



canadianavalanchecentre

Boulder Mountain Avalanche 1 Year Later

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John Fomm
Executive Director

IKAR-CISA 2011 Åre, Sweden - October 19, 2011



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www.avalanche.ca



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March 13, 2010
November 24, 2009



Accident Overview

- Group of ~ 200 snowmobilers
- Size 3 avalanche, hit group of ~100
- >30 injured, 1 seriously (quadriplegic)
- 2 fatalities
- > 50 professional rescuers
- 12 helicopters involved (small and medium)
- 3 day rescue and recovery effort
- Largest recreational avalanche accident in Canadian history
- Total cost of SAR >CAN\$1million
- Significant media interest, political involvement



Fallout...

- Criminal investigation
 - Criminal negligence causing death – against organizers
 - Child endangerment – against parents with children at event
 - All charges dropped
- Coroner Investigation
 - Ignoring avalanche conditions & special warning
 - Role of government (land manager)
 - Role of snowmobile club
 - Drug use evidence in deceased (cocaine and oxycodone)



Snowmobile Fatalities in 2008-09

- 19 snowmobile avalanche fatalities
- Triggered Coroner to convene unique “*Death Review Panel*” in fall of 2009.
- Report containing 15 recommendations focused on prevention

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Conditions for significant public pressure

- Coroner Death Review Panel Report on Snowmobiling (2009)
- Boulder Mountain Accident (2010)
- Few snowmobiling stakeholders engaged in avalanche safety
 - Local, provincial and national snowmobile clubs
 - Snowmobile Manufacturers
 - Snowmobile Retail Shops
- Key snowmobile stakeholders actively minimizing avalanche issue

Change was mandatory – the future of snowmobiling threatened.



So what?

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Successes – Awareness & Education

- Awareness and Education (DRP #3 and #4)
 - Avalanche Safety Brochure to all registered snowmobiles in western provinces
 - Direct marketing to over 50,000 snowmobilers via brochure to start October 2011
 - Use the avalanche forecasts
 - Take a course from an approved provider
 - Get the equipment (shovel/beacon/probe) and an Airbag.



Avalanche Skills Training
information available at:



www.avalanche.ca
Your online avalanche resource.

If an avalanche
accident happens...

**IT'S UP
TO YOU.**



**YOU DON'T
HAVE TIME
TO GO FOR HELP.**

Every person in your party
needs to have the right rescue
equipment and know how to
use it. Learn more about
avalanche self-rescue. Take a
course or check out at
www.avalanche.ca

photo: Greg Palmer



ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT



Every person in your group needs to
have a **beacon**, **probe** and **shovel**
and everyone needs to take the time
to practice searching.

Consider buying an **avalanche
balloon pack**. If you're caught in
an avalanche, triggering the
airbags to inflate will help you stay
on top of the snow. An
international study shows this
system is the most effective single
device for surviving an avalanche.

Common Avalanche Misconceptions.



"My Friends will dig me out."

Maybe. But they've got to be alive and
able to find you.

"I'm following tracks, so it must be ok."

First tracks may not trigger a slide, and the
conditions may have changed since those
tracks were made. Besides, you might be
following a complete idiot.

"But, I've got a beacon on me."

A **beacon** is not a force field – it doesn't
protect you from avalanches. Beacons
improve your chances of survival, but only
about a third of completely buried people are
found alive. They do make body recovery
easier though.

"I've ridden this slope for years."

Don't kid yourself. Slope stability changes –
day to day, hour to hour.



EXPERIENCE MORE. **BE SAFE.**



Become **Avalanche Trained.**



TAKE THE
**AVALANCHE SKILLS
TRAINING LEVEL 1**

If you ride in the back country,
you need to be trained.

photo: Jeremy Hanke



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A mountain of respect. **Know the risks.**

Prepare before. **Because after, is too late.**



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Successes - Training

- (#5) Develop materials to better educate what basic avalanche training is (and is not)
 - New lesson plans for instructors and brochure
- (#6) Create a dedicated Companion Rescue Course
 - 1 day rescue course (organization, transceivers, shoveling)
 - >200 instructors already approved
 - Targeted towards snowmobilers and skiers
- Some snowmobile clubs making avalanche training mandatory



