will increase. The National Park policies unavoidably taint the public image of the State Parks, especially while State Parks are attempting to emulate National Park programs/policies.

SOLUTIONS

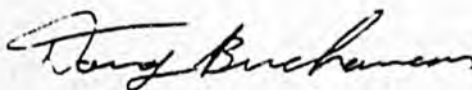
1. Establish a more effective system to monitor and reprimand bureaucrats misusing their authority for budgetary support.
2. Investigate the Alaska State Parks Division for further bureaucratic empires unrelated to its basic mandate.
3. Establish a better system of financial accountability to insure review of program relevance/priority to agency mandates.
4. Shift the Alaska Avalanche School to the University of Alaska.

* * *

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

two enclosures
cc: Governor
Interior Legislators

Sincerely,



Doug Buchanan
Executive Director

26 November 1983

Mr. Neil Johannsen, Director
DNR, Division of Parks
619 Warehouse Ave., Suite 210
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Mr. Johannsen,

1 As noted on the enclosed flier of the Alaska State Parks Division; what is the Alaska Mountain Rescue Fund?

2 Who owns this Fund?

3 Please send a copy of the contract under which the State Parks Division collects checks for this entity.

4 Please send an account of the actions that led to an agreement between that entity and the Alaska State Parks Division.

5 Does this entity operate under a profit or non-profit status?

6 Please send a copy of their charter.

7 Thank you for assisting us with this matter.

Sincerely,



Doug Buchanan
Executive Director

cc: file for possible later distribution



ALASKA STATE PARKS

ALASKA AVALANCHE SCHOOL

WINTER 1983-84 SCHEDULE

DATE	LOCATION	TYPE OF WORKSHOP	*PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS	COST
Nov. 18, 7-9 pm	U of A/FBKS, Duckering Bldg, 317	Introduction to Avalanche Awareness	AF	Free
Nov. 19, 1-5 pm	U of A/FBKS, Duckering Bldg, 317	Avalanche Considerations in Mountaineering	AF	Free
Jan. 6-9	Independence Mine, Talkeetna Mts.	Backcountry Avalanche Hazard Evaluation and Rescue Techniques, Level I	ABCE	\$75
Jan. 20-23	Thompson Pass, Chugach Mts.	Same as Jan. 6-9 (Level I)	ABCD	\$75
Feb. 3-6	Juneau Eaglecrest, Coast Mts.	Same as Jan. 6-9 (Level I)	ABCD	\$75
Feb. 17-20	Girdwood, Chugach Kenai Mts.	Same as Jan. 6-9 (Level I)	ABCD	\$75
Mar. 2-5	Kenai Lake, Kenai Mts.	Avalanche Forecasting & Hazard Evaluation Techniques for Mountaineers, Level II	ABCDE	\$75
Mar. 16-19	Haines, Coast Mts.	Same as Jan. 6-9 (Level I)	ABCD	\$75
Mar. 30-Apr. 2	Thompson Pass, Chugach Mts.	Same as Mar. 2-5 (Level II)	ABCDE	\$75
Apr. 11-15	Turnagain Arm, Chugach Mts.	Applied Mountain Rescue Technology	AG	\$125

***PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS:** (A) Must have an eagerness to learn, the ability to think and the desire to participate. (B) Be in good physical condition, able to ski uphill and down in variable terrain and changing snow conditions and be prepared to remain outdoors in foul weather all day. (C) At least intermediate level of winter mountaineering or ski experience. (D) Pre-registration and pre-payment of tuition fee required to register. (E) Previous attendance at the Alaska Avalanche School's Backcountry Avalanche Hazard Evaluation and Rescue Techniques Workshop. (F) Register at the door, no cost. (G) Must have skills and equipment appropriate to intermediate level mountaineering, rock climbing or mountain rescue capability.

INSTRUCTORS: Workshops are staffed by professionals who are specialists in their fields and familiar with Alaskan conditions. By providing 6 instructors at each workshop we are able to keep the level of training high and the ratio of students to instructor low. One guest instructor (an outside expert) is invited to attend each workshop from somewhere in North America. Collectively, our staff represents one of the highest levels of expertise available.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Food and lodging are the responsibility of the individual participants and are available at/or near each of the workshop locations. At certain workshops sleeping bag space is provided at no cost or at minimal cost. (Lodging is free at Independence Mine and Kenai Lake and \$5 per night at Thompson Pass. A limited number of free sleeping spaces will be available with local residents during the workshops at Juneau, Girdwood and Haines.)

REGISTRATION: Fill out the attached registration form, enclose the appropriate tuition fee and mail to:

Alaska Avalanche School
613 Warehouse Ave., Suite 210
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

For the Applied Mountain Rescue Technology Workshop, make checks payable to the Alaska Mountain Rescue Fund. For all Avalanche Workshops, make checks payable to the State of Alaska. Upon receipt, we will send you further detailed information. NOTE: Tuition fees are **NON-REFUNDABLE** unless we receive your cancellation at least 20 days prior to the date of the workshop.

CURRICULUM: The goal of the Alaska Avalanche School is to provide quality avalanche safety training to Alaskan residents at affordable prices. For a look at detailed

December 8, 1983

Re: Your Letter of November 26, 1983

Doug Buchanan, Executive Director
Alaskan Alpine Club
3641 Sandvik
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Dear Mr. Buchanan:

The answers to your questions are listed in the order in which you asked them:

1. The Alaska Mountain Rescue Fund is the name of a bank account used to deposition tuition fees for the Applied M₂. Rescue Technology Workshop.
2. The fund is a trustee bank account administered by the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group. The funds are used to pay for workshop expenses.
3. There is no contract.
4. It has been determined over the last several years by individuals within the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group and the State Division of Parks that there is (a) a strong need for mountain safety training in Southcentral Alaska, and that (b) no training capabilities of the caliber proposed presently exist. To fill this vacuum it was decided that Alaska Mountain Rescue Group and the State Division of Parks would enter into a joint venture to provide a quality state-of-the-art workshop in Applied Mountain Rescue Technology.
5. No profit is being made.
6. There is no charter.
7. Your welcome.

Sincerely,

Neil C. Johannsen
Director

By: Doug Fesler, Coordinator
Alaska Avalanche School

DF:clk

LEADERS IN PROTECTING THE HERITAGE OF AMERICAN MOUNTAINEERING FREEDOM

10 November 1983

Ester Wunnicke, Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources
Pouch M, M/S 1000
Juneau, Alaska 99811

DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

NOV 14 1983

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
JUNEAU

REF: ALASKA STATE PARK'S AVALANCHE SCHOOL

Dear Commissioner Wunnicke,

I notice that the State Park's Avalanche School schedule lists the Alaska (no "n") Alpine Club as providing support and assistance for The Alaska State Park's Avalanche School.

Could you inform us as to what that support and assistance is?

Why have you not approached the Alaskan Alpine Club or Alaska Alpine Rescue Group for that type assistance?

Why have we not been credited for endorsing this particular program within limits in our publication ALASKAN MOUNTAIN?

The Parks Department is keenly aware of the existence of our organizations (formed in 1979 and 1975), and of the controversy surrounding the other so called "alpine" club.

The Alaska (no "n") Alpine Club can be accurately described as a non-climber, environmentalist club. It has in the past and continues to directly thwart mountain safety and mountain rescue efforts being conducted by the volunteer, non-government sector. It is on record as supporting federal government restrictions on Alaskan mountain climbers, which are strenuously opposed by the active climbers (except the select climbers who are "coincidentally" benefitting from highly inappropriate grants from the National Park Service). It has supported the expanded role of State and Federal Parks at the exclusion of concern for specific policies detrimentally affecting active mountaineers.

We are wondering if that organization's pro-park political philosophy that supports the expanded government control of mountaineering responsibilities and freedoms, is the reason your Department is using your public resources to selectively work with and credit that organization. Certainly that organization tends to support your expanded budgets without regard for appropriate limits.

cont.

DELIVER TO	LOCATI
FROM	LOCATIO
TELEPHONE/TELEX	TOTAL NUMBER OF
TRANSMITTING ON/SPEED	DATE
PHONE FOR PROBLEMS/NAME/NUMBER	
REMARKS	

10 November 1983
Ester Wunnicke
page two

It is hard to otherwise explain your relatively poor communication with the statewide Alaskan Alpine Club and the interior Alaska Alpine Rescue Group.

This is important because we have watched the growth of your avalanche program to a point where it is precluding any opportunity for private enterprise, volunteer organizations or the more appropriate approach through established educational institutions. It is taking on the functions of a bureaucratic empire that can readily impinge upon citizen rights and freedoms. Certainly your selective choice of favored political allies is indicative of an unaccountable future.

The use of tax financed, manipulated public support to justify a non-priority tax funded program in a periferally related department demands investigation.

Sincerely,



Doug Buchanan
Executive Director, Alaskan Alpine Club
Chairman, Alaska Alpine Rescue Group

cc: Governor Bill Sheffield
Interior Legislative Delegation
other Legislators

VF
ST

8

12038 NL FAIRBANKS ALASKA 76 02-10 4:38P YST

PMS VIC FISHER CHAIRMAN
THE SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
JUNEAU AK 99801

01871

PLEASE SUPPORT FUNDING OF DNR ALASKA AVALANCHE
SCHOOL IN HB110. HAVING TAKEN THE COURSE, I KNOW
IT IS TAUGHT IN A HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL MANNER. THE
INFORMATION AND ATTITUDES PRESENTED IN IT HAVE
SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE INTERIOR MOUNTAINCLIMBING
COMMUNITY, RESULTING IN FEWER AVALANCHE RELATED
MISHAPS. THIS COURSE IS AN AFFORDABLE WAY TO REDUCE
THE NUMBER OF EXPENSIVE MOUNTAIN RESCUES. PLEASE
BE ADVISED THAT MANY MOUNTAINEERS IN THE INTERIOR
STRONGLY SUPPORT THIS FUNCTION OF STATE GOVERNMENT.
JOHN W KELLER, PAST PRESIDENT, ALASKA ALPINE CLUB

1984 FEB 10 PM 5 45

0 1

ST

February 9, 1984

Senator Vic Fisher
Pouch
Juneau, Alaska 99811

RE: House Bill 110, Alaska Avalanche School

Dear Senator Fisher:

Doug Buchanan, Alaskan Alpine Club, does not speak for a majority of Alaskan mountaineers, but only for a very small minority based in Fairbanks.

