



3-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

The Northwest Avalanche Center (NWAC) exists to equip you with the tools to safely recreate in the wintertime mountains. NWAC is public/private partnership. The US Forest Service provides avalanche and weather forecasting; and the non-profit NWAC provides outreach, education, and fundraising.



Photos (right): Truc Allen, Scott Schell, Andrew Kiefer



MISSION

The Northwest Avalanche Center exists to increase avalanche awareness, reduce avalanche impacts, and equip the community with mountain weather and avalanche forecasts, education, and data.

VISION

We envision a community of backcountry users in the Pacific Northwest aware of avalanche risk, making informed decisions, and returning safely.

VALUES

NWAC IS...

... COLLABORATIVE

We are a public/private partnership between the US Forest Service Northwest Avalanche Center and the non-profit Northwest Avalanche Center that functions as a cohesive team to achieve our shared mission and vision. We nurture our professional partnerships, respect their expertise, and constantly seek out new ideas, technologies, and opportunities for growth.

... INCLUSIVE:

We encourage and support all participants who recreate in the winter mountains. We aspire to be an inclusive and diverse organization, to serve and reflect the needs of an ever-changing community across our five core user groups.

... COMMUNITY-POWERED:

We are a community-supported organization; we exist because of the community of backcountry users and a coalition of partners, and we serve them with pride and gratitude.

... CREDIBLE AND APPROACHABLE:

We strive for expertise and accuracy in our products, portraying the winter environment and risk realistically. We create opportunities to learn from and engage with professionals, to share the factors that lead to avalanche incidents. We advise, forecast, and report on avalanche information, risk, and incidents without judgement or shame.

... TRANSPARENT:

We serve the community with free and open access to weather and forecast data for safe decision-making. As a learning organization, we seek and value feedback on our products and processes. We strive to add a personal element to bring our organization to life for the community.

Photos (left): Truc Allen, Colin Wiseman



Changing, growing, evolving backcountry

SUMMARY

The Northwest Avalanche Center understands change. Operating in the snow and avalanche world, we see changes in weather and our snowpack daily, monthly, and seasonally. Similarly, our backcountry community is constantly changing, growing, and diversifying. As an organization striving to equip our community with the tools needed to recreate safely in a dynamic environment, it is also our responsibility to change, grow, and evolve to provide the best service for our community.

Developed with input from our staff, board, and community, our three-year strategic plan is NWAC's North Star through this change. Since our founding, mountain weather and avalanche forecasting, education, and snow and weather data have always been at NWAC's core. The five bold goals laid out in our strategic plan remain true to our core mission, while guiding NWAC's vision through the dynamic world ahead of us.

In evolving our forecasts and education, advocating for policy and legislation that supports access to recreation for all, improving technology, driving collaboration, and growing our fundraising and revenue, we will ensure that NWAC can better serve our regional community and lead across the broader snow and avalanche world. We are excited to bring our vision and goals to life with your support.

The following five goals focus our efforts for the next three years to meet the needs of the growing and evolving backcountry community in the Pacific Northwest.

GOAL 1

Provide continually evolving, high-quality and equitable forecasts and education products to all regions and user groups we serve.

“Providing the tools needed to get into the backcountry safely is at the core of what we do at NWAC. As backcountry use continues to grow, we need to continue evolving our forecasting product, drive our education and outreach, and create sustainable capacity.”

-Scott Schell, NWAC Executive Director

KEY STRATEGIES

Expand Outreach & Education

- Ensure that all backcountry travelers are aware of NWAC services and are equipped to use them

Evolve Avalanche Forecasting

- Continue to progress our capacity and suite of forecasting products

Strengthen Staffing

- Create long term stability and retain staff in both the non-profit and USFS NWAC





GOAL 2

Promote an equitable, diverse, and growing backcountry community and engage NWAC members and users with a unified voice in support of access and recreation through regional and national programs, policy and legislative priorities.

“We envision a backcountry community as one that promotes and implements equitable and diverse policy, staffing, and access to the mountains.” -Molly Scudder, NWAC Communication & Outreach Manager

KEY STRATEGIES

Commit to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Dismantle racist and sexist structures creating barriers or prohibiting backcountry recreation for traditionally underrepresented groups

Advocate for Winter Recreation

- Engage our users and members to catalyze backcountry access for all through legislative & policy priorities for WA, OR, and nationally



GOAL 3

Collaboratively develop a **technology ecosystem** that improves accessibility, experience, and effectiveness of NWAC forecasts and tools.

“It’s critical that NWAC continues to improve in the technological space so our forecasts and tools are approachable and reliable for our community. This technical work also includes the back-end of our website and associated databases where we work every day. Streamlining our technology helps us communicate more effectively, access key data, maintain our focus on fieldwork, and ultimately build a better forecast. Working with other avalanche centers across the US on shared technology creates a more consistent experience for the public and forecaster alike over time.” - Dennis D’Amico, NWAC Forecast Director

KEY STRATEGIES

Advance Public Facing Tools

- Partner, innovate, and maintain best-in-class technology for our users

Modernize Internal Technology

- Stabilize, secure, and modernize operational back-end tools

GOAL 4

Establish NWAC as an anchor center for increased collaboration and model for innovation.

