

Wasatch Backcountry Rescue is proud to be back meeting and training together with the International Commission of Alpine Rescue and the Alpine Rettung Schwiez.

Thank you Marcel, and to all our partners within the rescue community.

My goal today is to give you an **update** with what is new with us in our rescue community in Utah, and tell you about some changes we are making based upon changes to our population, demographics, and logistics.

WBR is a Non-Profit Professional rescue agency comprised of on-duty ski patrolmen from across the Wasatch Front. We have approx **40 canine** rescue teams that are classified as either **A,B, or C teams**. C teams are candidates to our program with state access to our watershed areas, B are In-Resort Avalanche response teams, and Level A teams are state certified to search Avalanches within our backcountry use areas, and remote wilderness areas across the state under our respective county **Sherriff's umbrella**.

Here is a layout of our Northern Wasatch Mountains. Utah is gaining population faster than ever. SLC is a major metropolitan area, with class A avalanche terrain within minutes of the city center. In comparison, the population of Utah back in **1977** was **562,499**. Now we stand at **3,284,823** in **2020**, and are **projected** increase to **5,450,598** by the year **2060**, a **66%** increase. More and more people are out and using our mountains whether they live in the state or travel to ski our legendary snow.

In **2021** WBR responded to roughly **35** callouts, the majority of those being injured user extraction, **4** being **multi agency** avalanche recoveries, and 3 of which we deployed explosive ordinance to protect the rescue teams and agencies involved. The comprehensive tasks of our professional response include, effective interagency communication, **air or ground explosive mitigation teams, beacon, canine, recco, shovelers, probers, and extraction teams**.

In **2022** things were a bit different, mainly due to our unfortunate weather pattern. We received **4-6 feet** of snow with a lot of wind in late December early January on a very rotten ground layer from early storms in September and October, creating an extremely unstable snow pack. That kept the backcountry user **group at home** and not out recreating for a while. Then the **snow completely stopped falling** and we waited for snow for almost 2 months, at least thankful that the snowpack was stabilizing.

We were called out for **multiple user extractions** due to recreational party injury, but to only 1 fully buried avalanche victim and 2 dog search responses, due to unwitnessed

Avalanches and ski tracks in and near the debris that were clear of human scent. For our 1 buried victim, we arrived on-scene via helicopter within 22 minutes, and as we landed the victims party performed a partner rescue and had the face and head exposed and air way cleared for a successful save. We helped with a difficult extraction and decent of the patient. Who survived. Seconds from our first live Backcountry Rescue.

That being said we have **noticed a change in our callouts** over the years. We are using quite a few avalanche mitigation devices such as M101A1 Howitzers, Gazex, Wyssen, Obelex, Daisy Bell, and Hand charges to keep roads open and to aid in Heli and Cat skiing operation use. That, as well as a huge **population** and user group increase is creating an environment where we aren't seeing as many classic large avalanches, but more backcountry recreational skier, snowboarder, and snowmobile extraction.

Shown here are the **RACS** (remote avalanche control systems) installed by UDOT in the summer of 2021 on the Emma ridge in Little Cottonwood Canyon. This has dramatically decreased the number of avalanche related extractions in this area. But we have noticed a significant increase in users using this zone to access big class A avalanche terrain above and beyond this area that is more remote and makes extraction more difficult and time consuming.

Here is an **image** of that same area with our **2 original** permanent toboggan locations and projected toboggan decent capabilities. You can see differentiated by different colors on the map the range of each of these toboggans reach. Next is our updated map. **Coleman** Worthan the Mountain Manager of Alta ski resort had a proposal to in 2021 to add **3 additional** rescue toboggans to the BCC/LCC ridge line. We have put into use a total of 5 permanently placed toboggans in this area and intend to add 3 more to the Wasatch back and Park City ridge lines in the next year.

Coleman has created this google earth map of the area to give you an idea of our reach, range and avalanche problems in the area.

**Fast extraction** is key to an efficient rescue, getting these people off of the mountain to a trauma one facility quickly. We frequently perform our rescues in inclement

weather where **flying is not a possibility**. These sleds allow for us to get up to a patient quickly and efficiently and extract them much faster than using a SKED or make-shift rescue sled.

Here are the **sled instructions** we mount on every sled including a brief explanation and info card to inform the public. We did have one party use a sled to extract their friend down back to the town of Alta and we flew the sled back into place within the week for further use.

Each sled has been placed via Helicopter during times of good weather. Some are mounted to trees, some buildings. When recreating in the area we ask our members to check on these rigs and dig them out or make sure they are in good working order.

**We look forward to working our dogs in this amazing avalanche terrain, but also helping our user group in any way we can.**

Thank you for your time and pray for a big snow year.