Mr Buchanan has tried for years, unsuccessfully, to organize and persuade climbers to revolt against all national and state park regulations pertaining to access and registration, particularly in Denali State Park (Mt McKinley). His voluminous and monotonous anti-parks rhetoric appeared in several national mountaineering publications, but his tirade became so ridiculous that "Climbing" Magazine now refuses to print any additional letters or comments pertaining to his unsupportable claims against the park systems.

The Alaska State Parks' Alaska Avalanche School provides an invaluable service and is the main source for Alaskans interested in avalanche awareness and backcountry hazard evaluations. It is staffed by dedicated professionals working with a limited budget. Avalanche Schools are available at a nominal fee for students and courses are held in various locations to further reduce participant costs. With ever growing numbers of backcountry users, an awareness of potential hazards will insure reduced rescue costs and hopefully save a few lives. Mr Buchanan also heads a mountain rescue group; perhaps he enjoys recovering frozen bodies from avalanches.

As past president of the Mountaineering Club of Alaska and past Section Chairman of the Alaska Section of the American Alpine Club, and as a recent participant of the Avalanche School, I urge you to support House Bill 110.

Sincerely,

John R Dillman
John R Dillman
2101 West 29th Avenue #26
Anchorage, Alaska 99503
279-1246 or 274-7636



Alaska State Legislature

Senate Committee on State Affairs

Vic Fischer, Chair • Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811
(907) 465-4954

Official Business

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate State Affairs Committee
FROM: Senate State Affairs Committee Staff
RE: HB 110 Avalanche and Fire Weather Forecasting System
DATE: February 9, 1984

HB 110 transfers the responsibility of avalanche and fire weather forecasting from the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Natural Resources.

AEIDC (Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center) does the forecasting for the state through funds distributed by RSA from the Division of the Alaska State Troopers. The bill does not change any functions of AEIDC. Currently, AEIDC forecasts both fire weather and avalanche conditions.

Fiscal Information

The passage of the bill would require the 275,000 dollars be transferred from the Department of Public Safety budget to that of the Department of Natural Resources (see enclosed fiscal notes).

Enclosed as back-up is:

A fiscal note from DPS.
A fiscal note from DNR.
A packet of back-up information provided by
Representative M.M. Miller's office.

STATE OF ALASKA 1984 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

Revision Date: 2/9/84

REQUEST

Bill/Resolution No.: HB 110
 Title: Avalanche & fire weather forecasting system
 Sponsor: M. M. Miller
 Requestor: Senate State Affairs
 Date of Request: 1/20/84

FISCAL DETAIL

Agency Affected: Natural Resources
 Program Category Affected: NRMEC
 BRU, Program or Subprogram(s) Affected: Park Management

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY 84	FY 85	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89
OPERATING						
100 PERSONAL SERVICES						
200 TRAVEL						
300 CONTRACTUAL						
400 SUPPLIES						
500 EQUIPMENT						
600 LAND & STRUCTURES						
700 GRANTS, CLAIMS						
800 MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	275.0	275.0	275.0	275.0	275.0	275.0
CAPITAL						
REVENUE						

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL						

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

SOURCE OF FUNDS TO OFFSET FISCAL IMPACT OF BILL:

These funds are currently included in the FY 84 budget and FY 85 budget proposal for the Department of Public Safety. This is a transfer of funds (\$98.6) to Park Visitor Services project, Park Management BRU. Amount of transfer is \$275.0. The intended distribution would include \$32.3 for DOT/PF (avalanche) and \$144.1 for AEIDC (avalanche and fire).

ANALYSIS: Attach a separate page for analysis

Prepared By: Ned Farquhar Phone: 465-2400
 Division: Commissioner's Office Date: 2/9/84

Approved by Commissioner: Wm. D. Arnold, Deputy Date: 2/9/84
 Agency: Department of Natural Resources

Distribution (by Agency preparing fiscal note):
 Legislative Finance
 Legislative Sponsor
 Requestor
 Office of Management and Budget
 Impacted Agency(ies)

12/1/83

STATE OF ALASKA 1984 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

Revision Date: _____

REQUEST

Bill/Resolution No.: HB 110
 Title: Act Relating to Avalanche
 and Fire Weather Forecasting
 Sponsor: Rep. Miller
 Requestor: Senate State Affairs
 Date of Request: 2-8-84

FISCAL DETAIL

Agency Affected: Public Safety
 Program Category Affected: Justice
 BRU, Program or Subprogram(s) Affected:
Alaska State Troopers

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY 84	FY 85	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89
OPERATING						
100 PERSONAL SERVICES						
200 TRAVEL						
300 CONTRACTUAL		(275.0)				
400 SUPPLIES						
500 EQUIPMENT						
600 LAND & STRUCTURES						
700 GRANTS, CLAIMS						
800 MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING		(275.0)				
CAPITAL						
REVENUE						

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND		(275.0)				
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL		(275.0)				

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

SOURCE OF FUNDS TO OFFSET FISCAL IMPACT OF BILL:

ANALYSIS: Attach a separate page for analysis

Prepared By: Francis C. Allan
 Division: Alaska State Troopers

Phone: 269-5691
 Date: 2-8-84

Approved by Commissioner: [Signature]
 Agency: Public Safety

Date: 2/8/84

Distribution (by Agency preparing fiscal note):
 Legislative Finance
 Legislative Sponsor
 Requestor
 Office of Management and Budget
 Impacted Agency(ies)

12/1/83

Division of Alaska State Troopers
HB 110
Analysis

The Department of Public Safety, Alaska State Troopers BRU contains \$275,000 in the Detachments and C.I.B. component in FY 84 and the budget recently submitted to the Governor for FY 85. The Division has acted as a pass-through agency and has taken no active role in the operation of the Fire/Avalanche Warning System due to its lack of expertise in these areas. In FY 84 the funds were distributed by RSA to the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks (\$98,600), Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (\$32,300), and the University of Alaska (\$144,100). Thus, passage of this bill will have no effect on existing A.S.T. programs.

May 6, 1983

Representative Mitch Abood, Chairman
House State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Pouch V (MS 3100)
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Representative Albert P. Adams, Chairman
House Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature

COPY

Dear Representative _____

This letter is in support of the enclosed House Bill No. 110, sponsored and introduced in the present session on 1/24/83 by Representative Mike Miller. It has been referred to State Affairs and Finance, where it now sits.

This bill is an amendment to legislation passed in 1979 pertaining to an avalanche warning system for Alaska. It is primarily a housekeeping measure, with word changes that recognize the scientific forecasting value of the system rather than implying scare tactics through emphasizing warnings. However, should extreme avalanche danger develop, then of course appropriate warnings would be disseminated to the public. It also recognizes the associated value of the fire weather forecasting part of the overall system, and the nomenclature of the project therefore becomes the Alaska Avalanche and Fire Weather Forecasting System (AA/FWFS).


Probably the most significant change in the statute is a proposed shifting of responsibility from the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Natural Resources, in representing the state for operation of the system. Experience to date has shown this to be a more practical approach, since DNR now plays the major role in conducting the public education and prevention aspects of the program. Technical avalanche awareness workshops are offered throughout the state by DNR. In other words, DNR is closer to on-the-ground application in a working mode than is DPS. By prior agreement between the two Departments, this change appeared to be needed. The change should therefore not meet with any opposition, from the standpoint of the Departments involved.

While employed by the U.S. Forest Service, I was personally helping to formulate the original legislation which was sponsored by Representative Mike Miller to get the system going on a statewide basis. Although I have recently retired from that agency, I still maintain a personal interest in the AA/FWFS for its most effective operation.

I urge you to schedule this bill on the calendar at the earliest possible time, to enable possible passage during the current session. In this way, DNR would be in a position to followup with regular program planning and a budgetary request for Fiscal Year 1985. DPS has already submitted a budget request for Fiscal Year 1984 which is presently under routine review. This bill therefore does not

involve any new fiscal impacts from the standpoint of any needed special supplemental appropriations.

Sincerely,


Robert C. Jones

Enclosure

cc: Representative Mike Miller
House State Affairs Committee

Representative Jim Duncan
House Finance Committee

Wallace Watts, USFS Anchorage
Program Director AA/FWFS

Gary Morrison, USFS Juneau
Division of Recreation

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska
Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

TO: Richard A. Hamilton, P.E.
Acting Director
Maintenance and Operations
Southeastern Region

DATE: March 14, 1983

FILE NO:

TELEPHONE NO:

FROM: Gunnar Noreen *GN*
Avalanche Technician
Maintenance and Operations
Southeastern Region

SUBJECT: Work Summary

*586-7375
Weather Svc*

*789-0841
DOT*

Projects Completed:

Daily briefings with the National Weather Service *weather data*
Eaglecrest sends in weather data, Avalanche activities, and Avalanche Control Results

Issue daily avalanche advisories based on mutual consent with Lief Lie
Record daily avalanche advisory on the code-a-phone, 586-7669

Transfer of all equipment pertaining to snow studies from the Forest Service
Transfer all past records, studies and operational guidelines from Forest Service

Inventory of all transferred Forest Service materials including desk, chairs, cabinets, etc.

Familiarization of procedures and daily operation functions of National Weather Service and DOTPF

Learn procurement procedures regarding avalanche supplies

Compile slide library of avalanches, i.e. back country travel, destructive forces, indicators, rescue, safety precautions

Reorganized DOTPF Avalanche Cache (yellow box)

Conducted simulated avalanche rescue with peeps, probes on Thane Road, Snow Slide Creek

Formulated DOTPF Rescue plan and procedure guidelines, with help of Juneau Maintenance Crew

Contacted Ron Dippold, National Ski Patrol Leader for possible mutual aid agreement re: avalanche rescue.

