

NWAC

2018/19

ANNUAL REPORT

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

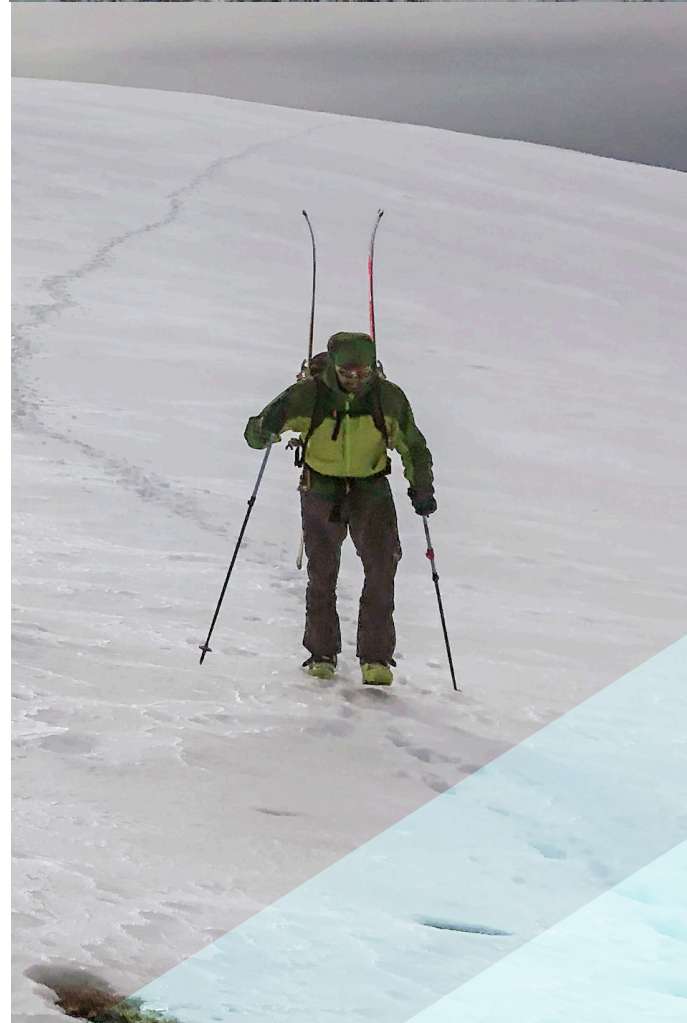
It's the end of the 2018-19 operational season and we're excited to report this has been year of significant change. While the change was mostly positive, we had some extremely sad notes bookmark both the beginning and end of the season.

On the positive side, here are a few highlights; we hired Cheri Higman as the new Education and Outreach Manager; Anna Mehann joined as our Media Coordinator; and finally, Andrew Kiefer and Matt Primomo joined the forecast team. Kenny Kramer, NWAC USFS Forecasting Director, issued his last forecast on March 26th, retiring after 30 years of service with NWAC. Thanks for all the great years Kenny! To help smooth the leadership transition and manage our growing field team, we officially hired Simon Trautman from the National Avalanche Center on a detail as our interim Forecasting Director. Simon did a fantastic job during this period of change.

Other high notes include: NWAC educated more users than ever before; we started the season without any weather station outages — the first time in many years and we made it through the year with zero avalanche fatalities!

This was also a year of loss for the NWAC. In early December, one day away from issuing avalanche forecasts, we lost our friend and colleague Laura Green to a windsurfing accident in the Columbia River George. This was a heartbreaking loss to the team and to the local Mt. Hood ski community. We will miss you Laura.

Then, in the late March, our organization experienced another tragic loss. Fellow Board member, friend, and mentor Tab Wilkins was killed in a skiing accident in the Blackcomb backcountry. Tab was critical to many of the organizational changes that led us to our successful season and I'm certain will guide us through the many years to come. Thank you, Tab, we'll greatly miss you.



continued....

While the losses this season were significant and jolting, we were still able to deliver on many of the goals we set out to achieve this season. Here's a snapshot of successes taken from our 2018-19 workplan:

1. Focused our outreach in Portland and launched a new event — Snowbash PDX
2. We launched a new youth ambassador program
3. We created and launched tools to assess programmatic efficacy
4. Develop and launched our new Laying Tracks workshop series targeting newer backcountry users
5. We grew our community of members nearly 25%—thanks so much for all your support!
6. Partnered with other avalanche centers; developed API based advisory tools; work towards national consistency
7. Successful leadership transition at the USFS forecast center
8. Added two new Avalanche Specialists (forecasters) to the USFS forecast team
9. Overhauled our weather program workflow and forecast editor
10. Successful implementation of a remote forecasting program. 3 forecasters/day spread around the region collaborated to produce 10 unique avalanche zone forecasts for 127 days last season.

