

# Hawkins Mountain Avalanche Fatality

March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Report by Dennis D'Amico and Robert Hahn

## Incident snapshot

**Occurrence Time and Date:** 12:20 pm on March 4, 2017

**Time First Reported to 911/SAR:** unknown

**Recovery Time:** The body was recovered from the site the following day by Kittitas County SAR.

**Lat/Lon:** 47.4484 N, 120.9994 W (estimated start zone from photographs)

**Location:** Hawkins Mountain, Big Boulder Creek Drainage, Okanogan-Wenatchee NF, WA

**Number in Party:** 2

**Number Caught:** 2

**Number Partially Buried, Critical:** 1

**Number Completely Buried:** 1

**Duration of Burial:** 15 minutes for the survivor, 40 minutes for the victim

**Number Killed:** 1

**Avalanche Type:** Soft Slab (SS-estimated)

**Trigger:** Snowmobile (AM)

**Size:** R (unknown) / D2 or higher (not directly measured)

**Start Zone Aspect:** SE

**Start Zone Elevation:** 7000 feet (estimated)

**Height of Crown Face:** not observed

**Width of Fracture:** not observed

**Average Vertical Fall:** 600 ft (estimated)

**Slab, Weak Layer, and Bed Surface:** Not observed. Suspected that 2/14 crust was bed surface with weak layer just above the crust.

**Burial involved a terrain trap:** Trees

**Number of people that crossed start zone before avalanche:** 1 snowmobiler high-marked in the same area as the start zone several times prior to the avalanche earlier in the day without incident.

**Avalanche occurred during:** Ascent or crossing start zone

**Location of group in relation to start zone during avalanche:** 1 snowmobiler (survivor) was in the start zone, the other (victim) below in the track. Another party was having lunch further downhill in the avalanche runout, but managed to escape to higher ground before the avalanche caught them.

**Avalanche Safety Gear Carried:** Both riders had a transceiver, shovel, probe and airbag packs. The airbags were not deployed.

**Avalanche Training and Experience at Activity:** Unknown

**Signs of Instability Noted by Group:** Unknown

**Extent of Injuries or Cause of Death:** Unknown if the survivor was injured, but he was able to assist in the recovery efforts and ride a snowmachine out at the end of the day. Reports suggest that the victim died of trauma related to impacting the tree next to his burial location and/or asphyxiation. NWAC did not have access to the coroner's report.

**Damage:** At least one snowmobile was badly damaged and had to be towed out.

**NWAC Forecast Zone:** East Slopes Central – Lake Chelan to South of I-90

**Avalanche Danger Rating (Above Treeline):** Moderate

## Weather

Hawkins Mountain is about 20 miles ENE of Snoqualmie Pass, 21 miles NW of Blewett Pass and about 5 miles NE of the Salmon la Sac campground on the north end of Cle Elum Lake.

The closest weather station to the incident site is the NRCS Sasse Ridge Snotel station at 4350 ft. The elevation of the avalanche start zone is just below 7000 ft. At the Sasse Ridge station, the Total Snowdepth increased 6 inches (15 cm) with 0.90 inches of water recorded between noon March 2<sup>nd</sup> and noon March 4<sup>th</sup>. The temperature rose above freezing for much of March 3<sup>rd</sup> at the station elevation.

During the same storm cycle at Snoqualmie Pass, a warming trend peaked mid-day on Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> and was followed by a sharp cooling trend Friday night. During peak warming, rain was observed up to at least 4800 feet in the Snoqualmie Pass corridor (observed) while it appears the Alpental summit station (5400 ft) stayed all snow or only briefly transitioned to rain, with below-freezing temperatures throughout the event. 19 inches (48 cm) of snow was recorded at the Alpental summit station with 7 inches recorded at the base station (3100 ft) over the 48 hours ending 4 am March 4<sup>th</sup>. Ridge-top winds at Alpental (5400 ft) averaged approximately 10 mph during much of the storm, with peak gusts approaching 30 mph. A relative break in wind and precipitation was observed at Alpental during the daylight hours on Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup>.