Orientation and training in Anchorage

Organize field observer stations for Thane Road, Behrends Avenue, White Subdivision, and Norway Point

Installation of Snow Stake on Mt. Juneau

Daily weather recording and weekly update on avalanche occurrences and corresponding weather patterns

Meeting with State Troopers regarding availability of existing avalanche rescue cache

DOTPF representation on the Juneau Interagency Disaster Planning Committee (Monthly Meeting)

Weekly conferences with National Weather Service Meteorologist Lief Lie, DOTPF, Acting Director Dick Hamilton, and Juneau Maintenance Shop Foreman Bert Goodwin

Daily visual inspection of Behrends Avenue, Thane Road, Eaglecrest, weather permitting

Mt. Juneau snowstake observations for snow depth, weather permitting

Received snow pit profiles from Eaglecrest, Done by Eaglecrest Staff

Snowpits done at remote sites, Mt. Juneau, Mt. Roberts and Eaglecrest, copy attached

Conference with Lief Lie as to when avalanche control work on Thane Road would have optimum results

Conference with Dick Hamilton on availability of gun crew to do control work
Inland Wilderness Emergency Medical Services (8 hour class)

Attend Alaska Avalanche School in Juneau at Eaglecrest (42 hours)
Repaired and improved Eaglecrest temperature probe and anemometer (currently in progress)
Conducted two Avalanche Awareness slide presentations at Mendenhall Glacier Visitors Center
Interview with Juneau Empire regarding avalanche situation in Juneau
Advertised Alaska Avalanche Warning System telephone number and explanation of rating the avalanche hazards
Familiarization of past papers written and studies done on avalanches in the Juneau area
Assist local government and State agencies in identifying hazardous avalanche zones and critical condition
During high or extreme avalanche conditions answer phones or refer calls to Lief Lie

PHASE II - OPERATION PLAN FROM 3/15/83 to 5/1/83

Installation of weather station at Salmon Creek (1 day)
Continuation of snow pit analysis (5 days)
Location of meteor burst site while there is still snow on the ground, to see where deposit zones are (1 day)
Acquire necessary permits once site has been selected (1 to 3 days)
Build shipping box for instruments to be sent to and from Juneau and Anchorage
Procurement of meteor burst system and installation (1 to two weeks)
Construct fiberglass box to house instruments on mountain ridge. (1 week)
Get tower lattice ready for instruments. (1 week)
Build permanent platform that is base for the fiberglass box (1 week)
Scout for locations of weather substations on road system accessible by skis (1 to 5 days)
Construct two more snow stakes for Mt. Juneau and Mt. Roberts (1 week)
Proposed two full blown avalanche rescue exercises at Eaglecrest, with State Troopers, SEADOGS, DOTPF personnel and National Ski Patrol and Temsco (2 days)
Behrends Avenue computerized analysis report, investigate possible use and implementation of program (1 week)
End of season, wind up projects and work on next year's schedule.

GN/bp

c: Wally Watts, Director
Alaska Avalanche Warning System

Gary Morrison
U.S. Forest Service
Recreation Dept.

NATIONAL SKI PATROL SYSTEM, INC.
Alaska Division

P.O. Box 432
Douglas, Alaska 99324

May 17, 1983

Mr. Chairman and Members of the
House State Affairs Committee:

My name is Bob Janes and I am testifying for the National Ski Patrol System in Alaska, in support of HB 110 which would amend certain portions of the Alaska Avalanche Warning System.

NSPS in Alaska is comprised of more than 350 registered patrollers who provide voluntary highly skilled services for the general safety and well being of the skiing public. This organization gave strong support toward establishing the existing system, which from the state participation standpoint, became a state law effective July 1, 1980.

We believe the proposed operational change for transferring responsibility for representing the state from the Department of Public Safety to another state agency with closer on-the-ground applications of the system would result in a more efficient operation.

We have just learned today that the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center (AEIDC), University of Alaska, is interested in and willing to take on the lead responsibility role for the state. We also understand this is agreeable with the Department of Natural Resources.

The National Ski Patrol System in Alaska therefore urges passage of HB 110 as written, except for Sec 18.76.010 substitute the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center, University of Alaska, for the Department of Natural Resources. This direction would be logical, since AEIDC currently supervises and directs the work of professional meteorologists operating from the Avalanche Forecast Center in Anchorage.

Thank you for your time. I would be pleased to answer any questions.


Bob Janes

Legislative Advisor, NSPS Alaska Division

City of Delta Junction

Box 229

Delta Junction, Alaska 99737

907 - 895 - 4656

The North End of the Alaska Highway

March 3, 1983

Representative Mike Miller (D)
Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Representative Miller:

The City Council of Delta Junction reviewed pending legislation at their March 1, 1983 meeting. They voted unanimously to endorse and provide their support on the following bills:

- HB42 An Act relating to the determination of population for purposes of calculating amounts of state aid; and providing for an effective date.
- HB100 An Act relating to an avalanche and fire weather forecasting system; and providing for an effective date.
- HB119 An Act making a special appropriation for payment as a grant to the community of TOK for a rescue ambulance apparatus; and providing for an effective date.
- HB136 An Act making an appropriation to the Department of Revenue for financial assistance to municipalities; and providing for an effective date.
- HB153 An Act making a supplemental appropriation to the Department of Revenue for financial assistance to municipalities; and providing for an effective date.
- HB162 An Act authorizing general law municipalities to limit the number of consecutive full terms certain municipal officials may serve.
- HB172 An Act relating to municipal government; and providing for an effective date. (Title 29 rewrite).

House Bill 164 was also reviewed by the Council and they voted four to two against endorsing and supporting this legislation.

Sincerely,

Lou Heinbockel

Louis E. Heinbockel, Mayor
City of Delta Junction

STATE OF ALASKA

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES
MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

Box 3-1000 Juneau, Alaska
99802
PHONE: 907 789-0841

April 6, 1983

Honorable Mike Miller
Alaska House of Representatives
Alaska State Capitol
Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Sir:

Basic organizational and operational concerns need to be dealt with to insure public and employee safety.

The current avalanche forecast and control organization is undefined and has no written procedures and is very fragmented. Communication and line of command is cumbersome and confusing. No one is responsible or in charge of the whole safety program.

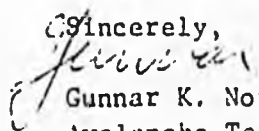
Snow avalanche problems are just attached to regular ongoing DOT/PF superintendents, maintenance and operational duties. Consequently, concern is only expressed and addressed when a serious snow related problem exists. After snow is removed from the highways, avalanche safety becomes a forgotten and minor issue.

Snow mountain weather in Alaska is a very dynamic system. The monitoring of snow avalanche conditions is a six to nine month, seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, and under some high hazardous conditions an hourly requirement. Specialists trained and directly involved in forecasting and evaluating snow avalanche hazard must concentrate, collect and assimilate weather and snow information throughout the winter snow season, November thru April.

In Juneau, the immediate concerns are construction and maintenance of climatological stations at Eaglecrest and Salmon Creek. These two stations are now constructed but need to be maintained. Also, the positioning of meteor burst data collection station, (wind speed, direction, relative humidity, temperature, water content of snow). When all these stations are operational we can then base our avalanche advisories on hard data. The Alaska Avalanche/Fire Warning System is now in it's toddler stage, there will be some growing pains. Hopefully all instrumentation will be completed before the 1983-84 avalanche season is upon us.

A draft is being compiled on specific recommendations that I feel would help this cooperative system flow smoother, a copy of this will be made available to you.

Sincerely,



Gunnar K. Noreen
Avalanche Technician

FOGGY MOUNTAIN SHOP *Scott Fischer • Betsy Flood*

171 SHATTUCK WAY

JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801

PHONE (907) 586-6780

March 4, 1983

The Honorable Mike Miller
House of Representatives
Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Mike,

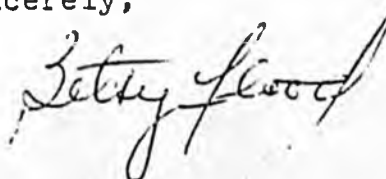
I recently completed a four day avalanche workshop in Juneau sponsored by the Alaska Avalanche School, Division of Parks, Dept. of Natural Resources. As a backcountry skier, I was very impressed with many aspects of this citizen education program subsidized in part by our state government.

All the instructors were experienced, knowledgeable and professional in their efforts to educate a varied group of over thirty students in avalanche evaluation, safety and rescue. The workshop schedule was well arranged for maximum classroom instruction and field work and very proficiently run by coordinator Doug Fesler.

I strongly support continued use of state money for programs such as the Alaska Avalanche School. Many Alaskans are involved, or have friends and family involved, in winter backcountry travel. The Alaska Avalanche School is a rare opportunity to educate these citizens in safe winter travel and thus help avoid the comparatively high costs of state funded rescue efforts in the backcountry. Doug Fesler should be commended for his tremendous efforts in this direction.

Thanks for your attention, Mike.

Sincerely,



March 21, 1983

Representative Mike Miller
Alaska State Legislature
Pouch V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Representative Miller:

We were fortunate enough to be able to attend the Alaska Avalanche School, Juneau Workshop in February 17-20. I don't believe we are alone in stating that the workshop was very well organized, instructed and very, very valuable in terms of public education.

We have both been involved in backcountry recreational guiding for the past two years in Alaska and have seen, even in that short time, a significant increase in wintertime backcountry use. With sophisticated modern equipment and techniques, this trend is sure to continue. With this in mind, public avalanche education is imperative. Also, with the lack of zoning restrictions at either the state or local level, knowledge of potential avalanche hazards to housing developments and individual homesites could avoid major losses of life and property.

We are taking the point of view that prevention is the best cure. Not only are avalanche accidents often tragic, and organized rescue efforts (often merely body recoveries) very expensive, but they are in most cases, avoidable if people possess the proper knowledge for basic evaluation of avalanche hazards.

True, public education in this area is expensive, but the returns are high in terms of public safety and avoidance of expensive rescue efforts. In the past, the State of Alaska has been able to offer avalanche education to the public at a cost affordable to most people. We strongly support the continuance of public avalanche education through the Alaska Avalanche School workshops.

It is encouraging to see more and more people enjoying Alaska's wintertime backcountry, but they should have the opportunity to approach backcountry activities armed with the necessary knowledge to avoid potential hazards or, if they are involved in an avalanche incident, to effect rescue efforts for those caught in a slide (buried victims' best chances for survival are the members of the party who were not caught in the slide).