Success – Forecasts and Warnings

- (#7) Expand distribution of avalanche bulletin
 - Website (specific website for snowmobilers)
 - RSS feeds
 - Email broadcasting
 - Media ‘push’ campaigns
 - iPhone Application increases bulletin use by over 20%
 - Skiers use iPhone
 - Snowmobilers use Android – need Android apps



Successes - Highway Signage (#11)

- 22 signs on key highways used to access snowmobiling areas
- Up to 50 more planned
- Public presence of the importance of avalanche safety and snowmobiling



Successes – Avalanche Terrain Ratings

(#13)

- Special project to rate avalanche terrain at all 79 managed snowmobile areas (88 trail systems) in the Province of BC
 - Largest known avalanche terrain rating project ever undertaken for recreational reasons
 - Uses Parks Canada's Avalanche Terrain Exposure Scale (ATES)
- Trail head signs, maps and brochures produced for every area.
- Completion of project – March 2014



Regional snow avalanche activity and known fatal avalanche accidents for Canada (1863 to June 1997)

Avalanche activity zones

- High** Mountainous and AMSD > 100 cm Numerous avalanche paths, many with avalanches most winters
- Moderate** Mountainous and AMSD ranging between 50 to 100 cm, or many steep hills and AMSD > 100 cm Reduced density of avalanche paths, some with avalanches most winters
- Low** Many steep hills and AMSD ranging between 50 and 100 cm Isolated avalanche slopes, infrequent avalanches, mostly in extreme winters
- Very low** Mainly gentle terrain or AMSD < 50 cm Very isolated avalanche slopes, Avalanches rare.

(AMSD - average maximum snow depth)

Fatalities from avalanches

- | Deaths | Type of accident |
|--------|---|
| 1 | Recreation, including commercial recreation |
| 2-5 | Transportation, including construction of transportation routes |
| > 5 | Resource industry (mining, logging, etc.), including work camps |
| | In or near residential or public buildings |
| | Others, including hunting |



(Paris Canada photograph 615-289-O-094 taken by R. Greydl, reproduced with permission)

The four levels of avalanche activity shown on this map are based on terrain steepness from a shaded relief map and regional values of average maximum snow depth. As a consequence of the map scale and the qualitative method used to delineate the avalanche activity areas, this map is not suitable for site-specific assessments of snow avalanche activity or hazard since it does not take into account isolated steep areas, isolated areas of heavy snowfall or strong winds, extreme winters, unusual storms, or slush flows on less steep terrain. For example, the method used to delineate the regional snow avalanche activity underestimates the activity on areas of the Newfoundland coast where wind-blown snow creates local avalanche activity. Nevertheless, 92% of the reported snow avalanche accidents in Canada fall within the areas of high or moderate avalanche activity.

Note: some of the 216 accident locations depicted on the map are obscured by overlapping closely-spaced symbols.