## NWAC Comments and Avalanche and Snowpack Observations from 3/4/17

March 4<sup>th</sup> was an active avalanche day with several human skier or snowmobile triggered slides reported in the Olympics and Cascades. Human triggered avalanches along the west slopes of the Cascades and Olympics on March 4<sup>th</sup> were within new snow layers (including the Avalanche Mountain incident that occurred in the Snow Lake area of Snoqualmie Pass the same day), while much of the larger avalanche activity along the east slopes of the Cascades ran on or just above the 2/14 crust. The potential for the 2/14 interface to produce widespread avalanches along the east slopes of the Cascades had not been well identified in the NWAC forecast or by avalanche professionals on the ground (see NCH incident also from March 4<sup>th</sup>) leading into the 4<sup>th</sup>. Three relevant public observations from the central-east Cascades forecast zone submitted via the NWAC observation page are attached at the end of the report with highlights below.

Snowpack test results from Red Mt near Salmon la Sac submitted via NWAC Observation page: 25 cm of light density snow on top of 25 cm of medium density, weak layer identified at approximately 50 cm, 10 cm of 1 finger hardness snow on top of very hard ice crust at 60 cm. Snowpit results consistently pointed to weak layer at 10 cm above ice crust.

Snowpack tests from a Level 1 avalanche course in same general area as the incident: CTs in moderate range with resistant planar and broken fracture characteristics in the recent storm snow interfaces. They did note a full propagation during a large column test on a deeper storm snow layer, and one full propagation ECT on a solar aspect "a few inches above the hard crust."

Party A (rescue comments below) had direct knowledge of at least one partial snowmobiler burial in the Lake Ann area 2 miles NE of Hawkins Mountain that required a partner rescue on March 4th.

A first responder en-route to the Hawkins incident encountered a slide in a lower bowl around the same time of the incident and found a man digging his sled out. The man said there was nobody else involved in the avalanche.

## Accident/Rescue Summary

Party A consisted of a husband and wife. The information below was collected from a post by the husband in Party A on the SnoWest snowmobile forum and through phone conversations with the husband in Party A and also with another snowmobiler on scene 15-20 minutes after the avalanche.