“NWAC has great staff and community support. As one of the larger avalanche centers, NWAC works closely with the National Avalanche Center to drive innovation and promote collaboration among US Avalanche Centers.” -Simon Trautman, National Avalanche Specialist

KEY STRATEGIES

Collaborate with Stakeholders

- Ensure that all backcountry travelers are aware of NWAC services and are equipped to use them

Lead with Action

- Continue to progress our capacity and suite of forecasting products



GOAL 5

Accelerate NWAC's fundraising & revenue base to meet increased demand and deliver best-in-class outreach, education, & forecasting products.

"With backcountry travel dramatically increasing in popularity, accelerated fundraising is critical to meeting the needs of our community with exceptional programming, forecasting tools and staffing at scale." - Graham Gephart, President, NWAC Board of Directors

KEY STRATEGIES

Grow Membership

- Increase the value of membership that encourages acquisition, retention, and reacquisition of members

Cultivate Impact Donors

- Increase number of high-impact donors meaningfully engaged in NWAC work

Strengthen Partnerships

- Develop consistent, significant, and stable partnerships for both non-profit and USFS NWAC



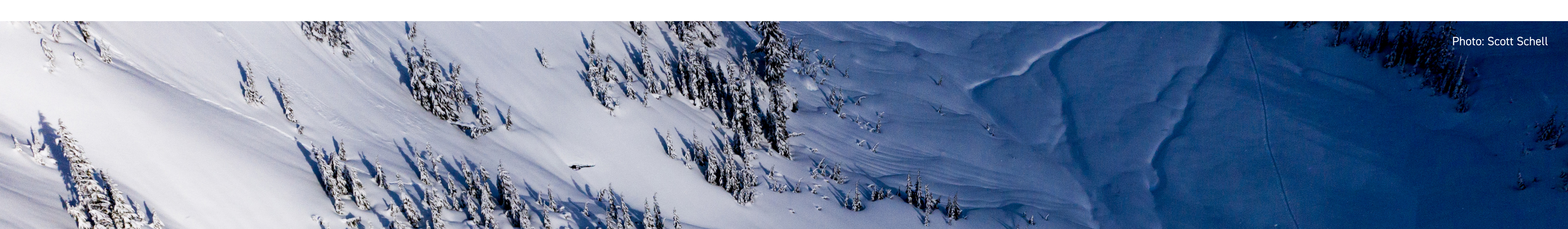


Photo: Scott Schell

GOAL 1

Provide continually evolving, high-quality and equitable forecasts and education products to all regions and user groups.

GOAL 2

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GOAL 3

Collaboratively develop a technology ecosystem that improves accessibility, experience, and effectiveness of NWAC forecasts and tools we serve.

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GOAL 5

Accelerate NWAC’s fundraising & revenue base to meet increased demand and deliver best-in-class outreach, education, and forecasting products.

		NOW	NEXT	FUTURE
GOAL 1	Provide continually evolving, high-quality and equitable forecasts and education products to all regions and user groups.	Understand backcountry use by forecast zone and develop long-term sustainable staffing plans to meet increased use. Integrate all educational content with our DEI Initiatives.	Work with the USFS to bring half of our forecaster roles to permanent positions, developing capacity to issue daily forecasts to all zones. Incorporate Trailhead Outreach programs into external research projects.	Research, analyze, and adjust avalanche education programs based on efficacy. Conduct a gap analysis of personnel for our next strategic plan.
GOAL 2	Promote an equitable, diverse, and growing backcountry community and engage NWAC members and users with a unified voice in support of access and recreation through regional and national programs, policy and legislative priorities.	Along with our existing partners - and in-step with our DEI consultant, committee, and staff - we will begin working on advocacy and policy driving towards an equitable and enjoyable backcountry experience for all.	Apply the lens of anti-racism to all facets of our organization and build a roadmap for achievement. Create a roadmap for improving access to the backcountry.	Provide a framework for other avalanche centers and similar organizations to better engage and advocate for all users of the backcountry. We will also assess our work and progress to develop our plan for the coming three years.
GOAL 3	Collaboratively develop a technology ecosystem that improves accessibility, experience, and effectiveness of NWAC forecasts and tools we serve.	Continue to improve the usability and reliability of our forecasts and data to help the end user. We will scope innovative tools to improve user experience and find efficiencies by baselining our existing workflows.	Streamline and integrate the full suite of national tools for forecasting and observations. We will improve membership value by adding new online learning resources, a new member portal, and emailed forecasts.	Launch an all new NWAC mobile app and implement ensemble weather forecasting tools for the community.
GOAL 4	Establish NWAC as an anchor center for increased collaboration and model for innovation.	Leading with an open source approach, NWAC will collaborate with our colleagues to scope a national tech position and develop guidelines and policies to move forward on shared technologies and outreach.	Provide clear documentation on the success of original NWAC programs and build consistency allowing other avalanche centers to adopt programs like these towards nation-wide changes. Engage academic researchers in: weather and avalanche warnings, glide avalanches and rainfall, and education efficacy among other topics.	Increase support for smaller neighboring regional avalanche centers. NWAC will be actively engaged in ongoing research.
GOAL 5	Accelerate NWAC's fundraising & revenue base to meet increased demand and deliver best-in-class outreach, education, and forecasting products.	Add staff capacity to better support our membership program. Refine membership campaigns and further effort with all NWAC user groups. Build a clear roadmap of partnerships for both the non-profit and USFS NWAC; and set benchmarks to define impact donors.	Work to improve all relationships of NWAC along with strengthening existing multi-year USFS partnerships and Non-profit partnerships.	Continue growing and diversifying our community of members at all levels, solicit program funding from the state of Oregon, and develop a personalized donor experience.