

Valdez Avalanche Center

Annual General Membership Meeting

Report and Minutes May 2, 2018

· Forecasting

Our forecasting team this year:

Ryan Van Luit, paid 40 hrs/wk, 4 field days/wk, 3 forecasts/wk.

Peter Carter, volunteer, 2-3 forecasts/wk

Kyle Sobek, volunteer, 0-2 forecasts/wk

Sarah Carter, volunteer, 2-8 hrs/wk, 1 forecast/wk

New this season: 46 Mile Observations. Gareth Brown contributed pertinent snow, weather, and avalanche observations.

Blueberry Study Plot Observation team: Kaden Addler, Sarah Carter, Samantha Schafer, and Josh McDonald worked diligently to take and record timely observations that augmented our daily forecasts and supplied climate data to NWS.

· Season Summary

The Valdez Avalanche Center issued 139 advisories from October through April 2018. The full-time and three part-time forecasters worked with three observers to collect and analyze field data.

Over the winter, Thompson Pass received 423" of recorded snow with 41" SWE. Valdez received 133" snow with 31" SWE. These values are within the twenty year average.

Memorable weather events included an extended storm cycle in December and three long, dry, windy periods. December 2-20 had two back to back storms that dumped 103" of snow with 14" of SWE at Thompson Pass. After that, three wind events, each exceeding 60 mph for durations of several hours or more, occurred while high pressure ridges dominated our region.

The common peak of our user season, mid-March to Mid April, was almost void of new snow, but the website still received 500 visits per day. An average of 300 people view the forecast each day throughout the season, with nearly 45,000 views in total.

For the second year, from March 15 - April 15, VAC staff manned a temporary information kiosk near Thompson Pass offering three times weekly educational courses and daily forecasting information.

Sharing avalanche information since 2008, the Valdez Avalanche Center advisory continues to serve diverse groups of local, regional and international backcountry users with a broad spectrum of interests and experience. VAC membership has grown to 140 individuals, businesses, and community partners supporting the forecast and education programs.

This is the fifth year the City of Valdez allotted funding through the Community Service Organization program for Valdez Avalanche Center. Private sector businesses and individual member donations enable the program to grow from a solely volunteer effort, to paying qualified, trained forecasters and observers for their hard work.

· **Outreach and Education Events**

KCHU PSAs and announcements

Valdez STAR newspaper Enviro Box with precipitation numbers

Nov.4-6 VAC volunteers and staff participated in the Alaska Avalanche Summit, Southcentral Alaska Avalanche Workshop, and the Winter Fest in Anchorage

Nov.17 Snowmachine Movie hosted at Civic Center

Nov.-Dec. PWSC AIARE Avalanche Level 1 course

Dec.16 Avalanche Awareness at Herman Hutchens

Jan.-Feb. Valdez High School and Gilson Middle School Avalanche and wilderness safety

Feb.14 Copper Valley Telecom Avalanche Awareness

Feb. 6-18 Alyeska Pipeline Terminal Avalanche Awareness

Mar. 3 Frosty Fever Avalanche Challenge at the VCVB

March 22-25 PWSCC AIARE Avalanche Level 2 course

March 31 Beacons & Eggs hosted in conjunction with Valdez Parks & Rec

March 15- April 15 VAC Information Kiosk, Mountain Skills classes and daily forecast updates