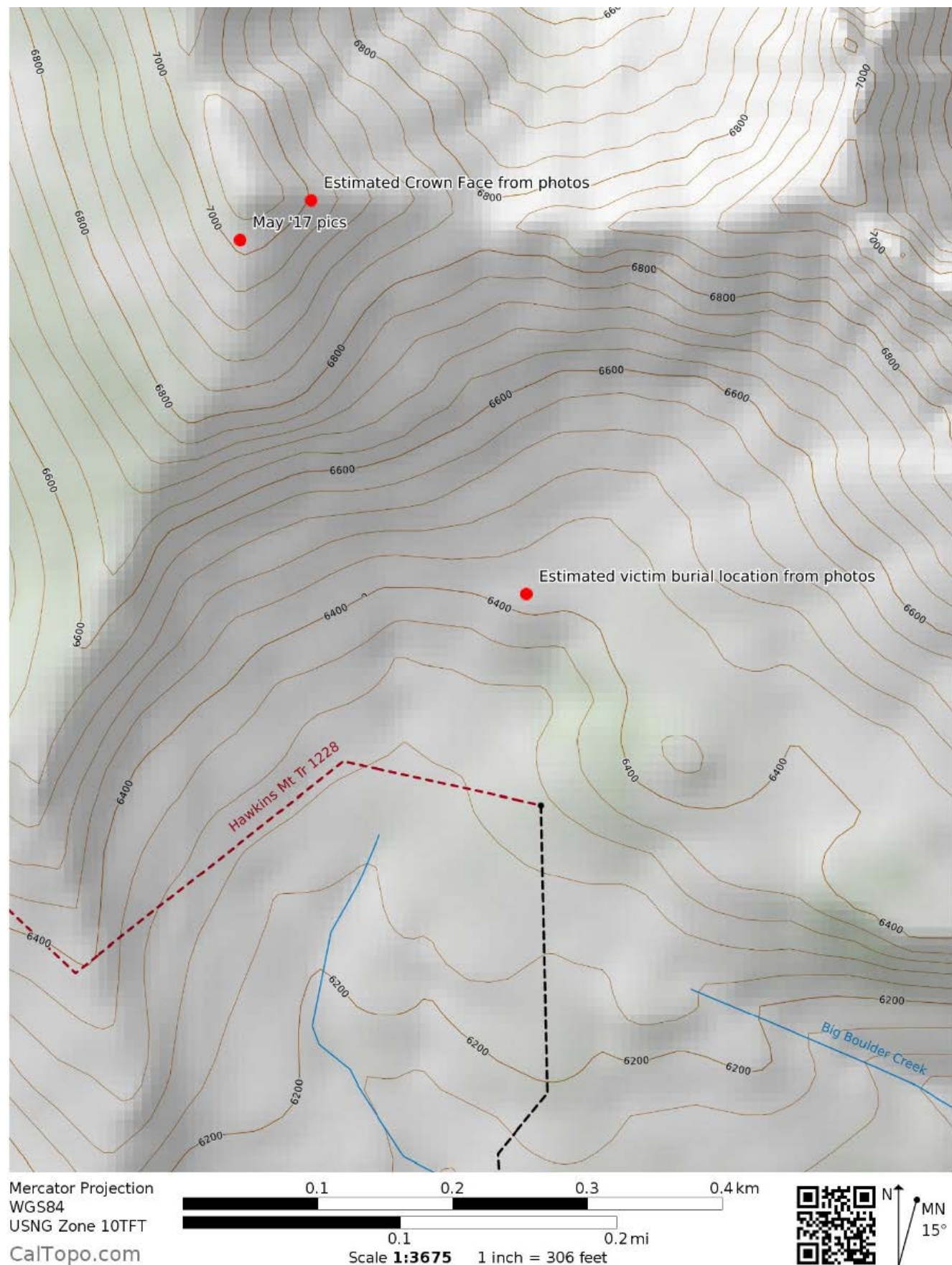
After the husband in Party A had high-marked several times, including in the area the avalanche would later release, Party A stopped riding to have lunch in the basin below the upper SE bowl of Hawkins Mountain. At 12:20 PM, the victim and the survivor came up to the same bowl that Party A had recently ridden. They were on the same slope Party A had high-marked when one of them turned out and the whole slope broke loose. One rider was above the other. The rider higher on the slope (survivor) was riding in the avalanche at first, then gassed it and briefly pulled out in front of the avalanche. The other rider (victim) was below him. Then the avalanche swallowed both of them.

Party A noticed that they were sitting in the avalanche runout so they ran up a small hill just as the powder cloud came over them. They had no time to move their sleds. Fortunately, the avalanche just missed Party A and when the snow cleared there was a 4 ft wall of snow behind them where the sleds previously had been parked.

Party A could see the survivor's hand just above the snow. With all of Party A's avalanche rescue equipment buried with their snowmobiles, they ran over and dug him out by hand. Once dug out, they tried using the survivor's transceiver to begin searching for the other rider (victim). They could see his sled but could not get a signal. After a couple of minutes other snowmobilers rode up from below and began to help organize the growing search effort. Rescuers were from separate riding groups and generally did not know each other. Some user unfamiliarity with the avalanche rescue equipment, SPOT Satellite GPS messenger and/or other GPS devices initially added confusion to the scene.

The wife in Party A had a probe hit by a tree near the victim's sled. A transceiver confirmed the probe strike and all efforts changed to digging by the tree. The victim was excavated about 40 minutes after the avalanche. He was not breathing and showed signs of trauma. CPR was started at 1 pm and continued for 6.5 hours. The rescuers relocated the victim to the bottom of the bowl as instructed by the rescue helicopter pilot but the rescue helicopter was ultimately unable to land. The decision from law enforcement/SAR to stop

CPR was communicated to the rescuers on-scene and the remaining rescuers exited around 9 pm. The victim's body was recovered the next day by the Kittitas County Sheriff's Office and Kittitas County SAR.