Look through the following pages outlining a some of our accomplishments of the 2018-19 season. For the upcoming year, we have solid structures to build on; however, there's still much to do.

As always, we'd love to hear how we're doing; feel free to reach out. Here's to another great season!

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EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Our programs create an environment that allows for inquiry, encourages critical thinking, and engages the community in an authentic way. And although we operate in an environment rich with for-profit education, we fulfill an unmet need by offering pre-AIARE level courses, workshops that reaches the novice/intermediate/experienced backcountry traveler, and user-groups that are underserved.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

NEW EDUCATION INITIATIVES

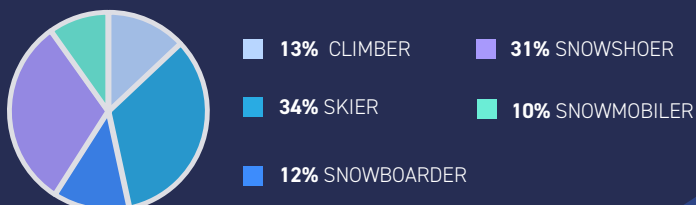
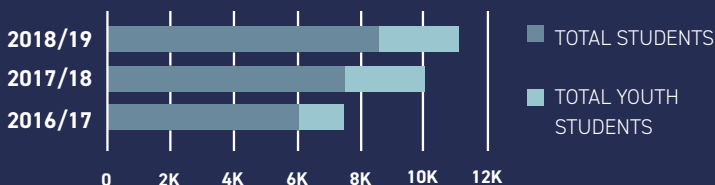
Launched a new workshop series, Laying Tracks, to connect with the beginning and novice winter backcountry traveler. This is a five-part workshop series, provides new recreationist a solid foundation for their Level 1 course and acts as a skills refresher for individuals that have previously taken their Level 1.

Piloted our NWAC Youth Ambassador program in order to provide peer-to-peer avalanche education; training 10 high school students to deliver an awareness class and involve their peers in communication exercises.

First Search and Rescue Summit held in November, connecting with 16 SAR units in our forecast region. In order to inform ways in which NWAC can support search and rescue efforts during the winter.

BY THE NUMBERS:

EDUCATION REACH



43
VOLUNTEERS

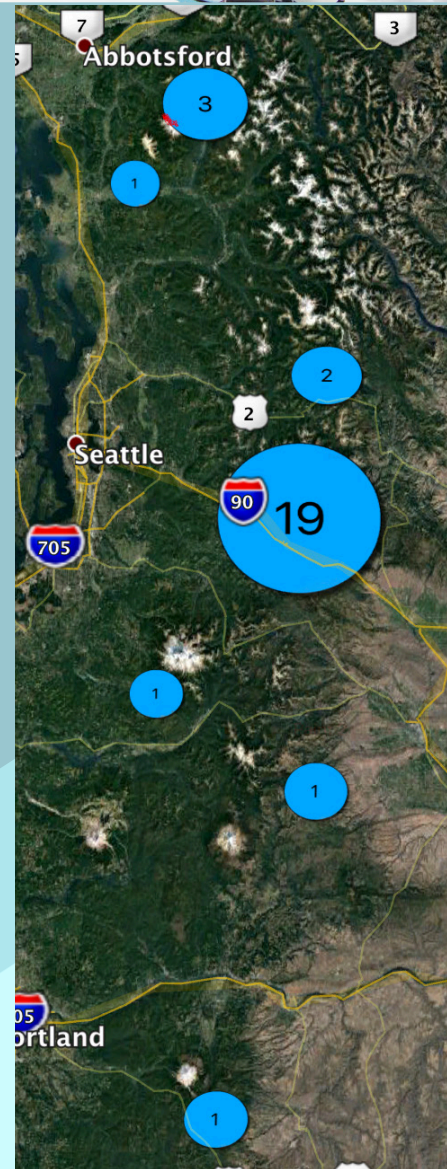
19
EVENTS

12
TRAILHEADS

787
SURVEYS COLLECTED

3083
UPHILL TRAVELERS

375
VOLUNTEER HOURS



MEDIA OUTREACH





We believe that social media is one of the most important avenues for connection with users in the PNW. We treat social media, the NWAC Blog, and newsletter as complementary sources of information to our traditional products in the weather and avalanche forecast. To that end we focus our media efforts on being clear, professional, and helpful. We're especially proud of our efforts in the following arenas during the 2019/20 season.