Sources

Topographic information:
 Canada, Energy, Mines and Resources
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Average maximum snow depth:
 Canada, Fisheries and Environment
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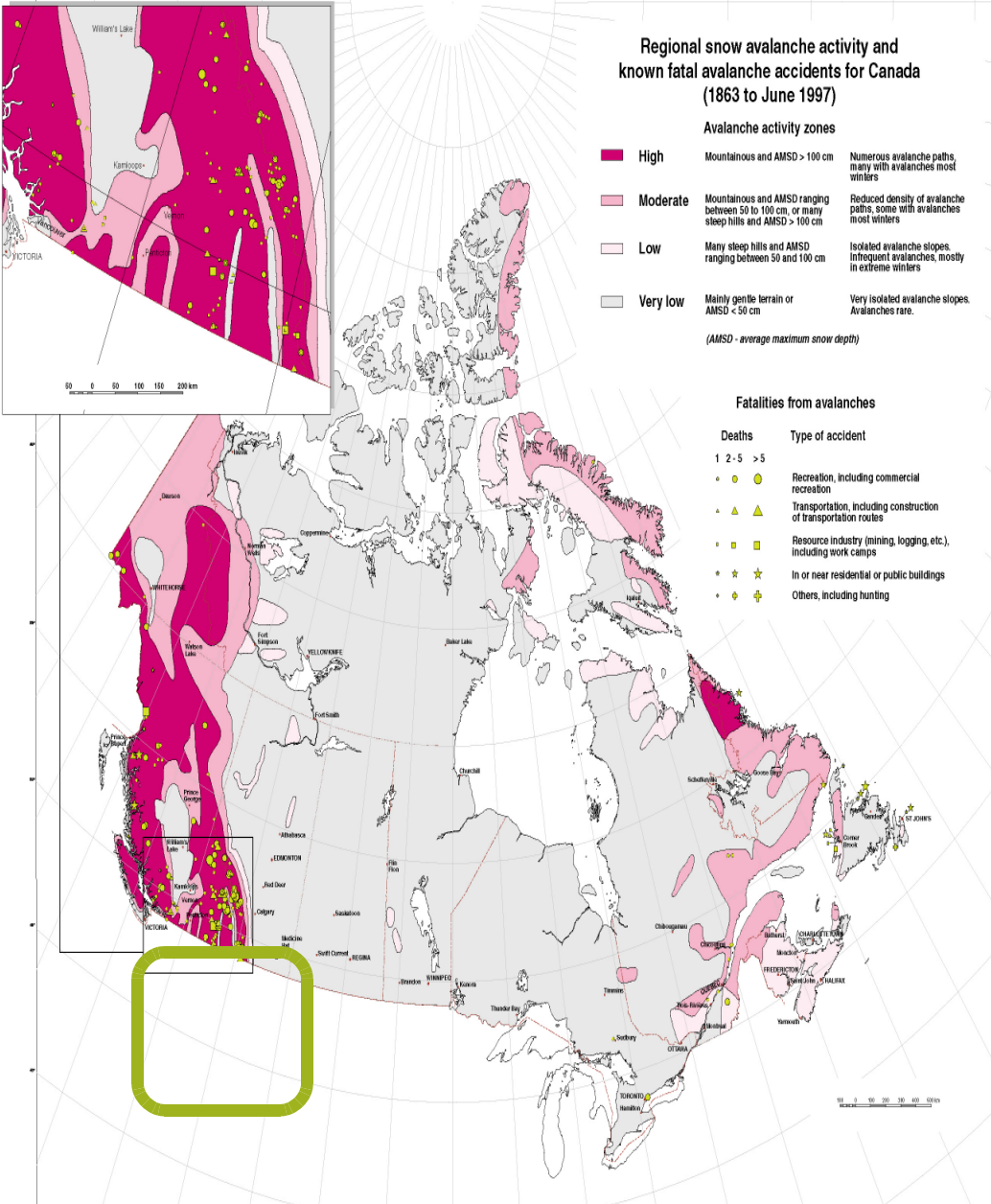
Stethem, C.J. and Schaerer, P.A.
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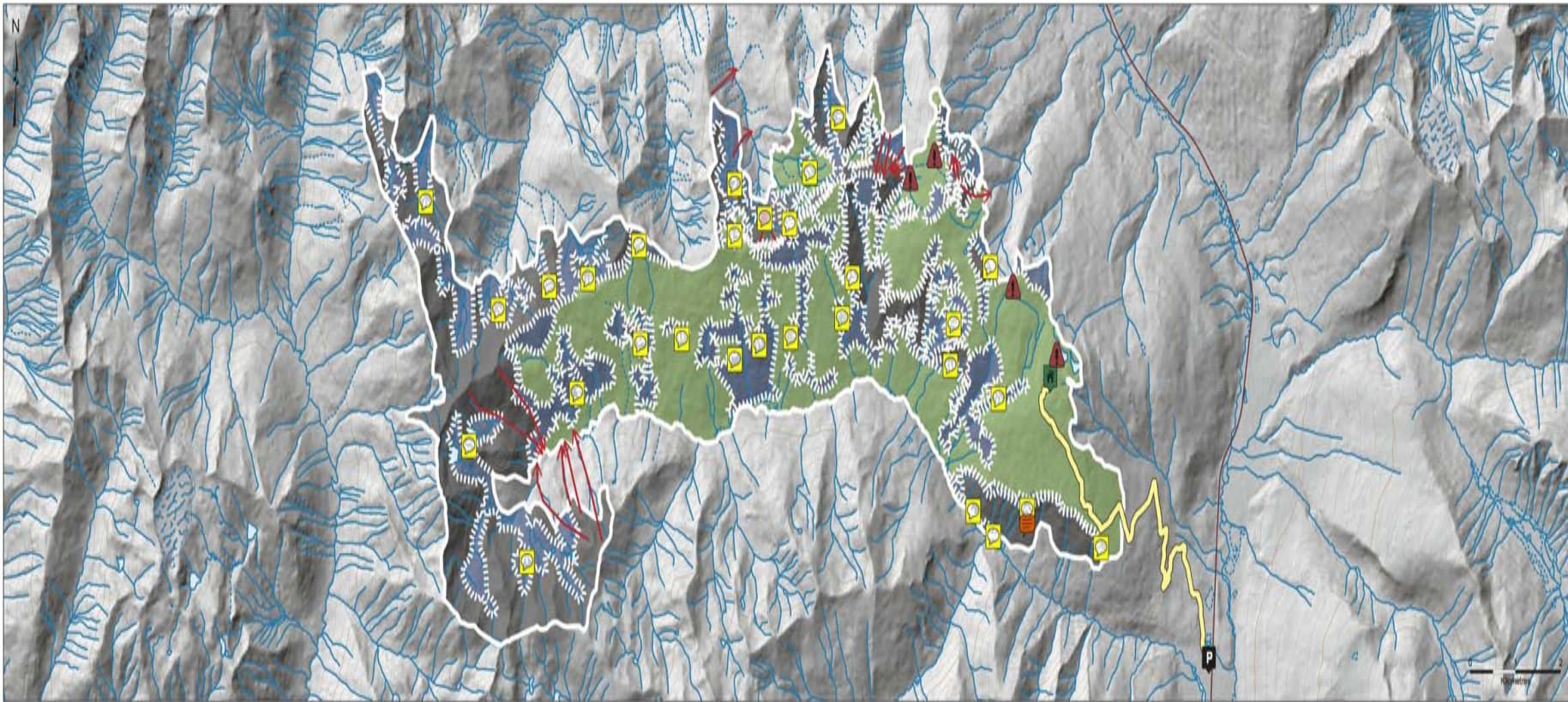
Recommended Citation:

Jamieson, B. and Brooks, G.R.
 1998: Regional snow avalanche activity and known fatal avalanche accidents for Canada (1863 to June 1997); Geological Survey of Canada, Open File 3592.

Copies of this Open File may be obtained from:
 Geological Survey of Canada, 601 Booth Street,
 Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E8
 or
 Geological Survey of Canada (Calgary), 3309-33rd
 Street N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2L 2A7

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 1998





Legend

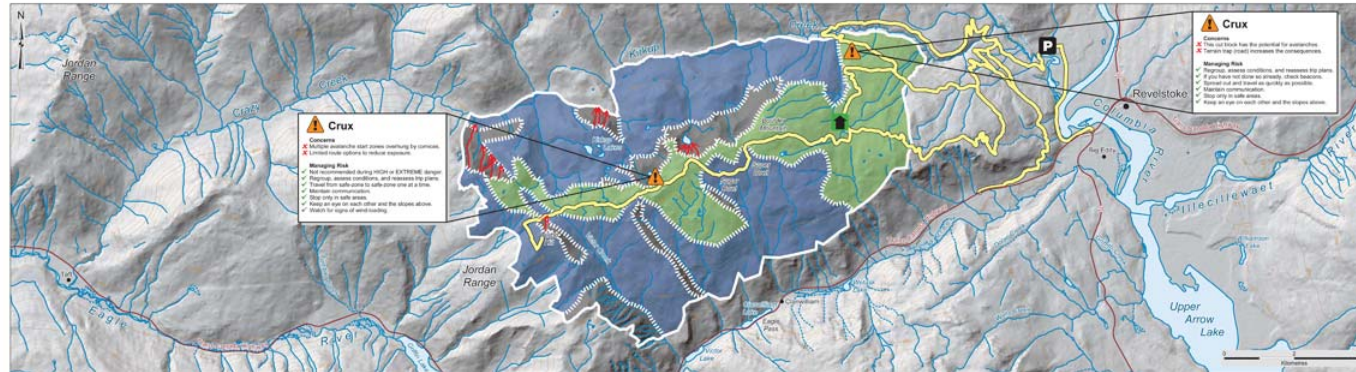
-  Cabin
-  Caution
-  Parking
-  Avalanche Path
-  Road
-  Class 1 - Simple
-  Class 2 - Challenging
-  Class 3 - Complex

Boundaries between classes are imprecise.