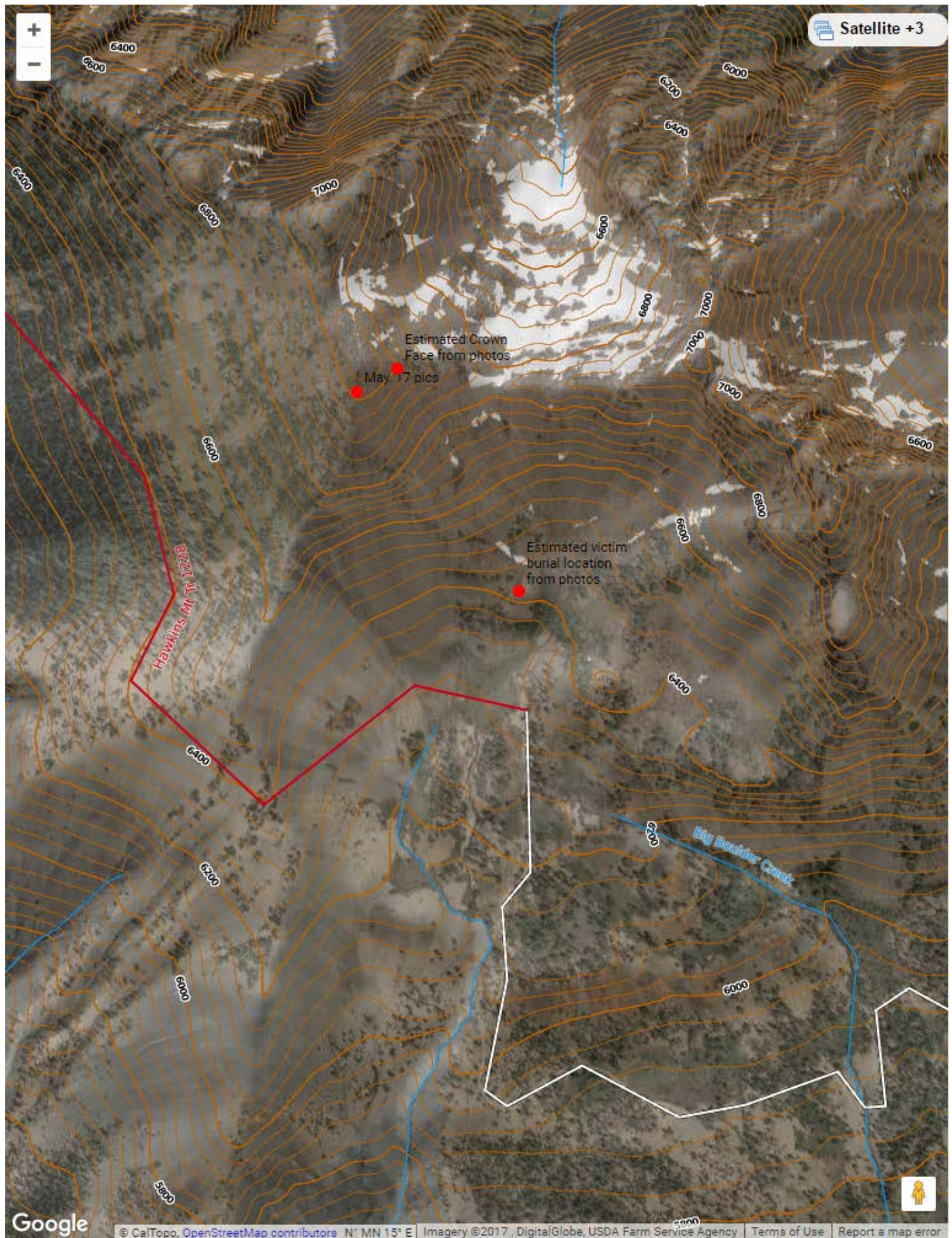





Photo provided by Tim Penelerick, March 4<sup>th</sup> 2017



Photo provided by Tim Penelerick, March 4<sup>th</sup> 2017

 = estimated burial location



Pictures taken from the ridge marked on map, May, 19th 2017 by Dennis D'Amico



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Recreational Observation

# East Slopes Central - Lake Chelan to South of I-90

March 4, 2017, 2 p.m. PST

**Weather:** Calm, Light Snowfall, Overcast

**Snowpack:** 25 cm of light density snow on top of 25 cm of medium density, weak layer identified at approx 50 cm, 10 cm of 1 finger hardness snow on top of very hard ice crust at 60 cm. Snowpit results consistently pointed to weak layer at 10 cm above ice crust.