BACKCOUNTRY BULLETIN:

In the 2018/19 season we reinvigorated the NWAC weekly newsletter we called the Backcountry Bulletin. The Tuesday newsletter included a statement on the snowpack and outlook for weather, educational opportunities, and upcoming events by NWAC and community partners.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

NWAC's belief in the power of social media to reach and engage with our audience has been at the center of an intentional push to include real time updates from our field staff for the last five years. In the 2018/19 season we worked specifically to diversify the type of content to use Instagram and Facebook stories, more video content, and other visually descriptive tools.

	FOLLOWERS /USERS	2017/18 GROWTH
 INSTAGRAM	22,022	44%
 FACEBOOK	18,385	36%
 EMAIL	15,427	62%
 TWITTER	4,371	13%



MEMBERSHIP

NWAC members make up the foundation of the Northwest Avalanche Center, and individual giving made up 43% of our annual budget. We believe that with membership comes engagement in the organization, and we value the commitment our members are making to support the growth and work we do at NWAC.

BY THE NUMBERS

2,243 MEMBERS	\$260K RAISED
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HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2018/19

- Our membership program grew 19% in number of donors and 20% in amount raised
- We found new ways to engage with members including the Supporter Celebration
- We worked to refine the user experience with a new donation platform and more membership specific content

EVENTS

Events are an essential part of fundraising for the Avalanche Center, however, we strive to make all our events centered around community building and engaging with our users. The highlights from this past year include:

SNOWBASH SEATTLE

Snowbash is our longest running event at NWAC, and this year was our largest yet, bringing together over 600 of the snow-sliding community to celebrate and support NWAC.

NSAW

The Northwest Snow and Avalanche Workshop continues to be one of the most important events for the wintertime backcountry community, highlighting the leading practitioners in snow and avalanche science. This year the event was entirely sold out at over 500 attendees.

SNOWBASH PDX

For the first time NWAC held a Snowbash Portland to reach the growing hub of Portland users. The event was held at Basecamp Brewing and the crowd demonstrated the enthusiasm of the PDX community.

MOUNTAIN GHOSTS

The first annual Mountain Ghosts event was held in 2017 and coordinated by longtime donors to NWAC. In 2018 the event became the largest fundraiser NWAC has ever held raising over \$70,000.

SUPPORTER CELEBRATION

In 2018 NWAC organized the first ever supporter celebration as a way to thank all our members from the past season. Over 200 people came out to play trivia, hang with their fellow members, and celebrate a great season! We're excited to continue the tradition.





“I am the Executive Director of Y.E.T.I., a non-profit that takes youth in King Country on outdoor adventure. In the winter we lead snowshoeing trips, so it is important for me to learn how to identify avalanche terrain, so we can keep all of our youth safe. I am super excited to bring the knowledge I learned in my training back to our programs! Thanks NWAC!”

– Talia Hirsch

THE AVALANCHE REVIEW SEASON SUMMARY

The 2018/2019 season was marked by a fundamental shift in the Northwest Avalanche Center's forecast staff and operations. For the bulk of four decades, the center was staffed by three US Forest Service Avalanche Meteorologists based in Seattle, supplemented by our Professional Observer Program.

In the spring of 2018, we began the transformation from a centrally located office-based program with three staff, to a more dispersed program with eight staff and a strong field presence, led by Simon Trautman (from the National Avalanche Center) in an interim capacity. Long time forecaster and retiring forecast director Kenny Kramer helped with the transition by staying on in a supporting role.

The non-profit arm of NWAC helped smooth our operational leaps with direct financial support for the forecast team and a tailored professional observer program. Additionally, the non-profit expanded NWAC's educational offerings both in number and user type and dramatically increased our social media presence.

NWAC's changes truly reverberated into all corners of the program and required a mix of new and existing employees to band together. These changes not only increased the accuracy and resolution of our products, they created an exciting amount of public buy-in and interaction with our center. Public observations and social media engagement jumped - a trend that we expect will continue as we further refine and build the forecasting program.



We would like to remember two special individuals we lost this season.



Laura Green

Long time Mt. Hood Meadows ski patroller Laura Green passed away Dec. 6th, 2018 during a wind surfing accident on the Columbia River. While Laura was a NWAC professional observer for the last several seasons, we will especially remember the support she gave the forecast center over the decades — it was a pleasure to work closely with Laura on avalanche forecasts for the Mt. Hood area.



