

Annual Report 23-24

EASTERN SIERRA AVALANCHE CENTER

PO Box 1675
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546



Forecaster Sammy Rubin checking on depth hoar - 1/30/24. Photo by Clancy Nelson.

About ESAC

The Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center (ESAC) is a 501c3 non-profit based in Mammoth Lakes, CA. ESAC has been operating as a non-profit since 2006.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center is to inform and educate the public on avalanche conditions in the Eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains of California.

23-24 Staff

Steve Mace - Director of Operations
Clancy Nelson - Forecaster
Everett Phillips - Forecaster
Sammy Rubin - Forecaster
Barb Bemis - Administrative Manager

Board of Directors

Thank you to our board members:

Nate Greenberg - President
Forrest Cross - Vice President
Neil Satterfield - Treasurer
Ann Piersall Logan - Secretary
Allan Pietrasanta
Gabe Taylor
Christy McIntire*
Scott Quirsfeld*

Michelle Mather - Event Coordinator

*New board members this season.



Letter from the Director of Operations

The 2023/24 season marks the **18th year of operations** for ESAC and the 6th year as a Type 1 Avalanche Center. It has been a period of growth for ESAC and as we reflect on the gains we have made as an organization over the past few years, **our hearts are full of gratitude for all of the community support.**

Coming on the heels of a record snow year, the 2023/24 winter season started slow with very little snowfall before the New Year. Persistent weak layers plagued our snowpack for much of the season creating some very impressive avalanche cycles, tricky snowpack management, and numerous close calls. Thankfully, no avalanche fatalities occurred during the 2023/24 operating season. Season snowfall totals managed to exceed 100% of average. Backcountry enthusiasts in the Eastern Sierra were treated to several big storm cycles providing stellar powder skiing and riding mid-winter and a high-quality corn season once spring rolled around.

I want to thank everyone who took the time to document what they saw in the backcountry and share those observations with the avalanche center. These reports are invaluable for the forecasting program as well as for our users. Your reports help us evaluate the day's avalanche danger and make our forecasts more accurate.

The Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center would not be possible without the dedicated staff and board, supporting partners, and driven community members. Your support is at the heart of our operation and has directly helped thousands of people to travel more safely in the mountains. **We'd like to extend a very warm thank you to everyone involved and let you know that we are already preparing for another successful season.**

We look forward to seeing you in the mountains!

Steve Mace

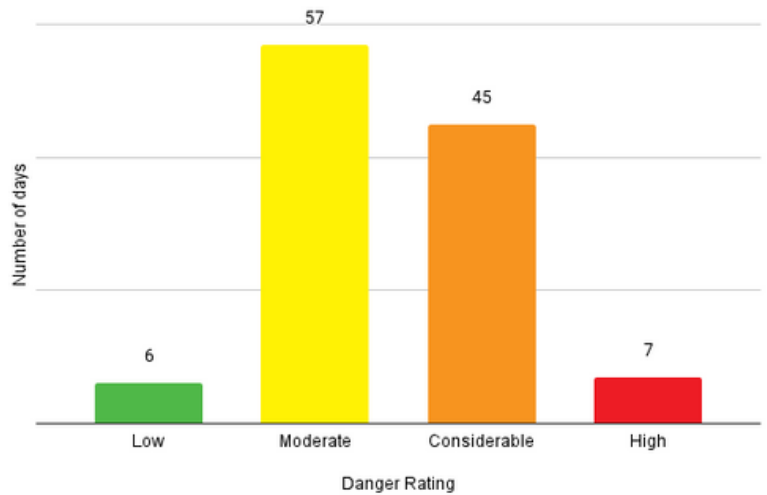
SEASON RECAP



Large remotely triggered avalanche, Virginia lakes - 01/23/24. Photo: High Sierra Snowcat & Yurt.