**Area Description:** Red Mountain near Salmon la Sac, From the highest point of Red Mtn to the North along the ridgeline

**Avalanches:** While climbing on low angle slopes NW of the highest point of the Red Mtn ridgeline, we remotely triggered an R5 D3 avalanche on the W SW slope of Red Mtn. The crown was 60-90 cm and 300 m across, crossing from gully to gully. It ran full path at approx 300m. We dug a pit on a similar test slope and found the weak layer to fail at ECTN13. An R2 D2 avalanche was also observed on a N NW slope in the drainage West of Red Mtn. Most likely remotely triggered by snowmobile.

**Observation by** Nick Webb

**Latitude:** 47.397263

**Longitude:** -121.143537

**Did you see any avalanches?** Yes

**Did you trigger any avalanches?** Yes

**Was anyone caught in an Avalanche?** No







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Recreational Observation

# East Slopes Central - Lake Chelan to South of I-90

March 4, 2017, noon PST

**Snowpack:** 40-50cm above Feb. 14 crust. Two clean easy shears in top 30cm. Failed on crust, CTE Q1 @50cm. Easiest shears I've seen in a long time.

**Area Description:** Near Mt. Cashmere , ENE aspect, 5000-6500ft.

**Avalanches:** Debris evident from yesterday's warm up. Large cornice failure triggered widespread 50cm slab below, R3D2. There were other groups in the area but assume this was natural sometime this AM. Another party remote triggered a small terrain feature causing an R1D1 slide aprox. 20m wide and 30m long.

**Observation by** Pete J

**Did you see any avalanches?** Yes

**Did you trigger any avalanches?** No

**Was anyone caught in an Avalanche?** No

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Recreational Observation

# East Slopes Central - Lake Chelan to South of I-90

March 4, 2017, noon PST

**Latitude:** 47.270000

**Longitude:** -121.080000

**Elevation:** Above treeline

**Aspect:** SE

**Did you see any avalanches?** Yes

**Did you trigger any avalanches?** No

**Was anyone caught in an Avalanche?** No

**Comments:** Witnessed a slide near Scatter Creek in the Salmon La Sac riding area. The two of us dropped in to a southeastern facing bowl. After about two minutes after reaching the bottom of the bowl the slide released. We were watching and able to get to safety. The crown was 2-2.5ft deep and started from above and lookers right of our drop. There was another group of five that arrived minutes after it happened. We decided to head back out the way we came and we warned them not to continue. They did not listen and I hope they are home safe tonight. One of the guys in the group of five was from Ellensburg. I will send pictures in an email and a google earth pin of the location.

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## East Slopes Central - Lake Chelan to South of I-90

Issued: 8:27 PM PST Friday, March 3, 2017 by Garth Ferber

NWAC avalanche forecasts apply to backcountry avalanche terrain in the Olympics, Washington Cascades and Mt Hood area. These forecasts do not apply to developed ski areas, avalanche terrain affecting highways and higher terrain on the volcanic peaks above the Cascade crest level.

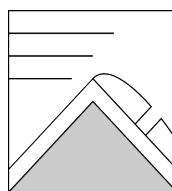
**The Bottom Line:** The avalanche danger should decrease but the decrease will be a moving target and you will need to carefully evaluate snow and terrain on Saturday.

Elevation	Saturday		Outlook for Sunday
 <b>Above Treeline</b>	 <b>Moderate</b>	Heightened avalanche conditions on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully; identify problem features.	 <b>Moderate</b>
 <b>Near Treeline</b>	 <b>Moderate</b>	Heightened avalanche conditions on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully; identify problem features.	 <b>Moderate</b>
 <b>Below Treeline</b>	 <b>Moderate</b>	Heightened avalanche conditions on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully; identify problem features.	 <b>Low</b>

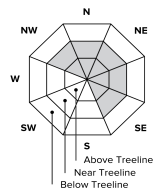
### Avalanche Problems for Saturday

#### Wind Slab

Wind slabs can take up to a week to stabilize. They are confined to lee and cross-loaded terrain features and can be avoided by sticking to sheltered or wind scoured areas.