The Alaska Avalanche School workshops are well managed, instructed, and provide an essential public service. They deserve to be continued. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

William Ross Hardwick

Gloria Griffith Hardwick

William Ross Hardwick
Gloria Griffith Hardwick
Box 534
Douglas, AK 99824

cc: Neil Johannsen



UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA, FAIRBANKS

November 14, 1983

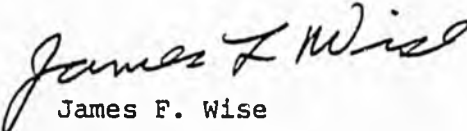
Representative Mike M. Miller
P.O. Box 1494
Juneau, AK 99802

Dear Representative Miller:

I am writing you in reference to the Alaska Avalanche/Fire Weather Forecast System, AA/FWFS and the proposed changes to the system incorporated in the pending HB110. The avalanche working group of the AA/FWFS met at the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center, University of Alaska, AEIDC on October 25, 1983. In the course of business, a motion was passed for the working group to support HB110. Also at the same meeting, it was suggested that the state appropriation for the AA/FWFS be re-examined and a new fiscal note attached to HB110 in view of: inflationary factors, current program inadequacies, and program growth needed to meet public needs particularly in avalanche advisory forecasts for new areas and the publication of educational materials. To this end we will bring concerned agencies together and prepare a new fiscal analysis.

I have attached a copy of the minutes of the October 25 meeting and the 1982-83 end of season report with its addendum. On another related point, should HB110 become law and the major role for the AA/FWFS program be statatorily assigned to AEIDC, University of Alaska (rather than by just cooperative agreement), then budgetary care needs to be exercised so that this inter-agency cooperative program is not lost within the total University of Alaska appropriation. If I can be of any assistance in providing more information about the AA/FWFS please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,


James F. Wise
Alaska State Climatologist

JFW/sw

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA

Mike M. Miller
November 14, 1983
Page 2

Attachments

Agenda & Minutes, October 25 Meeting
Alaska Avalanche Forecast Center End-of-Season Report 1982-83
Addendum to 1982-83 End-of-Season Report
AA/FWFC Overall Objectives for the Avalanche Season

cc: Jay Hogan, Budget Officer, DMB w/attachments

ALASKA AVALANCHE/FIRE WEATHER FORECAST CENTER (AA/FWFC)
OVERALL OBJECTIVES
FOR THE AVALANCHE SEASON

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. The Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center (AEIDC) will maintain a service center (the Alaska Avalanche Forecast Center), primary and supplementary field stations, and a data base concerning (a) surface weather condition, (b) snow pack conditions, and (c) avalanche activity.
- B. The Alaska Avalanche Forecast Center (AFC) will forecast southcentral mountain weather conditions and issue snow stability assessments for high use backcountry areas.
- C. AFC personnel will participate in the public awareness program on avalanche dangers.

II. REQUIRED ACTIONS TO MEET OBJECTIVES

- A. Maintain a service center, the Alaska Avalanche Forecast Center, to perform the following:
 - 1. Gather knowledge of surface weather conditions.
 - a. Use established National Weather Service (NWS) reporting stations and analyses.
 - b. Set up additional stations in representative areas through (a) other state and federal agencies, (b) paid observers in key locations, and (c) volunteer cooperators.
 - 2. Gather knowledge of snowpack conditions.
 - a. Work with other AA/FWFS cooperating agencies in sharing snowpack observations.
 - b. On-site observations by AEIDC field personnel.
 - c. Paid observers in key locations.
 - d. Volunteered data from private entities.
 - 3. Gather knowledge of avalanche activity.
 - a. Cooperate in sharing avalanche occurrence data with other AA/FWFS cooperating agencies.

- b. Records of on-site observations by AEIDC personnel.
 - c. Paid observers in key locations.
 - d. Volunteered data from private entities such as ski resorts, outdoor recreation groups, local flyers, backcountry skiers.
 - e. New media reports.
- B. The Alaska Avalanche Forecast Center will ~~forecast~~ southwestern snow stability assessments for back country areas.
- 1. Man the AA/FWFC sufficiently to issue both routine forecasts and nonscheduled advisories on avalanche conditions.
 - a. Routinely collect and analyze weather and snow data.
 - b. From November 1 to April 15, issue twice daily bulletins which integrate weather forecasts and snow analyses to assess the avalanche potential in areas of concern. Operations will start earlier if necessary. Similarly, operations will be continued later in spring, if conditions warrant.
 - c. Issue advisories and warnings, as necessary, to news media.
 - d. Maintain a telephone recording of mountain weather conditions and avalanche hazard for access by the public.
 - 2. Verify forecasts, develop procedures, and periodically assess the work performed in the AA/FWFC.
 - 3. Maintain a statewide data base of meteorological, snow, and avalanche occurrence data.
- C. Participate in the Public Awareness Program on avalanche danger.
- 1. See that Alaska newspapers, radio stations, and TV stations periodically publish the public telephone number for the AA/FWFC and publicize messages during critical periods.
 - 2. Participate in seminars, workshops, training, etc. on avalanches.
 - 3. Present lectures on avalanches to interested public and private organizations.

D. Supervision and Administration

1. Technical monitoring by senior staff.
 2. Secretarial support.
 3. Coordination among agencies.
 4. Budgeting and personnel actions.
-

ALASKA AVALANCHE FORECAST CENTER
END-OF-SEASON REPORT
1982-83

Prepared by

John S. Eise
Michael B. Ek
Jill A. Fredston

Arctic Environmental Information
and Data Center
University of Alaska
707 A Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99502

September 1983

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1. INTRODUCTION

The operation of the Alaska Avalanche Forecast Center (AFC) was transferred to the Alaska Climate Center, Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center (AEIDC) of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks in December 1982. The Center operates from October through mid-April each winter and is funded by the Alaska Avalanche/Fire Weather Forecast System.

AFC personnel include two full-time meteorologists and one full-time glaciologist. Overall supervision is provided by the AEIDC Climate Center. The AFC provides daily mountain weather forecasts and backcountry snow stability assessments to state and federal agencies as well as private ski resorts for their use in avalanche control efforts. This information is also disseminated to the general public.

This report covers the basic operations of the Alaska Avalanche Forecast Center (AFC) for the winter season of 1982-83. It addresses program operations, storm and avalanche activity, and recommendations for future improvements.

2. PERSONNEL

The following personnel assignments were made this past season.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>	<u>Date</u>
James L. Wise	State Climatologist	Principal Investigator	12-1
John S. Eise	Meteorologist	Hired Full-Time	12-15
Al Comiskey	Meteorologist	Assigned as Temporary Part-Time Forecaster	12-20
Jill A. Freeston	Glaciologist	Assigned to Head Field Program and as Part- Time Forecaster	1-15
Michael B. Ek	Meteorologist	Hired Full-Time	3-28

3. TRAINING AND ACTIVITIES

John Eise received his certificate for 40 hours of "Avalanche Training for Transportation" held at Thompson Pass November 15-19.

Al Comiskey was trained as a temporary forecaster from December 20-30 and went on shift December 31.

Jill Fredston began development of the snow field program in January and was trained as a forecaster in early March. She also attended a number of avalanche workshops given by the Alaska Avalanche School including "Back-country Avalanche Hazard Evaluation Levels I and II" in Hatcher Pass and Black Rapids respectively, as well as "Meteorology for Mountaineers" and "Avalanche Hazard Evaluation in Land-Use Planning" in Anchorage.

John Eise gave a short presentation on the AFC avalanche program to a workshop on January 15 sponsored by the National Ski Patrol and the Alaska Avalanche School.

Several fixed-wing reconnaissance flights to observe avalanche occurrences and snow conditions were taken by AFC personnel. Field work throughout the winter was conducted by Jill Fredston.

Public service announcements with posters were sent to all radio and television stations and newspapers regarding our 271-4500 24-hour recording of avalanche and mountain weather conditions. The Anchorage Daily News printed the phone number in the weather box on the front page throughout the winter. Local stations, including such programs as Aviation Weather, announced back-country avalanche warnings.

Mike Ek was trained as a permanent forecaster from March 31-April 8 and went on shift April 11.

Jill Fredston was contracted by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys in June to work on the Richardson Highway Avalanche Atlas. She spent several days field checking in Thompson Pass and a week in Fairbanks analyzing avalanche paths using aerial photography.

4. OPERATIONS

COMPUTER

INTRODUCTION

The Avalanche Forecast Center (AFC) utilizes the computing facilities of the National Weather Service in Anchorage. The hardware consists of two linked PRIME 750 computers with appropriate interface devices for external communications. Two 300 megabyte and two 80 megabyte disk drives are connected for data storage and system operations. The AFC leases memory storage plus two ports, one dial up with modem for user access and one hardwired to a terminal for AFC personnel. The Center uses the computer for routine operations such as forecast compilation/dissemination and data base management. It also serves as an effective tool in research and program development activities. The following is a short summary of computer operations this past season.

1. A hard disk crash in late spring resulted in a loss of some avalanche programs and data. The last tape back-up the NWS had done was in November 1982 so all modifications to programs and data were lost after that time although some hard-copies are available. The NWS has now implemented new procedures which involve a complete system back-up each week.

Still, the AFC will do its own back-up on tape every week in the forthcoming season, with periodic hard-copies made.

2. Snowpit observation subroutines were developed and implemented with only limited use (except for the cooperator in Thompson Pass who was excellent in reporting avalanche occurrences and weather observations). Refinements and changes still need to be made to allow for easier user inputs.
3. Proper formatting and storage of all data has been difficult due to a lack of a standardized way of taking and recording all observations. Standardized observation forms have since been developed.
4. Users continue to have intermittent phone line problems which are normally caused by static. The only solution is a cleaner communications line and fine tuning of Silent 700 terminals.

