

ESAC BOD Meeting Minutes

September 17th, 2009

SP's House, Swall Meadows

Present: Howie, SP, Allan, Scott, Forrest, Nate, Mike Schlaffman

Avalanche Center Discussion Points

In support of developing a common vision for the future

Framework

The Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center has operated successfully for the last several years in part through the combined efforts of the Forest Service and the ESAC "Friends of" organization. Throughout, the ESAC friends' organization has borne the bulk of the funding burden and also played a key role in setting the strategic vision for the center as a whole.

As we discussed at our joint Forest Service/ ESAC July meeting, the avalanche center has come of age, and both parties need to take stock of where we intend to take the center in the future. Towards that end I have assembled a short list of questions I hope are aimed broadly at the question of sustainability.

Sustainability in my view hinges on providing a well-defined and planned operation, scaled to a reasonable expectation of ongoing funding levels and commitment to staffing. Sustainability starts with stability.

All proposals presented below are simply my sense of where things should head. I am both open to discussion and change. I also note: striving for sustainability in staffing and funding has to be balanced with service to the public.

Operations sustainability questions.

Can do it again for \$23K

1. What is a Sustainable Season of Operation?
 - a. Season of operation should be a set term to facilitate predictable stable funding, to facilitate hiring and opportunities for job sharing/seasonal job change.
 - i. Proposed season from 11/15 to 5/15. (the longest season of any of the California avalanche centers).

Propose forecasting season for 12/1 – 5/1

Mike or another technically skilled person (like Kaj Allen) will be hired by FS to manage Forecasting

2. What is a Sustainable Geographic Area?
 - a. Geographic area advisory coverage should be keyed to public use and not exceed the capacity of staff to: conduct field reviews, collect and collate weather data, arrive at supportable conclusions regarding snow stability. Larger geographic areas are tempting as are geographic areas that change seasonally (i.e. spring skiing at Tioga).
 - i. Proposed geographic area from Bishop Creek to June Lake (even this strikes me as large without a 2nd position).
3. What are a Sustainable Number of advisories?

- a. The number of advisories influence staffing, funding and also season of operation (as it can be an extension of available funding).
 - i. Per Week - Number of advisories should be scaled to the primary weekend market. Whether 2 or three they should be keyed to Thursday or Friday through Sunday. This is consistent with many other centers including those of CAIC.
- b. Storm cycles
 - i. Forecast during several of the previous seasons storm cycles took an inordinate amount of time for very predictable conditions (3 inches plus per hour snowfall, winds over 60, consistent storm wind pattern). Storm cycle forecasting, though useful to the public, should be the result of clear expectations on our part.
 - ii. Consider abbreviated storm avy forecast process and format during storm cycles.

Additions to collection agreement:

- 3 per season face to face meeting with FS and forecaster, when forecaster arrives before season – mid Season – beginning of May.
 - Draft end of season by April 1?
 - Expected to work with board on Educational/Community events – specified number of events or hours
 - Forecaster attends a few avalanche courses, AIARE ITC, ISSW?
 - Continuing education requirements
4. What is a Sustainable Level of Education Programs/ offerings?
 - a. Avy awareness can be a gateway experience leading to investment in Level 1, 2 and 3 courses, and could play a key role in engaging new members in the friends of organization and growing long-term community support. Done right, it is also a significant time commitment.
 - i. Propose the forecaster provide a limited and prescribed number of avy awareness offerings, generally in conjunction with fundraisers.
 - b. Specific trainings could offer special opportunities to key funding partners, in particular CalT rans, Inyo and Mono Counties, and Mammoth PD.
 - i. Propose the forecaster should offer limited special trainings to key partners.

Difference b/t Outreach and education

Education

- Partner with avy educator perimitees
- Schools? Not so productive.
- Evening Presentations good if organized well

General Topics.

5. Website Re-design (I reviewed a number of different center websites and there are a number of ways to go about this).
 - a. Linkages to Friends of for fund raising
 - b. Blog
 - c. Other website content

Allan motion to accept Dharma Tech contract with discussed adjustments

1. \$4000 deposit, \$2000 when finished the framework, \$2000 when site is live
2. adjust Tech suppor period so it can be used by forecaster

SP second, all approved.

Nate will send us links to top 3 themes and we can all give comments/preferences

Measure R

Forrest working with MLTPA and Dana Stroud to get Measure R funds for the Beacon Basin

Needs letters from MMSR and FS saying they can house basins on site.

Must show we have in kind contributions – maintenance and upkeep for units.

2 Units are \$5000 + some labor

Summer stewardship event FOI - Inyo Craters

We show up, recruit people.

Put things in goodie bags

Sept 26

Season Kickoff

Dec 5th

Maybe look at venue other than MMSR like old theatre in Mammoth

Maybe low key

Allan will ask TC

Nate will ask Pondella

Gary could come for an Ortovox presentation

BCA?

Nate will ask someone for organizational help

6. Center – Friends Organization Renaming

Research how to change name, preferably without reincorporating

Decided to research and vote by email whether to change name

7. Government to Government Agreements and Fundraising.

Tough to get gov to gov agreements to fund. If funding can only go to ESAC, what are they getting?

Board needs to get funding divied up

- Mono Cty
- SCE – Howie
- Water district – Forrest
- DWP - ?

8. Term Position – cost/ funding and expectations

Scope of Work and Collection Agreement can be more basic and refer to an operational plan agreement and other documents.