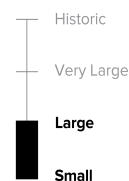
**Avalanche  
Problem**



**Aspect/Elevation**



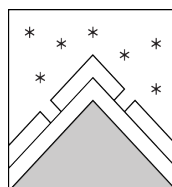
**Likelihood**



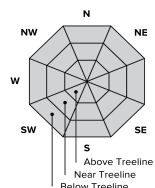
**Size**

#### Storm Slabs

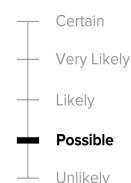
Storm slabs usually stabilize within a few days, and release at or below the trigger point. They exist throughout the terrain, and can be avoided by waiting for the storm snow to stabilize.



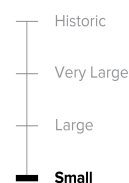
**Avalanche  
Problem**



**Aspect/Elevation**



**Likelihood**



**Size**

# Snowpack Analysis

## Weather and Snowpack

The most recent wet warm storm arrived on Valentines Day 2/14 and formed the uppermost strong rain crust in our snowpack in the Central East and Southeast Cascades while only a thin freezing rain crust was observed in the Washington Pass area.

A series of disturbances in cool, NW flow aloft from Saturday 2/25 through Tuesday 2/28 deposited 2-16 inches snow along the east slopes of the Cascades. Very strong alpine west winds were seen in most of the Olympics and Cascades on Tuesday.

Southwest flow aloft began to ramp up again on Thursday as the first in a new series of fronts crossed the Northwest. Strong southwest flow is carrying a second stronger front across the Northwest on Friday evening. Along the Cascade east slopes this will be causing strong southwest alpine winds and heavier moist or denser new snow above about 3-4000 ft and wet snow or rain below about 3-4000 ft.

## Recent Observations

### North

A report from the NC Heli Guides indicates a cycle of natural and ski triggered wind slab avalanches during the wind event on Tuesday and Wednesday 2/28-3/1. About 50-80 cm of storm snow was found with a good bond to the the Valentine's Day crust. About 20-30 cm of recent snow was covering about 10 cm of wind slab in some areas.

A party of four skiing at Washington Pass near the highway hairpin on the east side of the pass were hit by a natural cornice released avalanche on Tuesday afternoon. Four people were caught and carried up to 1000 ft downslope. Fortunately there were no fatalities and no full burials but there were apparently some injuries. The release occurred on a very steep slope at the top of a northeast facing bowl at about 6600 ft.

Windy conditions prevented the North Cascades Heli Guides from flying on Wednesday.

Another recent and large cornice failure was observed by the NCH on Thursday in the Cutthroat drainage. Plenty of other unreleased large cornices were noted.

A NC Mountain Guides report for Friday for the Delancey area indicates heavy snow in the near and below treeline and 35-60 cm of storm snow on the Valentine's Day crust. Moderate planar shears were found in recent storm snow layers. New storm slab was forming and ski tests were giving storm slab and loose dry releases. Whoomping and cracking was seen above 6600 ft.

### Central

No recent observations.

### South

No recent observations.

## Detailed Avalanche Forecast for Saturday

Decreasing winds and mostly light snow showers should be seen over the Cascade east slopes on Saturday with much lower snow levels and much cooler temperatures. Not a lot of snow is expected following the front Friday but we will see how it goes. The avalanche danger should decrease but the decrease will be a moving target and you will need to carefully evaluate snow and terrain on Saturday.

Layers of recent or new wind and storm slab may need a day or more to mostly stabilize. Water may also need a day to drain from the upper snow pack below about 3-4000 feet.

Recent moderate to strong southwest to west winds will make wind slab most likely on northwest to southeast slopes but keep an eye out on all aspects in areas of more complex terrain. Watch for firmer wind transported snow from Friday and possible deeper or covered wind transported layers such as from Tuesday.

New storm slab formed on Friday may need a day to mostly stabilize on Saturday. Storm slab is most likely in area that experienced more than a few hours of rapidly accumulating snow.

Avoid areas on ridges and mountain tops where a cornice might be present and avoid slopes below cornices.