WARNING LOG

During the 82-83 season, avalanche warnings were issued 7 times and remained in effect for a total of 30 days for the southern Talkeetna, western Chugach, and northern Kenai Mountains. Most warnings came early in the season when snowfall was the heaviest. The earliest warning was issued 28 October for all three mountain ranges. The latest warning was issued 1 December in the southern Talkeetna and 24 January in the western Chugach and northern Kenai Mountains. Areas around Turnagain Pass in the northern Kenai and east of Indian Pass in the western Chugach Mountains had the greatest number of warning days, 29 and 27 respectively. In the northern Kenai Mountains, there were 23 warning days for areas around Summit Lake and 15 for Moose Pass. The least number of warning days were in Chugach State Park in the western Chugach Mountains (13) and Hatcher Pass in the southern Talkeetna Mountains (10).

Figure 1. Warning days by area for the 1982-83 season.

DAY	SOUTHERN TALKEETNA	WESTERN CHUGACH		NORTHERN KENAI		
	Hatcher Pass	State Park	East of Indian Pass	Turnagain Pass	Summit Lake	Moose Pass
28 Oct	X	X	X	X	X	
29	X	X	X	X	X	
30	X					
3 Nov		X	X	X		
4		X	X	X	X	
5		X	X	X	X	
8 Nov	X	X	X	X	X	
9	X	X	X	X	X	
10		X	X	X	X	
11	X	X	X	X	X	
12	X	X	X	X	X	X
13	X	X	X	X	X	X
30 Nov	X	X	X	X	X	X
1 Dec	X	X	X	X	X	X
22 Dec				X		
23				X		
27 Dec			X	X	X	X
28			X	X	X	X
29			X	X	X	X
30			X	X	X	X
31			X	X	X	X
1 Jan			X	X	X	X
2			X	X	X	X
18 Jan			X	X	X	X
19			X	X	X	X
20			X	X	X	X
21			X	X	X	X
22			X	X		
23			X	X		
24			X	X		
TOTAL	10	13	27	29	23	15

RECORD-A-PHONE

From 3 November 1982 through 15 April 1983, the Avalanche Forecast Center received nearly 5400 phone calls on the public record-a-phone. The average number of phone calls per day for the season was 32 (see figure below). The average number of calls per day by month steadily increased from November 1982 to February 1983, decreased in March, and then increased slightly in April. The average number of calls was highest (40) on Fridays (0800 Friday to 0800 Saturday). The rest of the week, the number of calls averaged in the low to mid 30s.

Although most phone calls occurred on Friday, a large number of calls were recorded on days when the snowfall was heavy or when avalanches occurred. A total of 1366 calls were recorded on the 30 days when avalanche warnings were in effect compared to 4027 calls on the remaining 137 days. Thus, an average of 50 calls per day were recorded on warning days as compared to about 29 on nonwarning days.

Figure 2. Phone call summary by month and day.

MONTH	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	SEASON
Avg # Calls	29	35	39	42	22	28	32
DAY	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Avg # Calls	27	31	35	33	33	40	32

QUANTITATIVE PRECIPITATION FORECAST VERIFICATION

Verification of the quantitative precipitation forecast for five selected co-op sites reveals that the occurrence or nonoccurrence of snowfall was correctly forecast 511 times in 688 cases or 74% of the time. The snowfall amount was forecast in the right category 373 out of 688 occurrences for 54% accuracy and within one category for 82% accuracy.

The forecast verification statistics presented here give only a rough estimate as to the forecasting abilities in the Avalanche Forecast Center because they are subject to a variety of the following errors. The accuracy of many of the observations are in question. The 24 hour time periods over which many of the observations were taken do not coincide with the forecast time periods. The determination of whether or not a forecast verified was uncertain in many cases because of inconsistent precipitation forecast categories. Over the 1982-83 season there were six different forecasters with different skill levels. Finally, the data base is still small, particularly in the large snowfall range.

Figure 3. Quantitative precipitation forecast verification.

SNOW vs NO SNOW

		Observation			Total
		Snow	No Snow		
Forecast	Snow	205	125		330
	No Snow	52	306		358
Total		257	431		688

SNOW AMOUNT (inches)

		Observation					Total
		0	T-2	2-5	5-10	10+	
Forecast	High (> one category)	50	15	9	2	1	77
	High (one category)	75	20	7	1	4	107
	Hit (same category)	306	35	23	6	3	373
	Low (one category)	---	52	18	9	3	82
	Low (> one category)	---	---	16	16	17	49
Total		431	122	73	34	28	688

5. WEATHER OBSERVATIONS

CO-OP OBSERVATIONS

REPORTING FREQUENCY

COOPS - The cooperative weather observers had an overall seasonal reporting frequency of 63 percent. The reporting frequency was below 50 percent in November 1982, increased to 77 percent in January 1983, then decreased to below 60 percent by April 1983. Hatcher Pass, Eagle River Visitor Center, and Alyeska Base had the best reporting frequencies--better than 90 percent in all months. Alyeska Midway reported above 80, Thompson Pass above 70, and Alyeska Top nearly 70 percent of the time. Thompson Pass maintained a reporting frequency above 85 percent for all months except November 1982. The lowest seasonal reporting frequencies were Girdwood (38%), Devil's Club (33%), Silvertip (10%), and Bird Creek (5%).

ALASKA RAILROAD - The overall seasonal reporting for Alaska Railroad (ARR) was about 40 percent. The reporting frequency for November 1982 was 45 percent, climbed to 50 percent in February 1983, then fell to less than 10 percent in April 1983. Almost all stations reported between 30 and 50 percent of the time with Tunnel, Wasilla, Gold Creek, Carlo, Healy, and Dome reporting nearly 55 percent of the time. The low reporting frequencies can be attributed in part to the lack of weekend reports.

TIME OF OBSERVATION

COOPS - Most cooperative observers took their weather observations around one time of day with little deviation: Hatcher Pass by 0900, Glen Alps by 0700, and Thompson Pass by 0730. Although most Alyeska Base weather

observations were taken by 0900, they varied between 0500 and 1230. Alyeska Midway reports were taken anywhere between 0600 and 1700 with the majority taken by 1100.

REMOTE OBSERVATIONS

The three main sources of remote observations are (1) GOES stations, (2) Meteorburst stations, and (3) AHOS-T stations. Through cooperation with the River Forecast Center (RFC) we were able to obtain data from Meteorburst and AHOS-T sites, the former maintained by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service and the latter by the RFC.

The AFC and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF) installed a permanent ridgetop station on Penguin Point above the Seward Highway along Turnagain Arm. John Eise assisted Seward Highway Avalanche Project (SHAP) personnel Jim Hackett and Brian Canisy in the installation of the weather station in early October. Unfortunately, the GOES instrumentation and telemetry equipment was not installed until December 22 due to weather-caused delays.

The AFC was able to receive data on the evening of December 22. Shortly thereafter riming problems at the site set in and after less than a week, we began to lose data intermittently due to low signal strength and then signal loss. Later inspection at the station indicated that the antenna had been rimed and bent towards the ground.

A PVC pipe was later installed over the antenna to prevent riming and a second battery added to increase power to the GOES unit. In addition, the skyvane was replaced by the sturdier Hydro-Tech anemometer (Phil Taylor) because the propeller was rimed and had broken off. Due to problems in programming the unit, no additional data was ever received. The unit was

taken off the mountain in the spring and sent back to the Boise Interagency Fire Center in Idaho.

The meteorburst sites functioned well all winter except for occasional capping of precipitation gages. The format of data as received from the master station is confusing and hard to interpret so hopefully this situation will be remedied.

The AHOS-T sites were well maintained by the RFC and functioned smoothly all winter. Data was entered into the computer automatically for immediate access by users.

6. FIELD PROGRAM

The primary goal of the field program during the past season was to improve the quality of the snow stability assessments by increasing the amount of snow data collected and better integrating snow and meteorological information.

Jill Fredston conducted the bulk of the field work for the AFC. She spent an average of 3 days a week in high use backcountry areas such as Turnagain Pass, Chugach State Park, and Hatcher Pass digging snowpits and fracture line profiles at a variety of elevations and aspects. Access to these areas was gained either by skis or helicopter and occasional fixed-wing reconnaissance flights were taken. The principal limitation on the amount of field work conducted was the lack of personnel in the AFC to form a field team. Often, Fredston coordinated field trips with cooperating organizations such as the Seward Highway Avalanche Project, Alyeska, and particularly, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. While this was sometimes logistically difficult, it offered the advantage of observing the operations of other avalanche

programs and gaining a better understanding of local conditions and site specific problems. Observation of control work results along the Seward Highway and at Alyeska helped in assessing backcountry snow stability conditions. Finally, snowpit and avalanche occurrence data was also sent in to the AFC by a number of organizations and individuals including a cooperator in Hatcher Pass.

There are a number of ways in which the field program can be improved next season. These include:

- Regular site visits to obtain continuous profiles of the snowpack (e.g., depth, water equivalent, density, snow metamorphism, temperatures). If possible, this information should be correlated with local meteorologic information.
- Improve data base on avalanches. This should include snowpit data, fracture line profiles, and avalanche occurrence information (e.g., location, size, frequency). Photographic documentation should also be undertaken.
- More rapid and frequent collection of snowpit and avalanche occurrence data from cooperators.
- Increase the number of cooperators in order to obtain more information concerning backcountry conditions.
- Develop a qualitative model which can be used as a forecast tool to help evaluate the field data in terms of snow stability.
- Train Eise and Ek to help conduct field work.

7. SUMMARY OF STORM AND AVALANCHE ACTIVITY

The following is a general summary of storm and avalanche activity across the southcentral mountains. Detailed data on precipitation and storm occurrence may be referenced in Figures 4 and 5 respectively.

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

Heavy snowfalls in late October and early November created a significant avalanche cycle, briefly closing the Seward Highway and creating unstable conditions in much of the backcountry. Approximately five additional storm periods occurred during November, producing 2-5 inches or more of water equivalent and 2.5-6 feet of snow across the southcentral mountains with heaviest amounts from Alyeska into Thompson Pass. These early heavy snowfalls were extremely significant because the ground surface was covered before it was frozen, a phenomena which led to significant glide crack development later in the season. Generally, mild temperatures (interrupted by a brief cold snap during the third week in November) warmed the snowpack and allowed it to stabilize.