April 9-14 Arctic Man forecasting and outreach support staff

April 13 Spring Fling Fundraiser at Tsaina Lodge

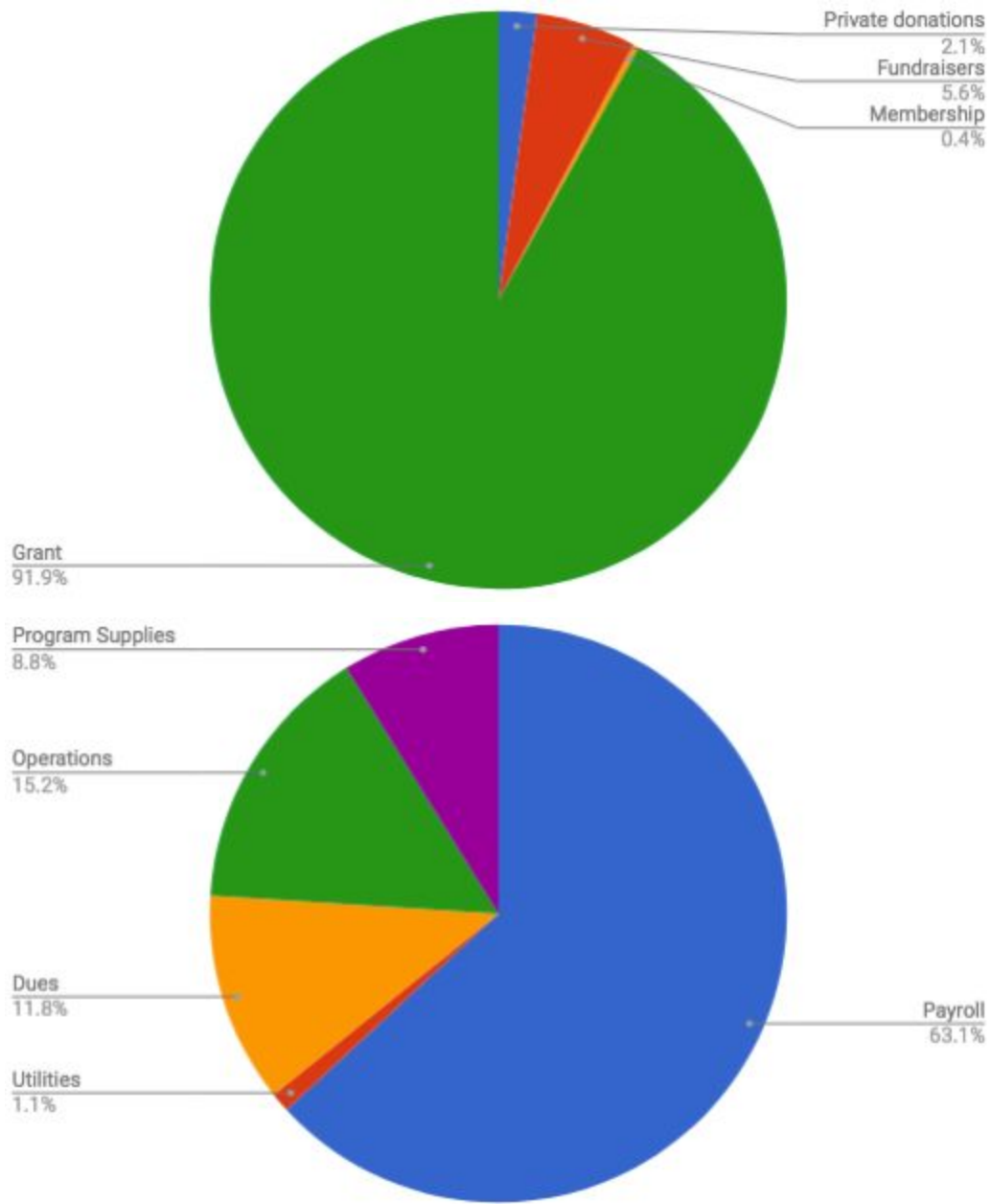
April 20-21 Avalanche Forecast and Outreach at Hill Climb

· **VAC Financial Report**

Fiscal year July 1, 2017-May 2, 2018

Expenses			
Payroll	\$30,550.85		
Utilities	\$525.87		
Dues	\$5,700.00		
Operations	\$7,339.57		
Program Supplies	\$4,279.73	\$48,396.02	
Income			

Private donations	\$1,223.15		
Fundraisers	\$3,201.90		
Membership	\$200.00		
Grant	\$52,500.00	\$57,125.05	
	Balance	\$8,729.03	



Funding, fundraising, and budget for 2017-18

Operations will be very similar in 2018-19 to 2017-18. An annual membership drive is increasing local support and donations. Our membership has grown to 140 individuals, businesses, and community partners supporting the forecast and education programs. **Please renew your membership if you have not already and encourage others to do the same. Thank you!**

Partnership with many entities including the Valdez Snowmachine Club and heli operators is increasing our outreach and fulfilling our mission of helping Alaskans LIVE TO RIDE ANOTHER DAY!