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## Mountain Weather Synopsis for Saturday & Sunday

Showers have diminished through the day Saturday as the air mass has cooled, following a strong frontal passage Friday evening. The Pacific Northwest is under a cool regime once again with mostly light showers. A deep upper low pressure system is centered a few hundred miles off the Washington coast Saturday afternoon. This will keep a very cool and somewhat unstable air mass over the region over the next few days with bands of showers rotating into the area bringing periods of moderate showers at times. Only very light showers reached the east slope areas and that pattern should continue. An organized band of showers is developing along the coast Saturday afternoon and expected to renew light to moderate showers overnight and early Sunday as the upper low offshore continues moving towards the coast. Showers should again taper later Sunday as the upper trough begins moving inland across the region later

Sunday. Snow levels should remain generally 1000 feet or lower over the next few days.

24 Hour Quantitative Precipitation ending at 4 am			Snow Level/Freezing Level in feet					
Location	Sun	Mon	Day					
				Northwest Olympics	Northeast Cascades	Central Cascades	South Cascades	Easterly Flow in Passes
Hurricane Ridge	.25	.25	Saturday Afternoon	1500'	1000'	1000'	1500'	2000'
Mt Baker Ski Area	.50 - .75	.50	Saturday Night - Sunday Morning	0'	0'	0'	0'	0'
Washington Pass	lt .25	lt .25	Sunday Afternoon	1000'	500'	500'	1000'	1500'
Stevens Pass	.25	.25 - .50	Sunday Night	0'	0'	0'	0'	0'
Snoqualmie Pass	.25 - .50	.25 - .50	Cascade Snow / Freezing Levels noted above refer to the north (approximately Mt Baker and Washington Pass), central (approximately Stevens to White Pass) and south (near Mt Hood). Freezing Level is when no precipitation is forecast.					
Mission Ridge	lt .25	lt .25						
Crystal Mt	.25 - .50	.25 - .50	* Note that surface snow levels are common near the passes during easterly pass flow and may result in multiple snow / freezing levels.					
Paradise	.50	.50						
White Pass	.25	.25 - .50						
Mt Hood Meadows	.50	.50 - .75						
Timberline	.50	.75						
LT = less than; WE or Water equivalent is the liquid water equivalent of melted snow in hundredths of inches. As a rough approximation 1 inch of snow = about .10 inches WE, or 10 inches of snow = about 1 inch WE.								



# American Avalanche Association Forest Service National Avalanche Center Avalanche Incident Report: Short Form



**Occurrence Date** (YYYYMMDD): 20170304      and Time (HHMM): 1220      Comments: Information estimated from snowmobilers on scene either during or shortly following the incident. Many fields are estimated. We do not know the 2<sup>nd</sup> snowmobiler's full name (survivor).

**Reporting Party Name and Address:** Northwest Avalanche Center  
7600 Sandpoint Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98115

## Avalanche Characteristics:

Type: SS      Aspect: SE  
Trigger: AM      Slope Angle: Unknown  
Size: R \ D      Elevation: 7000 ☐m / ☒ft  
Sliding surface (check one):  
☐ In new ☐ New/old ☒ In old ☐ Ground

## Location:

State: WA County: Kittitas Forest: Okanogan-Wenatchee NF  
Peak, Mtn Pass, or Drainage: Hawkins Mountain, Big Boulder Creek  
Drainage  
Site Name: West of Gallaher Head  
Lat/Lon or UTM: 47.4484 N, 120.9994 W (estimated)

Group	Number of People	Time recovered	Duration of burial	Depth to Face <input type="checkbox"/> m / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ft
Caught	2			
Partially Buried—Not critical				
Partially Buried--Critical	1	1235	15	
Completely Buried	1	1300	40	5-6
Number of people injured: 0		Number of people killed: 1		

Dimensions <input type="checkbox"/> m / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ft		Average	Maximum
Height of Crown Face			
Width of Fracture			
Vertical Fall		600	
Snow	Hardness	Grain Type	Grain Size (mm)
Slab			
Weak Layer			
Bed Surface			
Thickness of weak layer:		<input type="checkbox"/> mm / <input type="checkbox"/> cm / <input type="checkbox"/> in	

Burial involved a terrain trap? ☐ no ☒ yes → type: Trees

Number of people that crossed start zone before the avalanche: 1

Location of group in relation to start zone during avalanche: ☒ high ☐ middle ☐ low ☒ below ☐ all ☐ unknown