DECEMBER

A storm that began in late November and continued into early December brought heavy rain and snow loads which triggered a large avalanche cycle. The Richardson Highway was closed for two days during this period. During the cycle, most slides ran on a rain crust but then some began to break through to an old temperature gradient layer. A second storm moved in during the second week of December and blanketed most of the southcentral mountains. Three other brief storms occurred during the mid-part of December mainly from

Alyeska to Thompson Pass. Another storm hit from Christmas to the end of the month. Warming temperatures allowed the snowpack in some areas of the western Chugach and Kenai Mountains to begin to go isothermal and many glide cracks appeared. A number of small pocket slides occurred. By the close of December, water equivalent amounts ranged from 2-3 inches in the Talkeetna Mountains up to 10 inches or more from Alyeska to Thompson Pass. Snowfall amounts were less than in November but still were 1-2 feet in the Talkeetna and western Chugach Mountains with nearly 8 feet in Thompson Pass.

JANUARY

Warmer temperatures with a brief storm period in the first week gave way to sub-zero temperatures during the middle of January. A major storm system pushed in during the third week and produced a large avalanche cycle especially in the Turnagain Arm area. Most of the releases occurred within the new snow layer and were 1-3 feet deep. Overall January precipitation was light with water equivalents generally 0.10-1.5 inches with amounts of 3-5.5 inches from Alyeska to Thompson Pass. Snowfall amounts were around one foot except 3-5 feet in the Valdez-Thompson Pass area.

FEBRUARY

The first week of warm temperatures and a storm cycle was followed by a week of cold, clear weather. A series of storms as well as warm temperatures during the latter half of the month caused a large number of isolated glide plane releases which continued into the beginning of March. Glide cracks in the Turnagain Arm area which had originally developed on south and southeast exposures began to be seen on all aspects. Most of these occurred

between 1800 and 2200 feet. Overall precipitation changed little from January.

MARCH

March was a relatively dry and quiet month except for continuing glide plane releases and occasional human-triggered wet slab avalanches. Temperatures were mild with precipitation generally less than one inch water equivalent and 1-2 inches of snow except for roughly one foot in Thompson Pass. The snowpack received extensive radiational heating and became thin at lower elevations.

APRIL-MAY

April's weather was similar to October and November. Heavy snow loads at the start of April generated a number of avalanches. Most of these slid on the old snow surface which had been exposed for a long time period. Radiational heating and rapid melting of the isothermal snowpack occurred. Isolated glide crack activity persisted into May.

Figure 4. Precipitation summary November 1982 - March 1983.

STATION	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	SEASON
<u>Water Equivalent Amounts</u>						
<u>Southern Talkeetna Mountains</u>						
TKA	1.70	1.80	0.46	0.46	0.09	4.51
HPS	3.00	2.92	0.00	0.45	0.00	6.37
<u>Western Chugach Mountains</u>						
ANC	1.72	0.11	0.21	0.23	T	2.27
GLI	1.90	1.70	1.12	0.75	0.03	5.50
MTYB	5.30	10.35	5.53	4.46	2.80	28.44
HOM	1.61	4.13	1.46	1.57	0.67	9.44
<u>Eastern Chugach Mountains</u>						
*TPS	-	9.50+	2.93+	7.22+	0.22	19.87+
VWS	5.15	8.96	3.10	3.24	0.81	21.26
<u>Snowfall Amounts</u>						
<u>Southern Talkeetna Mountains</u>						
TKA	27.0	10.3	11.9	11.0	2.1	62.3
HPS	36.0	26.0	00.0	6.0	00.0	68.0
<u>Western Chugach Mountains</u>						
ANC	23.4	1.9	3.7	4.3	T	33.3
GLP	24.0	20.0	13.0	10.0	T	67.0
MTYB	55.5	13.0	14.5	3.0	1.0	92.5
HOM	5.0	1.3	11.0	1.1	T	18.4
<u>Eastern Chugach Mountains</u>						
*TPS	-	93.8	31.7	39.1	14.0	178.6
VWS	59.4	56.9	60.2	31.1	10.9	218.5

*Does not include November

+Totals may be greater due to missing observations

Station Identifiers:

TKA - Talkeetna

ANC - Anchorage International Airport

MTYB - Alyeska Ski Resort-Base

TPS - Thompson Pass

HPS - Hatcher Pass

GLP - Glen Alps

HOM - Homer

VWS - Valdez

Figure 5. * Storm summary November 1982 - March 1983.

	Talkeetna Mtns		Western Chugach Mtns				Eastern Chugach Mtns	
	TKA	HPS	ANC	GLP	MTYB	HOM	TPS	VWS
Nov 1-2	X	X	X	X		X	-	X
Nov 4-5	X		X	X	X	X	-	X
Nov 8-14	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
Nov 22					X	X	-	X
Nov 24				X	X		-	X
Nov 29-Dec 2	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
Dec 5-9	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Dec 12-13					X	X	X	X
Dec 16-17					X	X	X	X
Dec 20					X	X	X	X
Dec 24					X	X	X	X
Dec 26-30	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Jan 1				X	X	X		X
Jan 3-4	X				X		X	X
Jan 6-8	X		X	X	X	X		X
Jan 15-20	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Jan 27				X	X	X		X
Jan 31-Feb 2				X	X	X	X	X
Feb 4-8	X		X	X		X	X	X
Feb 18-20	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Feb 24	X				X			X
Feb 26-28	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Mar 10-12	X			X	X		X	X
Mar 15	X				X			X

Total = 24 Storm Periods

*Notes. Indicates days when 3 or more stations reported precipitation. X's show which stations received precipitation during the storm period. Thompson Pass (TPS) is not included in the November statistics.

8. PROBLEMS - ACTIONS

Problem - No policy statement for AFC or comprehensive written operations plan.

Action - A written operations plan, including a policy statement, has been drawn up.

Problem - Lack of snowpit and avalanche occurrence data base.

Action - As previously discussed, selected sites will be visited regularly for collection of snow data. Where possible, these sites are in the vicinity of weather observation sites in order to facilitate later correlation studies. The network of cooperators has been built up to enhance data collection in backcountry areas. Procedures for collecting avalanche occurrence data, especially after storms, have been drawn up and included in the operations plan. The AFC will place a high priority on compiling a data base including snowpit, avalanche occurrence, and meteorological information.

Problem - The lack of standards for weather, snowpit and avalanche occurrence observations is a handicap in developing a complete and comprehensive data base management system.

Action - The AFC has drawn up a set of standards. Once adopted, these standards should be adhered to by the AFC and users.

Problem - Insufficient weather observation coverage to properly forecast weather and snow conditions in southcentral Alaska.

Action - The following observation sites are being established.

Co-op Observers Site

1. Summit Lake
2. Moose Pass
3. Arctic Valley
4. Hope
5. South Fork Eagle River
6. Ernestine (Thompson Pass)
7. Portage Pass
8. Sheep Mountain

Agency/Individual

DOT/PF
DOT/PF
U.S. Army
NWS
NWS/RFC
DOT/PF
ARR or USFS
Private X-Country

Remote Observation Site

1. Penguin Point
2. Andy Simon's Mountain
3. Wedge
4. Thompson Pass - Divide
5. Hatcher Pass
6. Bear Valley/Portage Pass

Agency

DOT/PF
DOT/PF
CSP
DOT/PF and SCS
Private (Dave Hamre)
ARR

Problem - Late installation of remote observation stations (i.e., meteor-burst).

Action - Remote stations are being installed by October 15 so that proper installation and testing are not precluded by weather and ground conditions.

Problem - Lack of sufficient quantitative precipitation forecast aids in relation to snow amount vs water equivalent.

Action - Have observers take humidity measurements. Snow amounts will then be compared with water equivalent measurements in relation to humidity to establish any correlation. Results will aid snow amount forecasts. In addition, other forecast tools will be developed.

Problem - Forecast verification, especially of quantitative precipitation, is difficult because observation time periods are inconsistent with forecast time periods and because of the use of inconsistent precipitation categories by the AFC. In this context, inconsistent means varying in width, i.e., 0-.05 vs 0-.02 vs .01-.07, etc.

Action - Have cooperative observers take all observations at one time of day, preferably 0700. Use consistent categories of precipitation for forecasting which will enable better tabulation of forecast accuracy when verifying, i.e., 0, 0-.05, .05-.10, .10-.25, etc.

Problem - Need for applied research and equipment testing sites to develop new methods of collecting data and an orographic precipitation model.

Action - Set up research sites along the Seward Highway at Devils Club and along the Richardson Highway in Thompson Pass at the Divide weather site.

Problem - Non-accountability of weather equipment by user agencies.

Action - The AFC will maintain tighter control of equipment. Users should return equipment to the AFC by May 1.

ADDENDUM TO ALASKA AVALANCHE FORECAST CENTER
END-OF-SEASON REPORT
1982-83

This addendum concerns the avalanche program in southeast Alaska. This avalanche warning program is primarily concerned with Juneau and the vicinity around Juneau. If conditions are deemed serious enough, the Juneau office of the National Weather Service will issue advisories for other areas as well.

The AA/FWFS pays for a snow technician employee of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. The 1982-83 season was the first with a full-time snow technician. The snow technician is responsible for assessing snowpack stability and taking weather observations at a supplemental station at Salmon Creek. Observations are also received on a regular basis from the Eaglecrest Ski Area on Douglas Island. Daily forecasts for the backcountry areas are a cooperative effort of the National Weather Service lead forecaster and the snow technician. The daily forecast is disseminated to the public by means of a 24-hour telephone recording. During periods of high hazard, the forecasts are disseminated to the news media (newspapers, radio, and television stations).

The NWS and DOT/PF work closely with the Juneau Interagency Disaster Planning Committee composed of local, state, and federal government agencies. There are monthly meetings of the group to make sure that plans are current in the event of a high avalanche threat or an occurrence involving people. Occasionally the highway south of Juneau is closed temporarily due to avalanches or the threat of avalanches.

The 1982-83 season in southeast Alaska was relatively mild. There were 2 or 3 days with avalanches along the highway south of Juneau but none of them reached the highway. There was also a small avalanche in the Behrends Avenue slide path but it did not reach any of the structures in the runout zone.

MINUTES OF THE ALASKA AVALANCHE WORKING GROUP MEETING
October 25, 1983

James Wise, state climatologist at the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center (AEIDC), opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, October 25, 1983 with staff introductions: Jill Fredston, snow specialist and project leader; John Eise, meteorologist; and Mike Ek, meteorologist.