YOU ARE HEADING INTO AVALANCHE TERRAIN

1. What type of terrain are you heading into?



- CABIN
- CRUX
- PARKING
- AVALANCHE PATH
- ROAD/TRAIL
- TERRAIN RATED

SIMPLE
Exposure to low angle or primarily forested terrain. Some forest openings may involve the runoff zones of infrequent avalanches. Many options to reduce or eliminate exposure. No glacier travel.

CHALLENGING
Exposure to well defined avalanche paths, starting zones or terrain traps; options exist to reduce or eliminate exposure with careful route finding. Glacier travel is straightforward but crevasse hazard may exist.

COMPLEX
Exposure to multiple overlapping avalanche paths or large expanses of steep, open terrain; multiple avalanche starting zones or terrain traps below; minimal options to reduce exposure. Complicated glacier travel with extensive crevasse bands or icefalls.

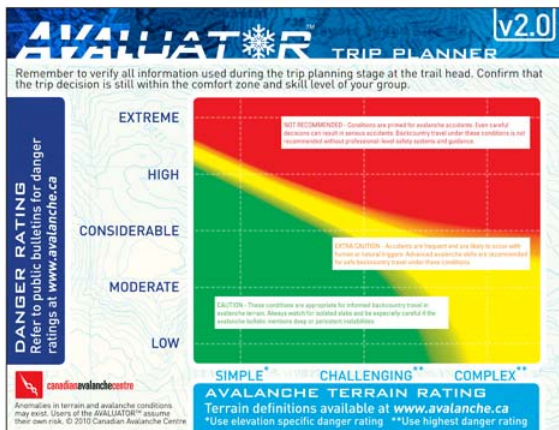
2. What is the Avalanche Danger Rating today?

Where can I access today's forecast? 1-800-667-1105, select number for North Columbia->Selkirk & Monashee region.

Danger Level	Travel Advice
5 Extreme	Avoid all avalanche terrain.
4 High	Very dangerous avalanche conditions. Travel in avalanche terrain not recommended.
3 Considerable	Dangerous avalanche conditions. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route-finding and conservative decision-making essential.
2 Moderate	Heightened avalanche conditions on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully; identify features of concern.
1 Low	Generally safe avalanche conditions. Watch for unstable snow on isolated terrain features.

3. What does the Evaluator recommend?

Combine the danger and terrain ratings on the Evaluator chart to manage risk.



- Have you told a responsible person your trip plans?
- Is everyone in your group properly dressed and equipped with a transceiver, probe and shovel?
- Do you have any backcountry knowledge or avalanche awareness training?
- For more information go to: www.avalanche.ca



We would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Government of British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Sports and the Arts.

Warning: Mountain travel is dangerous—hazards exist. Spotting hazards and assessing their risk is your responsibility. Decision guides like the Evaluator cannot eliminate these hazards, but will help you understand and manage them. The Evaluator is no substitute for training, experience, and choosing skilled and responsible travel partners. Use the Evaluator and the information on this sign at your own risk. Travel the back country at your own risk.
Terrain Assessment Maps Warning: This map is illustrative only and should not be used to determine precise routes or location of features. The terrain ratings shown are an approximation and may assist with trip planning. Use the information provided on this map at your own risk.

pre-trip planning

- Overview
- ↓ Trip Planning
 - Section A
 - Section B
- Traverse Planning
- Weather
- Discussion Forums
- Trip Plan Form
- Your feedback

