

# YOUR VOICE COUNTS

## ENCOURAGE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE MT. SHASTA AVALANCHE CENTER

### THE ISSUE: MINIMIZED STAFFING OF THE MT. SHASTA AVALANCHE CENTER

- **The Mt. Shasta Avalanche Center (MSAC) is staffed by one individual. Why does this concern us?**
  - SAFETY
    - A single avalanche specialist working in the field, in avalanche terrain on a regular basis is un-safe. You would not have one fire fighter work a fire line – it is just as unsafe.
    - In the event of an avalanche rescue, there is only one full-time USFS staff member that is qualified to run and manage an avalanche rescue in the unfortunate event of a burial.
  - AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES
    - One avalanche specialist can only realistically provide forecasts 3 to 4 days per week
    - One avalanche specialist cannot provide as many avalanche presentations, transceiver clinics, avalanche courses, or other outreach and education opportunities as two, or more, can.
    - One avalanche specialist cannot provide as much interaction with backcountry users as two, or more, can.
    - Wintertime utilization of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest by the general public and winter recreation enthusiasts continues to increase – the need for the MSAC is ever growing!
  - COLLABORATION
    - In any field of study, or business, it is extremely helpful, as well as wise, to have multiple minds working on the same issue, or to have people to “bounce your ideas off of”
    - The potential exists for collaboration between the USFS, the National Weather Service, and numerous other research institutes. With limited staffing, these opportunities are greatly restricted due to the availability of staff time.
- **There exists at least 2 full time positions available for avalanche specialists for the Mt. Shasta Avalanche Center – only one of which is staffed.**
- The MSAC serves an area 1,000 square kilometers in size, an area that has seen increased use every year in the winter months by skiers, hikers, snowboarders, snowmobilers, campers and day-use recreationalists – the need for the MSAC is ever growing.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

- **Write the Shasta-Trinity National Forest (See list of contact persons)**
  - If you utilize the services of the MSAC (avalanche forecasts, avalanche presentations, avalanche courses, transceiver clinics, etc.) let the USFS know if they have been, and continue to be, valuable to you.
  - Encourage the USFS to continue supporting the Mt. Shasta Avalanche Center (MSAC) through staffing and funding this valuable community resource.
  - Encourage the USFS to support the Mt. Shasta Avalanche Center by paying equal wages to Avalanche Specialists on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest as they are paid on other forests across the nation.
  - If you wish the MSAC could provide more services (such as advisories 7 days a week, more transceiver clinics, more avalanche presentations, routine maintenance to weather stations, any other ideas) let the USFS know.
  - View the letter that the Friends has sent to the Shasta-Trinity National Forest Service, Forest Supervisor and other representatives on our website at [www.fmsac.org](http://www.fmsac.org) for more ideas.
  
- **Write your representatives (See list of contact persons)**
  - Send your representatives, and other interested organizations (i.e. search and rescue organizations) a copy of your letter to the USFS.
  
- **Call in any snowpack/avalanche/weather observations you have**
  - If you play in the backcountry of Siskiyou County, call in your observations to the Mt. Shasta Avalanche Center 530-926-9614.
  - With fewer paid staff members input and observations from the backcountry users is of utmost value this year.
  - Dig snow pits, report avalanche sightings, report snowpack and weather observations.
  
- **Support the Friends of the Mt. Shasta Avalanche Center**
  - The Friends of the Mt. Shasta Avalanche Center is working towards resolving the staffing shortage through partnership with the USFS
  - The Friends of the Mt. Shasta Avalanche Center provides for volunteer forecasters to temporarily forecast a portion of those days that are not being forecast by USFS staff members.
  - The Friends continues to upgrade and install weather stations around Siskiyou County which are essential tools to avalanche forecasters.
  - The Friends continues to upgrade and create rescue caches, which are equipped for potential avalanche accidents.
  - **The Friends is growing in size and momentum thanks to all of YOUR continued support.**