

The Northwest Avalanche Center has ended backcountry avalanche forecasts for the 2019/2020 season

On March 23rd, Governor Inslee of [Washington](#) and Governor Brown of [Oregon](#) issued Stay at Home orders for the public regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. On March 27th, the National Forests spread across [Washington](#) and Oregon closed developed USFS recreation sites including campgrounds, sno-parks, restroom facilities, and trailheads. The state's Stay at Home orders are clear in that "to the maximum extent possible, individuals stay at home or in their place of residence." Although we firmly believe in the value of backcountry travel it is not an essential activity that outweighs the importance of slowing the spread of this virus.

Aside from the need to maintain congruency with the Governors' orders and USFS closures, we must support the well-being of our employees and their families any way we can. Our operation is not immune to the same challenges other organizations and families across our region are all facing at this time. Simply put, we want our workforce and families to stay safe and healthy too.

The avalanche and snowpack observations that our field staff gather almost every day throughout the winter provide the foundation for our avalanche forecasts. With other professional operations shuttered, we are no longer receiving the snowpack information we need to produce a quality daily forecast.

NWAC Forecast Operations through mid-April

- Support for search and rescue groups
- Respond to avalanche fatalities or serious avalanche accidents as staff resources allow
- Reduced Mountain Weather Forecast Operations
 - We will staff our forecast office daily from 8 am - 4 pm and issue a mountain weather forecast at 2 pm. There will not be a morning issuance (7am).
- Weather Station Network Maintenance
 - Remote network troubleshooting will continue
 - Field repairs will be deferred except for critical outages

These decisions were not taken lightly, however, to reduce the risk for our staff, populations that border trailheads, and the backcountry community at large, we need to end operations for this season. We are looking forward to getting back into the mountains next season and providing you all with the tools to recreate safely in the backcountry. Until then we encourage you to stay near your home and stay healthy.

Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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