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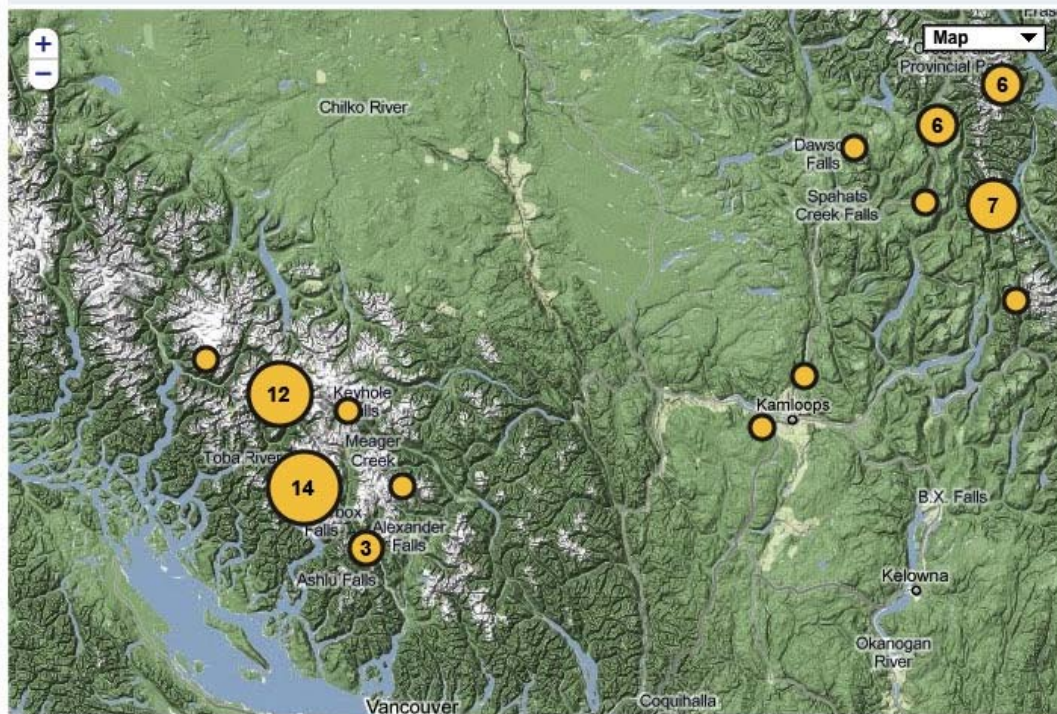
traverse planning

Trip planner

Welcome to the Trip planner - select your trip type and ATES rating to matching routes

Trip type: Skiing/Snowboarding Snowmobiling Ice climbing

Ates rating: Simple Challenging Complex



Trips to compare: The gully The warren The gully The warren

Compare

pre-trip planning

traverse planning

→ Overview

↓ Trip Planning

Section A

Section B

→ Traverse Planning

→ Weather

→ Discussion Forums

→ Trip Plan Form

🗨 Your feedback

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Trip planner

Welcome to the Trip planner - select your trip type and ATEs rating to matching routes

Trip type: Skiing/Snowboarding Snowmobiling Ice climbing

Ates rating: Simple Challenging Complex



Whistler White Water

Map X

Terrain rating

Challenging

Elevation Zone

Alpine: 60%
Tree line: 30%
Below Tree line: 10%

> VIEW > COMPARE

Trips to compare: 📌 The gully 📌 The warren 📌 The gully 📌 The warren

Compare

pre-trip planning

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traverse planning

Compare trips

BACK TO MAP

Today Friday Saturday

PREVIOUS DISPLAYING 1-3 OF 8 ROUTES NEXT

Friendship Col Friday 11 Oct 2010	The Womb Friday 11 Oct 2010	Boomerang Friday 11 Oct 2010
Alpine 1 Low	Alpine 4 High	Alpine 4 High
At Treeline 1 Low	At Treeline 4 High	At Treeline 5 Extreme
Below Treeline 1 Low	Below Treeline 5 Extreme	Below Treeline 5 Extreme
SIMPLE CHALLENGING COMPLEX	SIMPLE CHALLENGING COMPLEX	SIMPLE CHALLENGING COMPLEX
Primary Concerns 	Primary Concerns 	Primary Concerns
Terrain rating Challenging	Terrain rating Challenging	Terrain rating Challenging
Elevation Zone Alpine: 60% Tree line: 30% Below Tree line: 10%	Elevation Zone Alpine: 60% Tree line: 30% Below Tree line: 10%	Elevation Zone Alpine: 60% Tree line: 30% Below Tree line: 10%
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View trip	View trip	View trip

pre-trip planning

- Overview
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 - Section A
 - Section B
- Traverse Planning
- Weather
- Discussion Forums
- Trip Plan Form
- Your feedback

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traverse planning

Quartz Creek

← BACK TO MAP

Friday 11 Oct 2010	Saturday 12 Oct 2010	Sunday 13 Oct 2010
Alpine 1 Low	Alpine 4 High	Alpine 4 High
At Treeline 1 Low	At Treeline 4 High	At Treeline 5 Extreme
Below Treeline 1 Low	Below Treeline 5 Extreme	Below Treeline 5 Extreme
SIMPLE CHALLENGING COMPLEX	SIMPLE CHALLENGING COMPLEX	SIMPLE CHALLENGING COMPLEX