115	Daily Forecasts Issued
9	Early-Season Summaries Issued

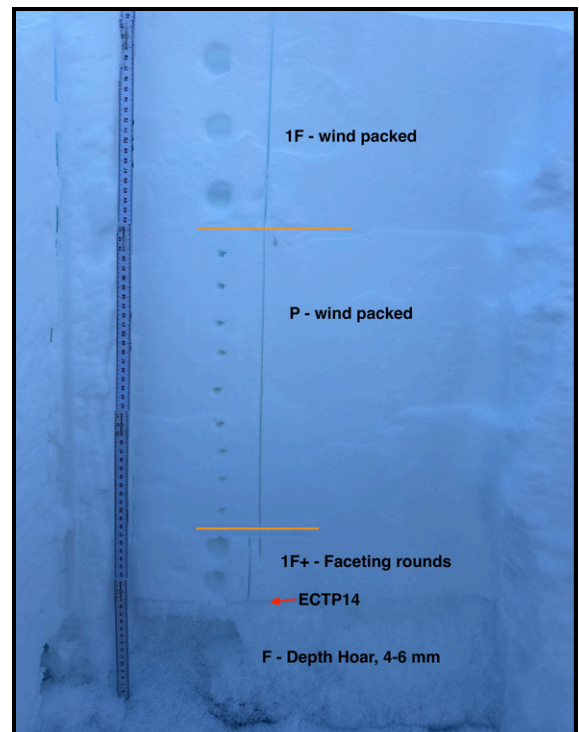
DANGER RATINGS 23-24



OBSERVATIONS

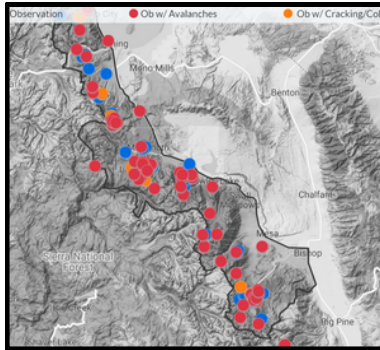
525	Snowpack and Avalanche Observations
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Thank you to everyone who took time to submit an observation this year! Your observations are invaluable to the forecasters and other backcountry users. Your reports help us evaluate the day's avalanche danger and make our forecasts more accurate.



Poor snowpack structure on Sherwin Ridge - 12/28/23. Photo by Steve Mace.

SEASON ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Fourth Forecaster

Sammy joined Clancy, Everett, and Steve as a forecaster, marking the first season ESAC employed four forecasters. This staffing allowed prioritization of partnered field work and increased field presence. ESAC plans to continue to employ four forecasters moving forward.

Revamp of the Observation Platform

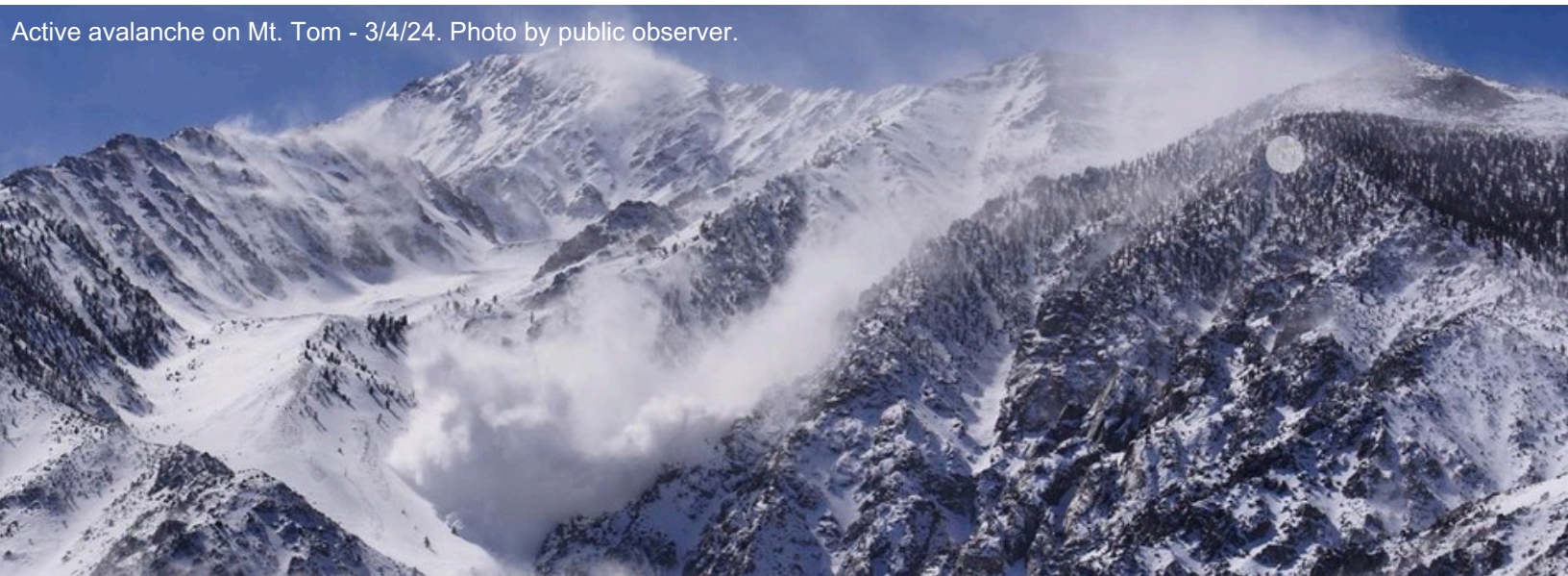
The observation platform on the website was updated this season. This upgrade has increased our ability to analyze field data, adding accuracy to our forecast products. Like the ESAC forecast, observations are now congruent with other avalanche centers across the country. This increases ease of access to information for users that utilize forecasts from multiple avalanche centers.