Valdez Avalanche Center Advisory Board

Are our current board members continuing their term?

Will Stark - yes	Erica Shirk - yes	Karen Allred - ?
John Cullen - ?	DB Palmer - ?	Rich Loftin - yes

Nominations for new board members - Kyle Perouse

Your involvement can be tailored to your interests, including outreach, finance, membership and fundraising. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact scarter@alaskasnow.org

New Business/Ideas/Suggestions/Feedback

Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Erica Shirk, Kamilla Xavier, Kyle Sobek, Laurie Brown, Kyle Perouse, Pete Carter, Jesse McKay, Gareth Brown, Hope Finley, Peter Biskind, Ryan Van Luit, Andrew Roche, Sarah Carter, Rich Loftin

Apologies: Renee Ernster, Karen Allred, Will Stark, Jeremy Robida

Facilitator: Sarah Carter

The report above was reviewed and discussed.

Discussion and Ideas:

- Question: What benefits do members of the avalanche center receive? Right now the motivator is knowing they are supporting the winter forecasting and local outreach programs and will be kept in the loop with events and education opportunities. Ideas: other benefits could be offered such as hat with membership, local and/or gear discounts. Membership Drive goal: grow the revenues to 1% next year, 10-30% in five years.
- Suggestion that we look at the cost or possibility of a sponsorship of a Beacon Park in conjunction with interpretive signs. With the goal of heightening awareness: participants learning how to organize a companion rescue, how to use avalanche rescue gear, and

having a hands-on opportunity to improve rescue skills outside of a formal class. Will contact BCA.

- Suggestion to look into 'Are you beeping?' signs for our forecast area, ie. placed at common trailheads.
- Suggestion that the VAC financial report break out the funding that is earmarked for the Blueberry Observation Program (in partnership with the City and NWS)
- Discussed how VAC is under the umbrella of the AAIC and it's 501(c)3 status, and contributes 10% of revenues to AAIC to pay for insurance, admin, and Executive Director support.
- Discussed the collaboration and partnership between Valdez Snowmachine Club and AAIC/VAC.
- Suggestion was made by Kyle Perouse to look into more partnership with Salmon Berry Ski Hill and Valdez Parks and Rec for outreach and education opportunities. Other partnerships we can grow: Valdez Adventure Alliance, SWAN, PWSC, Healthier Valdez
- Renee Ernster requested (via email) a custom avalanche class for high school kids after the cross-country and basketball seasons.

Action Items:

- Research how United Way funding grants work, does VAC qualify to be on the donation list? (someone mentioned Pam Verefielle is the contact in Valdez)
- Appoint a lead for making sure members and supporters know when the public City Council CSO grant application request meeting is and how they can best support by presence at the meeting and/or email testimonies. Frame the grant application by means of sharing benefits, data, measures, attendance at events, and "we're making a difference because of these facts..." It was mentioned that school sports teams and extra-curricular groups travel through Thompson Pass enroute to events almost every weekend of winter - is VAC forecast helping them make logistical decisions?
- Next year's fundraiser: maybe two events? Rendezvous Lodge has offered to host an event. Tsaina Lodge is willing to host again. Formulate a fundraiser committee - Kamilla Xavier is willing to help. Capture the non-motorized and motorized crowds. Host another movie night.
- Check in with Glennallen Fire Dept. They desire avalanche education.
- Kyle Perouse stepped forward as interested in becoming an Advisory Board member.
- AAIC is holding an annual Strategic Planning Retreat July 13 Anchorage with the Foraker Group. July 14 & 15 in Wasilla. Advisory Board members, volunteers, and staff are invited and encouraged to attend.





VAC Information Kiosk. March 15- April 15, 2018 Scott and Alex teaching mountain skills classes.



Above: Blueberry Weather Plot with Level 2 class. Below: Slab avalanche March 2018. Josh McDonald photo



Level 2 class in the field. March 2018.



Beacons & Eggs Program at Salmon Berry Ski Hill. March 31, 2018. S.Carter photo