Trip details



Primary concerns



Terrain rating

Challenging

Elevation Zone

Alpine: 60%
Tree line: 30%
Below Tree line: 10%

Cautions

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. In consequat egestas sem, a pulvinar diam dignissim e condimentum. Phasellus iaculis ornare ipsum, ut sagittis nibh venenatis quis

Mitigations

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Other routes

This route is inside the Revelstoke snowmobile club's area

[See all routes within this club's area](#)

Other resources include

- [Canadian Mountain Encyclopedia](#)
- [Atlas of Canada topographic maps](#)
- [Google Earth](#)
- [NASA Worldwind](#)

Rescue & public safety

- [Canadian Mountain Encyclopedia](#)
- [Atlas of Canada topographic maps](#)
- [Google Earth](#)
- [NASA Worldwind](#)

Successes – Snowmobile Committee

(#15)

- CAC formed a committee involving key snowmobile stakeholders
 - All provincial snowmobile club organizations
 - Key snowmobile avalanche educators
 - Commercial snowmobile operators (rentals)
- Currently the most active and productive committee of the CAC.



Expansion of Forecast Regions (#8)

- 44% of fatalities occurring in regions without a public bulletin
- Coroner calls for expansion of forecast regions, all regions in BC should have a forecast
- Problem – no data
- CAN\$1m to CAN\$1.5m/year in additional funding needed
 - Starting implementation this winter
 - Big expansion planned for 2011-12 winter if \$\$ raised
 - Paid observer network combined with volunteer observers
 - iPhone and Android App (pictures, conditions with GPS locations)

Other initiatives

- Media work
 - 30 second 'Public Service Announcements' on Radio
 - CAC promoting snowmobiling in media as a safe and enjoyable way to explore BC backcountry***.
- Research: CAN\$1 million/3 year special project funded by Canadian Government
 - Social sciences study – who are snowmobilers and how do they think?
 - Promote professional avalanche standards through training
 - TV Show & Educational Online Video Series



Changes by

Manufacturers

- Partnering with CAC through sponsorship and co-marketing
- Marketing messaging's moving to 'responsibility' messaging
- Promoting awareness seminars

 Yamaha/ArticCat –
canadianavalanchecentre
mountain sleds come
with BOA



The 2012 Summit. Don't be a follower.

Most power and best fuel economy with the 163+ hp* Rotax® E-TEC® 800R engine. Lightest platform. Best power-to-weight ratio. New tallest standard track lug. Effortless carving and sidehilling with the S-36 handling package. No wonder it's the most sold mountain sled in North America since 2008.** See the new Summit™ at ski-doo.com. Get the latest news and hang with the Summit Freeriders at mountainblog.ski-doo.com and on Facebook.

**TIME TO GET SERIOUS.
SERIOUS POWER.
SERIOUSLY LIGHT.
SERIOUSLY NIMBLE.**

"A majority of SnoWest Deep Powder Challenge test riders chose the Summit as the Best Sled for 2011, Best Boondocking and BestRider Amenities. Ski-Doo was chosen 19 out of 35 times, or 54% on all categories rated."

- Source: SnoWest Volume 38, No. 3

Catch the SUMMIT in action.
Watch this video.

Ski-Doo and the Canadian Avalanche Centre want you to stay safe. Check avalanche conditions. www.avalanche.ca

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2011-12 Canadian Avalanche Centre Events

Check out an avalanche awareness event near you.
Visit avalanche.ca for up-to-date info.

Backcountry Avalanche Workshops – Northern Circuit

November 13: Prince George, BC - PGSC Clubhouse (*ski and sled*)
November 15: Smithers, BC - The Old Church (*ski*)
November 16: Smithers, BC - The Old Church (*sled*)
November 19: Chetwynd, BC - TBD (*sled*)
November 21: Grand Prairie, AB - Stojan's (*sled*)
November 23: Jasper, AB - Jasper Activity Centre (*ski*)

Backcountry Avalanche Workshops – Southern Circuit

November 25: Kamloops, BC - Thompson Rivers University (*ski and sled*)
November 28: Kelowna, BC - Union Cycle (*ski*)
November 30: Nelson, BC - LV Rogers Secondary (*ski*)
December 1: Rossland, BC - RSS Auditorium (*ski and sled combined*)
December 4: Fernie, BC - Fernie Alpine Resort (*ski*)
December 5: Lethbridge, AB - TBD (*sled*)
December 7: Calgary, AB - Albert Park (*sled*)
December 8: Canmore, AB - TBD (*ski*)