John Eise reviewed last year's end-of-season report. Burt Goldenburg, National Weather Service Deputy, Division Alaska Region, pointed out our omission of the program in southeast Alaska. An addendum will be written about the program in the southeast.

Jill Fredston explained this season's snow/field program. An average of 4 days per week field work, with a focus on high use backcountry areas, will be conducted by AFC personnel.

John Eise reviewed the 1983-84 operations plan for the Alaska Avalanche and Fire Weather Forecast System (AA/FWFS). Jerry Nibler of the National Weather Service River Forecast Center (RFC) said there should be more cooperation between the Avalanche Forecast Center (AFC) and the RFC in regard to sharing observation sites. Doug Fesler (Alaska Division of Parks) expressed concern about the location of the meteorburst station planned for Behrends Avenue in Juneau. Both Doug Fesler and Burt Goldenberg thought that Anchorage should work more closely with Juneau, and that Juneau should standardize its forecasting, perhaps by being included in Anchorage's operation.

The group broke for coffee and the meeting resumed after 10 minutes.

Pending legislation affecting the Alaska Avalanche/Fire Weather Forecast System was discussed by Jim Wise. In the legislation (HB 110), the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center is designated to represent the state in the operation of the system. Jim Wise stated that AEIDC was willing to accept the responsibility but had done nothing to actively seek it. A motion was made and passed for the working group to support the pending HB 110. It was also decided that a copy of the minutes of the meeting which show the working group's support of the legislation be sent to Representative Miller, the original sponsor of the legislation.

Jim Wise presented the 1983-84 season budget for the Avalanche Forecast Center in terms of the amount budgeted for each of four major tasks. The total budget of \$141,000 was approved by the group. Projected costs of the program in the 1984-85 season, allowing for a 5% increase due to inflation, were \$148,200. Also with the projected budget for this 1983-84 season, there will be about \$30,000 less carried over into the fire weather season. Therefore, a recommendation was made to increase the state appropriation from \$275,000 to \$312,000 to be able to maintain the state's activity in the AA/FWFS at the level deemed necessary by the group.

Doug Fesler suggested that the AA/FWFS secure funds to make avalanche training films because there are no quality films in the U.S. He said the films would be marketable in Canada and the U.S., as well as other countries. Initially, six 10- to 15-minute films, with different topics, should be made. The entire working group supported the idea.

The meeting ended at 11:30 a.m.

AVALANCHE WORKING GROUP MEETING
AGENDA

Tuesday, October 25, 1983

- 9:00 - Introduction and Opening Remarks
(Jim Wise)
- 9:15 - Highlights of 1982-83 Season Report
(John Eise)
- 9:30 - Snow/Field Program for 1983-84 Season
(Jill Fredston)
- 9:45 - Operations Plan 1983-84 Season
(John Eise)
- 10:30 - Coffee Break
- 11:00 - Pending Legislation on the Program
- 11:15 - Financial Plan 1983-84
(Jim Wise)
- 11:45 - Projected Financial Plan 1984-85
(Jim Wise)
- 12:00 - Adjourn

AVALANCHE WORKING GROUP MEETING
October 25, 1983

Gerry Nibbler	NWS	P.O. Box 23, 701 C Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99503
Vic Baer	USFS	Ranger District, Pouch 110-469, Anchorage, Alaska 99511 (345-5700)
Doug Fesler	ASP	619 Warehouse Ave., #210, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 (264-2125)
Wallace Watts	USFS	2221 E. Northern Lights Bldv., Anchorage, Alaska 99505 (276-4246)
George Pollitt	SAA Office State Troopers	P.O. Box 6188 Annex, Anchorage, Alaska, 99502 (269-5716)
Jack Morrow	DOT/PF	P.O. Box 507, Valdez, Alaska 99686 (835-4322)
Glenn Hare	USFS	Ranger District, Pouch 110-469, Anchorage, Alaska 99511 (345-5700)
Burton Goldenberg	NWS	701 C Street, P.O. Box 23, Anchorage, Alaska 99503 (271-5126)
James L. Wise	AEIDC	707 A Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 (279-4523, extension 42)
Jill Fredston	AEIDC	707 A Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 (279-4523, extension 36)
John Eise	AEIDC	707 A Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 (279-4523, extension 35)
Mike Ek	AEIDC	707 A Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 (279-4523, extension 35)



3210

March 23, 1982

Dick Hamilton
Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities
Box 3-1000
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Dick:

Reference is made to our past conversations concerning the AA/FWFS funding which was RSA (#3521) to your Department from Department of Public Safety-Alaska State Troopers.

The funding was transferred to your department to help establish a satellite avalanche forecast center in Juneau this winter and at the same time assist in your avalanche problems on the state highway system in the area. From your cooperation, this has become a reality and from what I hear, has been received quite well by the general public.

Though the avalanche problem on the highway is over for the season, the back country activity will continue for some time with the longer and warmer days ahead. Because of this, it is essential the program continues until the back country avalanche danger subsides or until the cross country skiing activity fades out for the year.

Since funding is still available from the RSA, I would like to have Gunner Noreen be retained until April 29 to carry out his duties in snow pack evaluation and avalanche forecasting and at the same time perform advance work for the next winter. This will allow the program to get a head start plus save funding for next winter.

The following is a list of items that Noreen should do during this period.

1. Continuation of the Snow pit evaluation and avalanche forecasting.
2. Select a site location for the meteorburst automatic remote weather station.
3. Acquire the necessary land use permits for remote weather station.
4. Construct a fiberglass housing for the remote weather station radio equipment similar to the one DOT/PF installed on Penguin Ridge along the Highway.
5. Prepare radio tower to handle the antenna and weather sensors.
6. Order the necessary sensors and related equipment for the weather station. (See attached list).
7. Build a shipping box for sending the telemetric equipment and weather sensors to Anchorage during the summer.



8. Select locations for weather stations along road system that is accessible by skis.
9. Construct two more snow stakes for Mt. Juneau and Mt. Roberts
10. Behrends Avenue Computerized Analysis Report-investigate possible use and implementation of program.
11. Prepare preliminary operating plans for next season.

The Bureau of Land Management has three Meteorburst telemetric stations they are not using and have agreed to lend them to the AA/FWFS for remote weather platforms during the winter. In the summer, they'll be used as remote weather platforms for on going fires. One of these platforms will be assigned to the Juneau area during the winter. This will allow the Avalanche Forecast Center to obtain high altitude weather data which is vital in helping prepare a forecast. As part of the agreement, the AA/FWFS will purchase the sensors and any related equipment needed to make them operational.

With any excess RSA funds after wages and transportation are taken out could you purchase the weather sensors and related equipment show on the attached list. The items marked with an asterisk need to be shipped to Anchorage in care of me so the equipment can be used for the fire season. Then in the fall, they will be shipped back along with items we have on hand that's needed for the winter season.

If you have any questions, please give me a call.

Sincerely,



WALLACE J. WATTS
Program Manager AA/FWFS

cc:
Gunner Noreen
Gary Morrison

- 1/ Weather Measure Corp.
Division of Systems Donner
PO Bo. 41257
Sacramento, CA 95841
Telephone: (916) 481-7565
- 2/ Meteor Communications Corp.
1819 South Central No. 26
Kent, WA 98031
Telephone: (206) 872-8890
Don Sytsma
- 3/ Local Purchase
- 4/ Robert E. Riabe Co.
2211 5th Ave.
Seattle, WA 98121
- 5/ The Energy Store
2934 Spenard Rd.
Anchorage, AK 99503
- 6/ Graybar Electric Co.
5501 'A'
Anchorage AK 99502
- 7/ Meteordata
5630 Silverado Way
Anchorage, Ak 99502

Note: in the secode up grade the electronic package has to be sent down to Meteor Communications Corp. for them to install it.

Another option on the pruchase is to transfer the funds on all the items except for local purchase to USDA-Soil Conservation Service who will be ordering the same items for the other two meteorburst platforms. This would eliminate property accountability on DOT/PF part.

There is an estimated \$280.00 additional charges for misc. hardware to assemble the whole package together.

Total cost to make the meteorburst platform operational is \$6700.25 not including the permanent shelter cost.

Notes to Representative Mike Miller:

Dear Mike:

This proposed legislative amendment incorporates wordage from the enclosed two other drafts on the same subject:

- (1) 13-0033 Hein 10/25/82
- (2) One developed recently by the State Troopers, Department of Public Safety.

The changes needed are essentially housekeeping ones. Some of the key points to keep in mind are:

1. The original statute, Chapter 119, HCS CSSB301, effective July 1, 1980, provided only for an avalanche warning and control system. Current operations include a fire weather forecast system, to enable a stable year-long organization of professional meteorologists and forecasters.

2. Rather than referring to the system as a warning operation, it is preferred to recognize it as a forecasting service. Hence, the name Alaska Avalanche and Fire Weather Forecast System (AA/FWFS).

This nomenclature is specified in cooperative agreements, program planning and budgetary data, etc. The acronym AA/FWFS is also used throughout documents.

3. The lead state responsibility for operation of the system has been formally agreed to and shifted from the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Natural Resources.

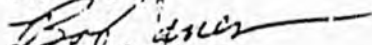
4. Private enterprise cooperation and participation in the system already exists.

5. The term snow avalanche is preferred over just avalanche, in order to specify only snow slides; it does not include mud slides or rock debris avalanches.

6. The control plan features of the Act, Section 2, (7) have been expanded to include direct control measures on certain heavy-use designated recreation areas, such as developed ski areas, etc; previously, the control measures related only to state highways.

We would appreciate your sponsoring this amendment as soon as possible in the forthcoming Session. Should there be any questions by your legislative counsel, I would be happy to discuss them. My phone number is 586-7152.

Sincerely,


Robert C. Janes

Director, State and Private Forestry

Enclosures

P.O. Box 432
Douglas, Alaska 99824

May 6, 1983

Representative Mitch Abcod, Chairman
House State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Pouch V (MS 3100)
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Representative Albert P. Adams, Chairman
House Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature

Dear Representative _____

This letter is in support of the enclosed House Bill No. 110, sponsored and introduced in the present session on 1/24/83 by Representative Mike Miller. It has been referred to State Affairs and Finance, where it now sits.