Avalanche occurred during ☒ ascent ☐ descent

Subject	Name	Age	Gender	Address	Phone	Activity
1	Mike Albertson	45	M	Kirkland, WA		Snowmobile
2	Brett		M			Snowmobile
3						
4						
5						

## Equipment Carried

1	2	3	4	5	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transceiver
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shovel
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Probe
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Experience at Activity

1	2	3	4	5	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Novice
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intermediate
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advanced
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expert

## Avalanche Training

1	2	3	4	5	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	None
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advanced
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expert

## Signs of Instability Noted by Group

☒ Unknown  
☐ None  
☐ Recent avalanches  
☐ Shooting cracks

## Injuries Sustained

1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	None
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	First Aid
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctor's care
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hospital Stay

## Extent of Injuries or Cause of Death

1	2	3	4	5	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asphyxiation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Head Trauma
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spinal Injury
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chest Trauma

☐ Collapse or whumphing      ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Fatal      ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Skeletal Fractures  
☐ Low test scores      ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Other: Trauma

**Damage** Number of Vehicles Caught: 0 Number Structures Destroyed: 0 Estimated Loss: \$ At least one snowmobile was badly damaged and had to be towed out.

**Accident Summary** Include: events leading to accident, group's familiarity with location, objectives, route, hazard evaluation, etc.  
 Party A consisted of a husband and wife. The information below was collected from a post by the husband in Party A on the SnoWest snowmobile forum and through phone conversations with the husband in Party A and another snowmobiler on-scene 15-20 minutes after the avalanche.

After the husband in Party A had high-marked several times, including in the area the avalanche would later release, Party A stopped riding to have lunch in the basin below the upper SE bowl of Hawkins Mountain. At 12:20 PM, the victim and the survivor came up to the same bowl that Party A had recently ridden. They were on the same slope Party A had high-marked when one of them turned out and the whole slope broke loose. One rider was above the other. The rider higher on the slope (survivor) was riding in the avalanche at first, then gassed it and briefly pulled out in front of the avalanche. The other rider (victim) was below him. Then the avalanche swallowed both of them.

Party A noticed that they were sitting in the avalanche runout so they ran up a small hill just as the powder cloud came over them. They had no time to move their sleds. Fortunately, the avalanche just missed Party A and when the snow cleared there was a 4 ft wall of snow behind them where the sleds previously had been parked.

**Rescue Summary** Include: description of initial search, report of accident, organized rescue, etc.

Party A could see the survivor's hand just above the snow. With all of Party A's avalanche rescue equipment buried with their snowmobiles, they ran over and dug him out by hand. Once dug out, they tried using the survivor's transceiver to begin searching for the other rider (victim). They could see his sled but could not get a signal. After a couple of minutes other snowmobilers rode up from below and began to help organize the growing search effort. Rescuers were from separate riding groups and generally did not know each other. Some user unfamiliarity with the avalanche rescue equipment, SPOT Satellite GPS messenger and/or other GPS devices initially added confusion to the scene.

Rescue Method					
1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self rescue
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transceiver
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spot probe
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Probe line
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rescue dog
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Voice
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Object
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Digging
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

The wife in Party A had a probe hit by a tree near the victim's sled. A transceiver confirmed the probe strike and all efforts changed to digging by the tree. The victim was excavated about 40 minutes after the avalanche. He was not breathing and showed signs of trauma. CPR was started at 1 pm and continued for 6.5 hours. The rescuers relocated the victim to the bottom of the bowl as instructed by the rescue helicopter pilot but the rescue helicopter was ultimately unable to land. The decision from law enforcement/SAR to stop CPR was communicated to the rescuers on-scene and the remaining rescuers exited around 9 pm. The victim's body was recovered the next day by the Kittitas County Sheriff's Office and Kittitas County SAR.

**Attach additional pages as needed. Include weather history, snow profiles, reports from other agencies, diagram of site, photographs, and any other supporting information**

Please see <http://www.nwac.us/accidents/accident-reports/> for the full incident report.

**Please send to: CAIC; 325 Broadway WS1; Boulder CO 80305; [caic@state.co.us](mailto:caic@state.co.us) and to the nearest Avalanche Center.**