Beacon Basin at MMSA

The beacon basin at Mammoth Mountain was officially reopened this winter. Thank you to Mammoth Mountain and Mammoth Mountain Ski Patrol for helping make this happen. This resource allows anyone to get out and practice their beacon searching, probe and shovel use, and single and multiple burials.

Check out [our video](#) on this resource!

Active avalanche on Mt. Tom - 3/4/24. Photo by public observer.



OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

PUBLIC EDUCATION EVENTS

5 Avalanche Awareness Events
417 Estimated Total Attendance



ESAW presentations - 11/4/23.



Forecaster Sammy Rubin presenting at the June Lake Education Event - 2/7/24.

THANK YOU!

Shout out to Michelle Mather for helping coordinate these events!

And to our hosts:

- Mammoth Brewing Company
- Mountain Rambler Brewery
- The Lift
- SNARL

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND OUTREACH

December 2023

Annual Kickoff Event and Fundraiser - Zahan put on an excellent show! We had the highest attendance in event history.

January 2024

Red Line Film Showing - Thanks for sharing your story, Jenna and Greg!

March 2024

Mono County SAR Meeting - Forecasters met with the SAR team to discuss avalanches in relation to search and rescue.

December 2023

Interagency Meeting - 13 local and regional agencies represented by 28 attendees.

February 2024

Bishop Elementary School presentation - Director Steve Mace shared basic avalanche awareness with around one hundred 3rd and 4th grade students.

April 2024

ESAC held its first Spring Appreciation Celebration - the weather was finicky but the support for our new merch was amazing! Stay tuned for this event to evolve in the future.

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

WEBSITE SNAPSHOT

40,000

Users

1 MILLION +

Website visits

3min, 28sec

Average session length

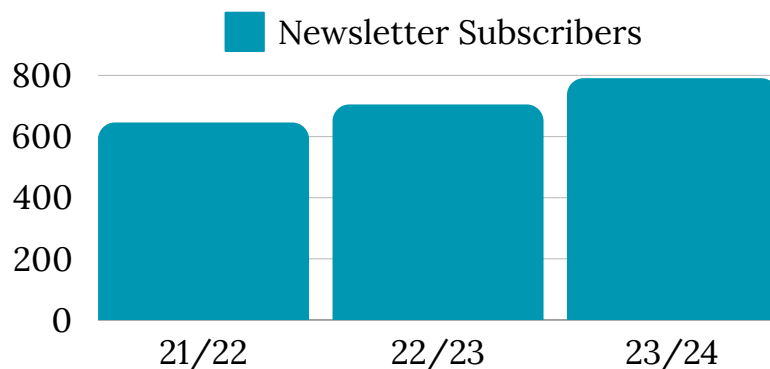
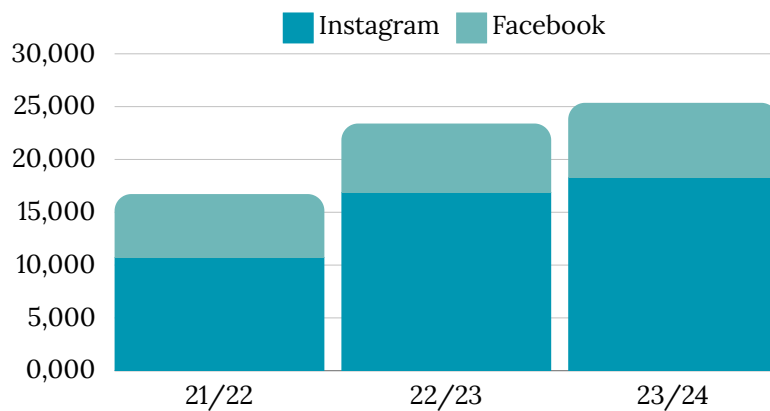
MOST VISITED PAGES

