

USDA FOREST SERVICE
USDC NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
UTAH AVALANCHE FORECAST CENTER
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Rogers Thomas, Winter Sports Forester
USDA Forest Service
6944 South 30th East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84121

Dear Rogers,

The attached report gives a few of the more salient features of the past 1982-83 season. Our continued user growth has some interesting features. The drop in call rate at Ogden and Provo is strange. It may be the result of less advertising in the area, of local economic conditions, or less interest in what might be perceived by the locals as a forecast with not enough local info. It would take serious effort to uncover the answer and certainly would be worth it to do a survey to find out.

This summary is intended to be inserted in the UAFC report put out last year and follows roughly the same organization.

Sincerely,

Duain Bowles

Duain Bowles

Barry Mathias

Barry Mathias

3.3 Summary 1982-83

An early season snowfall throughout the region resulted in formation of temperature gradient snow and a lower layer instability which, for the Logan area, persisted throughout the season. However, for the areas to the south snowfall amounts were higher than normal with the southern areas, by seasons end, receiving twice the total snowfall as the extreme north. A continuous even snowfall stopped development of further lower pack instability. Avalanche activity for the season was generally storm related, of direct action nature, and was typically due to failure in new soft slabs or wind slabs. The normal spring warm up was delayed by cool cloudy weather and resulted in the development of a strong dense snowpack with little of the usual wet springtime avalanche activity. A late spring storm resulted in a brief period of increased avalanche hazard on May 11.

Mountain weather observations were continued on a daily basis through direct and recorded phone calls. Approximately 3600 calls were handled with 94,000 individual observations recorded. In addition information from 95 snow pits was recorded and used in preparation of the daily forecasts.

The forecast center prepared 1900 forecasts which were loaded into automatic answering machines in Logan, Ogden, Salt Lake City, and Provo at 730 AM and 500 PM. A direct broadcast of the forecast was made over KPCW in Park City. Ten avalanche warnings were issued through the National Weather Services western loop to the media and NOAA weather radio. A summary of the warnings follows:

Group	Warning Date	Hazard/Day
1	Nov 19	High 1
2	Nov 30-Dec 5	High 4, Ext 2
3	Dec 14	High 1
4	Dec 23-24	High 1, Ext 1
5	Jan 28-30	High 3
6	Feb 7-9	High 3
7	Mar 1	High 1
8	Mar 23-27	High 4, Ext 1
9	Apr 3-4	High 1, Ext 1
10	May 11	High 1

Total		High 20, Ext 5

Calls for avalanche and mountain weather to the Public answering Phones totaled 53,315 calls for the season. This represents a total call increase of 28% for the forecast area. The Salt Lake City Phones had a call increase of 35% while the Provo and Ogden Phones showed a decrease of 18% and 31% respectively. The total call drop in Ogden and Provo may be due to less advertising of the Phone numbers in the two areas. A maximum call rate of 748 calls Per day on Salt Lake Public Phone was recorded during a warning Period on March 24. A summary of information calls follows:

Salt Lake City Public Phone	Calls	Total Calls
Nov	2741	
Dec	6804	
Jan	7514	
Feb	7731	
Mar	9911	
Apr	5339	
May 2	315	
		40,355
Salt Lake Observer Phone	4357	44,712
Ogden Public Phone	3671	
Provo Public Phone	3042	
Logan Public Phone	1890	53,315

No avalanche deaths were reported this year despite many backcountry accidents. Fifteen accidents were recorded involving burials. There were undoubtedly many more unreported accidents. In several cases the victims were located through prompt and efficient use of locator beacons. While luck helped, general good search procedure and on site rescue gear was a major factor in preventing any avalanche deaths. This may be due, in some part, to the excellent public safety courses offered by the touring centers and ski areas and to an increased safety awareness on the part of the public. Forecast center personnel have fully supported backcountry safety courses by delivering approximately 35 safety talks, and including as part of the daily forecast, safety tips on equipment, touring practice, and route finding. We think these efforts may be reflected in some of the rescue success.

Efforts have been made to improve communications between the ski areas and the forecasters at the National Weather Service. Training sessions before and during the season have been used to orient all concerned with the forecasting Procedures and schedules. This need to constantly improve lines of communication has lead to establishment of two remote Phone-accessible weather systems at Alta and Snowbird. The remote stations were extensively used by the forecasting Personnel at the Weather Service and the ski areas.

Demonstrations of centralized computers for information transfer and data Processing were made on a system loaned by SPerry. This system was donated by SPerry for developing user input Programs to the SPerry Univac-computer DAPS system. System files capable of receiving raw meterological and snow Pack data were Programed and demonstrated to ski area Personnel. The intention is to Promote remote data terminals at the ski areas with the capability of both receiving information and transmitting local data to the Weather Service.