

UPDATE ON WEATHER STATIONS

YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED THAT THE MT. SHASTA AVALANCHE CENTER WEATHER STATIONS ARE NOT ON-LINE THIS YEAR.....

How the Weather Stations Transmit Data

The Friends recently upgraded the communication systems for all of our weather stations, by converting to a radio system, rather than a cell phone system, for data retrieval. The radio system is dramatically cheaper to operate than the cell phone system, allowing for hourly contacts for data, rather than contact and download of weather data being limited to every four hours. The new radio system relies upon the Grey Butte weather station as the base station- all weather stations are connected to the Grey Butte station, and all data is downloaded from the Grey Butte station (via phone line) once an hour and made available via the internet.

What Happened

During lightning storms in the fall of 2007, the Grey Butte weather station communication system, and associated phone line was affected. It is still unknown exactly what happened and where exactly in the system the problem is.

What is Being Done to Fix This

MSAC staff has worked diligently to troubleshoot the problem; working closely with the Friends' contracted weather station specialist and engineer and Friends volunteers and the USFS Communications Department. Continued assistance from the USFS Communications Department is necessary as is more staffing for the MSAC.

The Grey Butte weather station and communication system are USFS property (with the exception of the newly updated radio system) and as it is understood at this time, the USFS is the only ones that can authorize and/or work on this station. Therefore, in order to solve this problem, it is necessary for the MSAC, FMSAC and the USFS Communications Department to continue to work together to solve this problem. The USFS Communications department has indicated that they will not be able to dedicate time to fixing this issue until Summer 2008 at the earliest.

The one MSAC full-time qualified staff member is currently doing all the tasks of the MSAC as well as running the wilderness department, and has limited time to dedicate to fixing the weather station communication problem. Due to the MSAC being short staffed, repairs to the communication system associated with the weather stations have been delayed.

What you can do

Write (and/or call) the USFS and your representatives! Let the Forest Service know how much you value the resources of the MSAC and encourage their continued support of the MSAC through staffing and funding.