This bill is an amendment to legislation passed in 1979 pertaining to an avalanche warning system for Alaska. It is primarily a housekeeping measure, with word changes that recognize the scientific forecasting value of the system rather than implying scare tactics through emphasizing warnings. However, should extreme avalanche danger develop, then of course appropriate warnings would be disseminated to the public. It also recognizes the associated value of the fire weather forecasting part of the overall system, and the nomenclature of the project therefore becomes the Alaska Avalanche and Fire Weather Forecasting System (AA/FWFS).

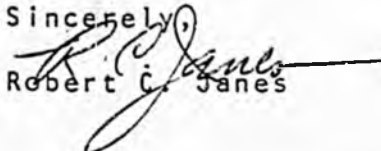
Probably the most significant change in the statute is a proposed shifting of responsibility from the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Natural Resources, in representing the state for operation of the system. Experience to date has shown this to be a more practical approach, since DNR now plays the major role in conducting the public education and prevention aspects of the program. Technical avalanche awareness workshops are offered throughout the state by DNR. In other words, DNR is closer to an on-the-ground application in a working mode than is DPS. By prior agreement between the two Departments, this change appeared to be needed. The change should therefore not meet with any opposition, from the standpoint of the Departments involved.

While employed by the U.S. Forest Service, I was personally helping to formulate the original legislation which was sponsored by Representative Mike Miller to get the system going on a statewide basis. Although I have recently retired from that agency, I still maintain a personal interest in the AA/FWFS for its most effective operation.

I urge you to schedule this bill on the calendar at the earliest possible time, to enable possible passage during the current session. In this way, DNR would be in a position to followup with regular program planning and a budgetary request for Fiscal Year 1985. DPS has already submitted a budget request for Fiscal Year 1984 which is presently under routine review. This bill therefore does not

involve any new fiscal impacts from the standpoint of any needed special supplemental appropriations.

Sincerely,


Robert C. Jones

Enclosure

cc: Representative Mike Miller
House State Affairs Committee

Representative Jim Duncan
House Finance Committee

Wallace Watts, USFS Anchorage
Program Director AA/FWFS

Gary Morrison, USFS Juneau
Division of Recreation

Avalanche forecasts reduce risks on slopes, roads



Joyce
Weaver

For most of us, it's a handy little phone number that just might change our plans -- and save our lives -- when we're contemplating a drive down to the Kenai or a ski outing in the mountains back of Anchorage. But for Bob Thompson of the National Weather Service, 2-1-4500 is pretty much a full-time concern. If a seasonal one. When summer comes, his focus will shift to a hotter topic -- forest fires.

The avalanche forecasting system is two years old in its present form: a cooperative effort of federal and state agencies that are variously responsible for land, recreation, highways and weather analysis.

COOPERATION ISN'T always easy for folks with such diverse backgrounds and goals, Thompson admits. Rugged backcountry park rangers dig snowpits with their shovels and analyze the accumulated snowpack. Meteorologists deal with computers and satellite data, as well as local temperature, precipitation and wind information. The state highway folks want to protect not only the traveling public, but also the work crews who face the hazardous task of removing the results of avalanches from Alaska's highways.

But the product of the joint venture appears to prove it's working: the recorded forecast is generally updated at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. daily, or whenever the weather brings much change in the hazards in South-central Alaska. The public places an average of 25 to 30

calls to the recording daily; up to 60 or 70 when there's a new snowstorm, and fewer on Sundays and Mondays.

When it's so easy to become informed, a skier has no excuse for making a risky assumption.

For instance, right now you might assume all that rain that reached right up into the mountains of South-central last week had cemented the snowpack into something that couldn't possibly budge till breakup.

But if you'll give 271-4500 a call, you'll find that some south-facing slopes may be wind-loaded with snow by the strong northerlies of the past couple of days.

Thompson notes there's also a new service specifically for motorists, a highway avalanche closure report at 337-6702.

MOUNTAINEERS AND SKIERS who want to become knowledgeable about avalanche hazard evaluation and rescue can spend an intensive few days doing just that at any of five upcoming Alaska Avalanche School workshops.

The sessions are sponsored by the state parks and division of geological and geophysical surveys with help from the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Army.

LEVEL I WORKSHOPS (for any experienced mountaineers) are planned Feb. 18-22 at Thompson Pass, March 2-5 at Hatcher Pass and March 11-14 at Black Rapids. Level II workshops (for those who have attended Level I or equivalent training) are March 25-28 at Summit Lake Pass and April 2-5 at Thompson Pass.

Participants must be in good physical condition, able to ski uphill and down and prepared to stay outdoors all day in foul weather.

Registration, food and lodging information are available from the parks office, 619 Warehouse Drive, Suite 210, Anchorage 99501, telephone 274-4676.

Joyce Weaver is a writer for The Anchorage Times.

Anchorage Times
2/1/82

Ready, Aim, Fire

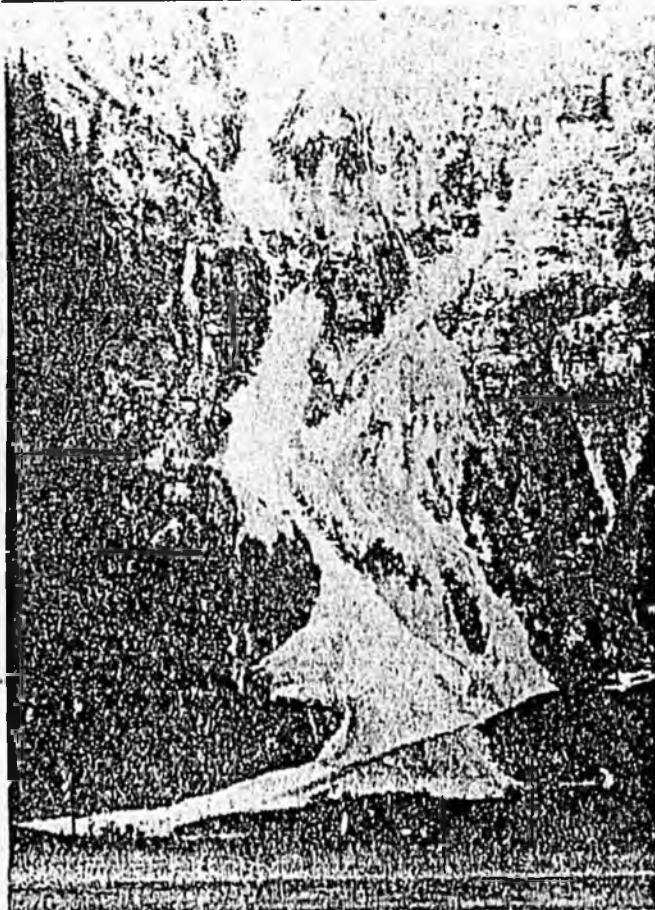


Photo by Mark Kelly

MONDAY'S AVALANCHE — This avalanche, which cascaded down along Thane Road Monday morning, prompted the state to blast down other potential avalanches using a 105 mm gun. No damage or injuries were reported in Monday's avalanche.



Photo by Mark Kelly

AVALANCHE CONTROL — John Mallinger of the state Department of Transportation, loads a shell into a 105 mm gun, while Bill Lockhart checks the settings as the

two prepare to blast down an avalanche along Thane Road from Douglas, as a part of the department's avalanche-control program.

The Alaska Avalanche School conducted 12 workshops on avalanche safety this season, ranging from two-day, introductory lessons (one day in the classroom, one day in the field) to four days of advanced instruction in the back country. Doug Fesler, who coordinates the school for the Alaska Division of Parks, says classes fill up rapidly because of the large number of back-country travelers in the state, and also because of the low registration fees: Workshops vary in price from free to

\$40. Similar workshops in the Lower 48, and there are only a few, would cost \$200 or more. Alaska is a good setting for avalanche training because of the combination of the steep terrain and the high incidence of avalanches. Food and lodging was available at or near each of the workshop locations in the mountains near Skagway, Palmer, Valdez, Anchorage, Juneau, Delta Junction, Girdwood, and on the Kenai Peninsula.

Participants in all but the introductory and classroom workshops must be in good physical condition, able to ski uphill and down in variable terrain and changing snow conditions, and must be prepared to remain outdoors in foul weather all day. The advanced courses require mountaineering or ski mountaineering experience. Sponsoring the workshops with the Division of Parks are several city, state, and federal agencies, as well as some businesses from the private sector. For additional information contact the Alaska Avalanche School, State Division of Parks, 619 Warehouse Drive, Suite 210, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

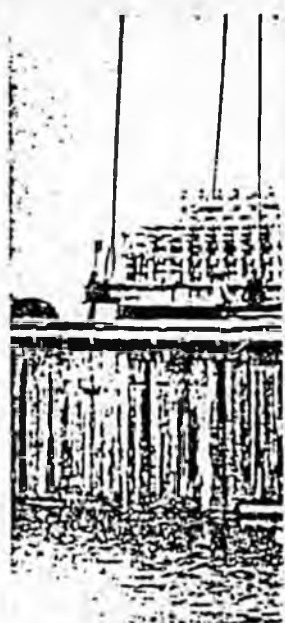


BOTH PHOTOS BY TOM GRESHAM, STAFF

One of the techniques taught in the avalanche seminars is digging a "hasty pit" to examine the layers of the snow pack. Instructor Nick Parker, left, watches the progress of a student digging into three feet of snow on a steep hillside. The kit in the foreground is used in evaluating avalanche potential and includes thermometers, reference books, magnifying glasses, a whisk broom, and other items.



Snow comes in many forms — both stable and unstable. Students attending sessions of the Alaska Avalanche School learn to identify the various snow forms, sometimes by examining the crystals with a high-power magnifying glass, as this student is doing.



The city of Valdez is floating dock on Oc unloaded parts from an Lynden Transport truck units, barged from Seatl Prudhoe Bay.



US. Borax's 9.5-mile to the Quartz Hill n Ketchikan was 30% com scheduled for September of South Coast, Inc., the talks over plans with rox Borax plans to build a ci of the Wilson River. Deve estimated \$1 billion. The Ketchikan and is one of known. Mining is expect years.