Tab Wilkins

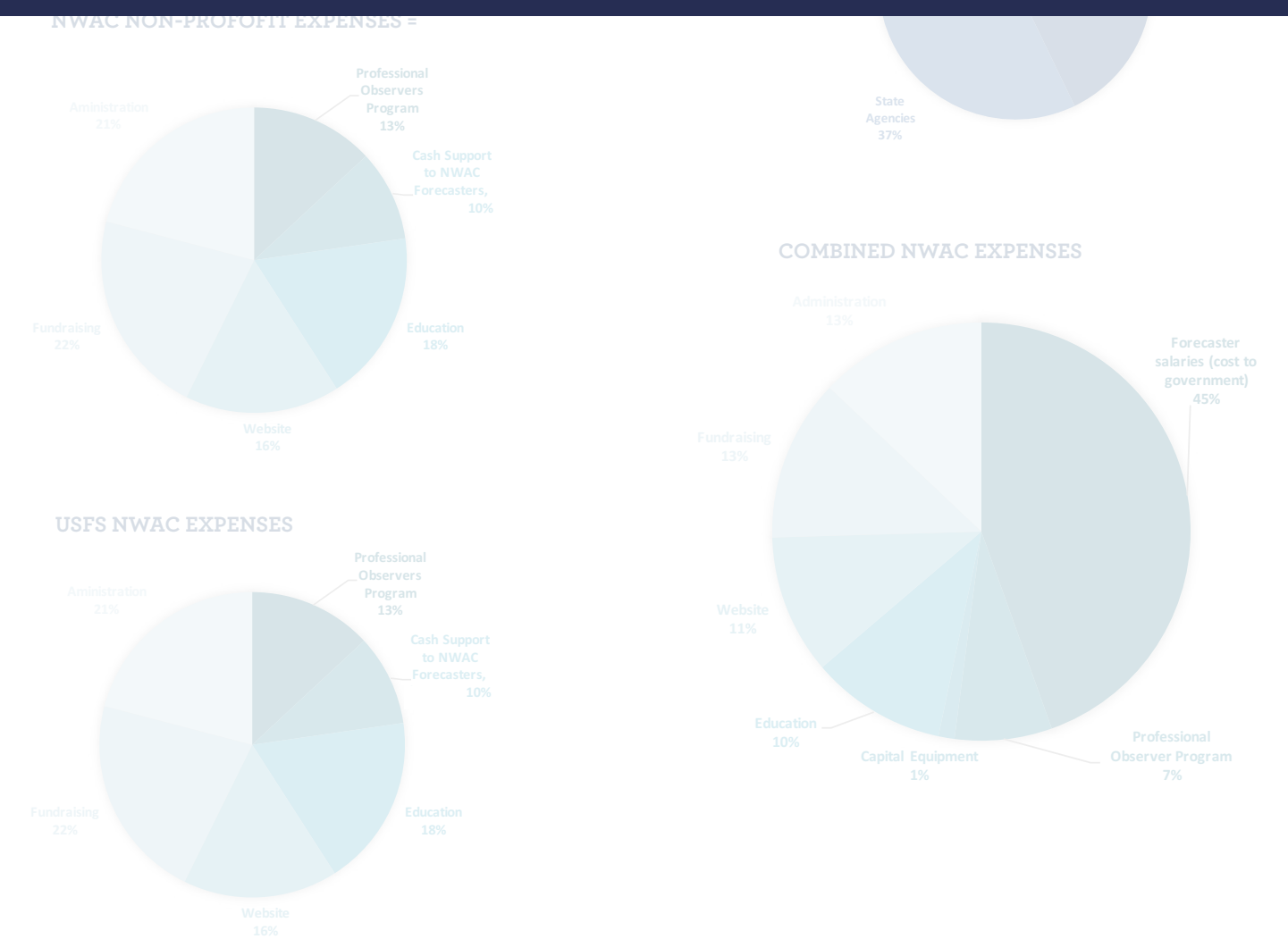
Tab died Mar. 23rd, 2019 from injuries related to a fall while skiing on Decker Mt. near Whistler, BC. Tab brought a rare balance of joy and commitment, non-profit development experience and patience to the Center's board and operations. He generously shared his love of the mountains and his vast professional experience in service to others. He was critical to building the organization capacity, culture and competence that deliver the services our community depends on today. Tab set the model (and a high bar, with a smile) that will inspire the organization forward. We will greatly miss Tab's presence at NWAC but will always remember our shared time and his impact on the community.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT



Pending completion and submission of FY 2018-19 Federal Tax Returns.

Note: NWAC Non-profit Fiscal Year is July 1st to June 30th.



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