1. Observations
2. Forecast

TOP USER LOCATIONS

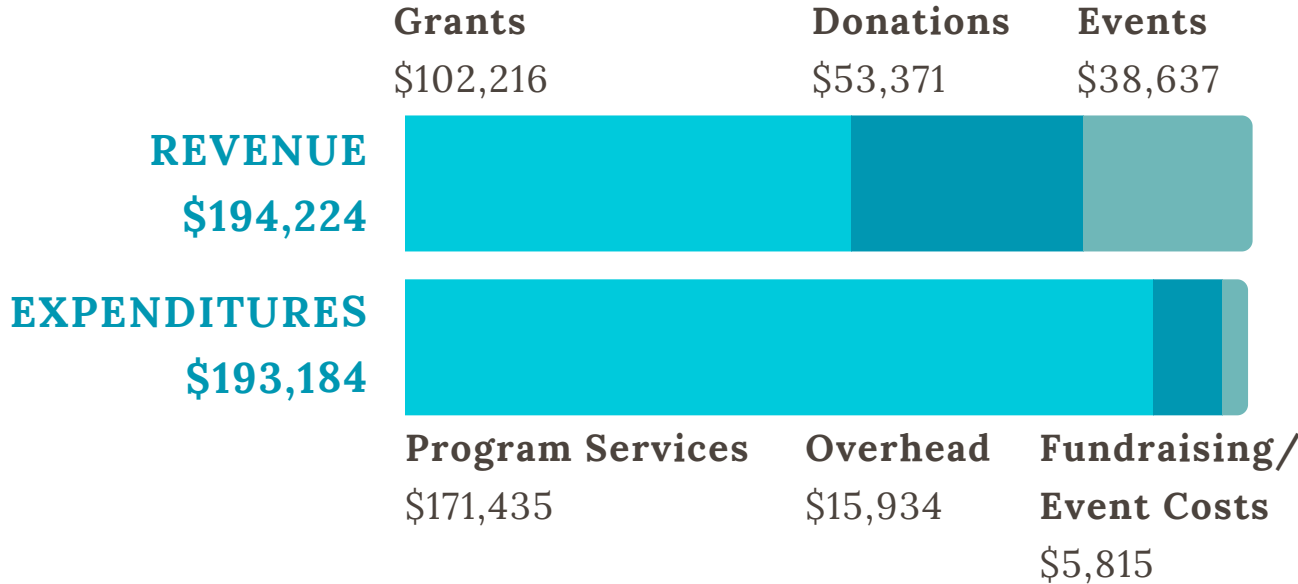
1. Los Angeles
2. Mammoth Lakes
3. San Jose

SOCIAL MEDIA



ESAC utilizes the website, newsletter, and social media to share the forecast, observations, and other avalanche-related resources. Though this year's winter was not historic like last year, the continued growth of followers and subscribers helps the information reach backcountry users locally and regionally.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



FOR COMPARISON: '22-'23 Revenue - \$156,604
 Expenditures - \$155,086

LOOKING FORWARD

Education and Outreach

ESAC plans to continue to offer free avalanche awareness evenings to the public. ESAC would like to expand it's outreach and partnerships among local and regional agencies and organizations, including SAR, city and county agencies, and more.

Fundraising

ESAC plans to grow and expand its fundraising efforts. In order to continue offering the product we do with the current staffing and economy, we are looking to increase funding through grants, donors, and sponsorships.

June Mountain Avalanche Resources

ESAC is partnering with MMSA and June Mountain to assist with the installation of beacon checkers and a beacon training park at June Mountain. There are also plans for increased signage about avalanches and backcountry access at both MMSA and June Mountain.

MAJOR SPONSORS & DONORS

Thank you to all of our donors and sponsors who help make what we do possible. Every grant, donation, and partnership allows us to continue to offer our products to the public and work to provide avalanche information to all users!

KEY SPONSORS

County of Inyo
Ridge Merino
Town of Mammoth Lakes - Measure U
CA State Parks Off-Highway Motor
Vehicle Recreation Division
Edison International
Patagonia
Roussev Family Charitable Trust
S. Livingston Mather Charitable Trust
Brian Cox

SUSTAINING SUPPORTERS

Golden State Guiding
Stealth Backcountry
Los Angeles Department of Water and
Power
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area

SELECT SUPPORTERS

International Alpine Guides
Weathertop Foundation
Putnam Foundation
Benchetler Fasani Foundation
Wolverine Publishing

SUPPORTERS

Jeremiah and Mary Mann Family Fund
Eastside Sports
Mammoth Mountaineering Supply
Sage to Summit
All Good Sunscreen
High Sierra Snowcat
Sierra Mountain Guides
Erik and Cate Wright

Blowing snow on the Dana Plateau - 4/6/24. Photo by Steve Mace.