Backcountry Avalanche Workshops – MEC Circuit

October 21: Edmonton, AB
November 17: Vancouver, BC
November 19: Victoria, BC
December 6: Calgary, AB
December 7: North Vancouver, BC

Staying Alive Series

TBD: Revelstoke, BC - Revelstoke Mountain Resort (check www.avalanche.ca)
TBD: Lake Louise, AB - TBD (check www.avalanche.ca)
November 17: Jasper, AB - D'ed Dog Pub
December 8: Golden, BC - Senior's Centre

Other Events

November 12: North Vancouver, BC - MEC Snowfest
November 20: Calgary, AB - MEC Snowfest
November 26: Vancouver, BC - MEC Snowfest

Avalanche Awareness Days

January 21-22: Across Canada. Visit avalanche.ca for details.

Passionate about youth avalanche awareness?

Contact Youth Education Coordinator Bridget Daughney for more information on youth avalanche education, starting a youth avalanche awareness program, borrowing avalanche gear to use with your students, or to share your ideas: bdaughney@avalanche.ca.
Check out <http://www.avalanche.ca/cac/community/educators> for more information.

2011-12 Snowmobile Avalanche Awareness Events

Visit avalanche.ca for up-to-date info.

Sled Shows

October 21-23: Edmonton, AB - Northlands Expo Centre
November 4-6: Saskatoon, SK - Prairieland Exhibition Centre
November 12: Vernon, BC - Vernon Recreation Complex

Patterns to Prevention Avalanche Awareness Workshops

October 24: Edmonton, AB
November 7: Saskatoon, SK
November 8: Edmonton, AB
November 9: Red Deer, AB
November 10: Calgary, AB
November 14: Grassland, AB
November 17: Fort McMurray, AB
December 7: Lloydminster, SK
February 3: Grand Prairie, AB
Contact Lori Zacaruk for more information: info@zacstracs.com

Yamaha Avalanche Awareness Seminars

October 24: Salmon Arm, BC
October 25: Kamloops, BC
October 26: Kelowna, BC
October 27: Vernon, BC
November 15: Calgary, BC
November 16: Cranbrook, BC
November 17: Fruitvale, BC
Contact Amber Wood for more information: amberwood@trigger-point.ca

BRP Avalanche Awareness Seminars

October 14: Kamloops, BC - RTR Performance
October 17: Lethbridge, AB - Mr. R's
October 18: Brooks, AB - A&E RV Sales & Service
October 19: Calgary, AB - Bow Cycle South
October 20: Cochrane, AB - Bow Ridge Sports
October 24: Edson, AB - Riderz
October 25: St. Albert, AB - Riverside Honda and Ski-Doo Sales
October 26: Edmonton, AB - Martin Motorsports
October 27: St. Paul, AB - Power Merchants Ltd.
November 8: Crescent Valley, BC - Playmor Power Products Ltd.
November 9: Kelowna, BC - Banner Recreational
November 10: Vernon, BC - Banner Recreational
November 11: Tulameen, BC - Reichert Sales & Service
November 12: Tulameen, BC - Reichert Sales & Service
November 15: Squamish, BC - No Limits Motorsports
November 16: Langley, BC - Ski and Trail Powersports Ltd.
November 17: Chilliwack, BC - Greater Vancouver Powersports
November 18: Surrey, BC - Greater Vancouver Powersports
November 22: 100 Mile House, BC - Performance All Terrain and Rentals
November 23: Prince George, BC - Forest Power Sports
Contact Carole Savage for more information: snowmobile@avalanche.ca

Summary...

- Snowmobilers are taking responsibility and working hard
 - only 10% of snowmobilers belong to organized groups
- CAC is coordinating all efforts for snowmobiling prevention projects
- Significant increase in funding;
 - Government funding increases (>2x) + projects
 - Trail Pass Funding - \$1/trail pass sold to CAC (~\$40,000/yr and growing)



February 19, 2011

>20 people

3 fatalities





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Thanks for your attention.

Click to edit Master subtitle style
John Tømm
itomm@avalanche.ca

IKAR-CISA 2011 Åre, Sweden – October 21, 2011



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www.avalanche.ca