

# The Powder Cloud



Newsletter of the Utah Avalanche Center

**DONATE NOW**

July 2020

## What's New

### 2019-2020 Annual Report

The 2019-2020 Annual Report has been published. [Check out the report](#) for a full recap of the past season. Some highlights from the season:

- Evelyn Lees retired after 28 years with the UAC.
- We added 3 staff members to our organization.
- We held 20 events reaching over 700 people in 7 days during the first annual state-wide Avalanche Awareness Week.
- We rolled out a remote Know Before You Go instructor training program and trained instructors in the US as well as the Alps and Pyrenees.
- We had to adapt our services very quickly to a large increase of backcountry users when the resorts closed.
- The community continued to show phenomenal support of the UAC through event participation and donations.

# Utah Avalanche Center 2019-2020 Season Review

The Coronavirus changed everything this spring and sent a huge number of people into the backcountry in March and April

**109%**  
OF AVERAGE  
SNOWPACK

**314**  
human  
triggered  
avalanches

**28**  
people  
caught

**15**  
people  
buried

**2**  
killed



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**\$1,013,000**  
statewide budget

**32%**  
from federal,  
state and  
county govts

**68%**  
private  
sponsorship

**53%**  
spent on  
forecasting



**14**  
employees

**449**  
field days

**1,197**  
avalanche  
forecasts  
posted



**2.8 Million**  
page views

**242**  
videos  
produced

**2.1 Million**  
video views



**151**  
classes and  
presentations

**6,937**  
class and  
presentation  
attendees

**Keeping people on top of the greatest snow on earth for 40 years!**

**Fall Fundraising Party is now the UAC Backcountry Benefit**

Every year on the second Thursday of September the backcountry community in Utah joins us to celebrate the coming winter season and we don't plan to let you down in 2020! The 27th Annual Backcountry Benefit is Thursday, September 10. To keep our community healthy, we won't be having the big in-person bash you know and love, but we are still working with Black Diamond, Uinta Brewing, and our other partners to maintain the fun that's been part of the fundraiser since the beginning and create a party to remember!

If you've joined us before, you may have used the online platform GiveSmart to get those coveted silent auction items and this year is no different. Not only will you sign into GiveSmart to bid, but it's how you'll get opportunity drawing tickets and gain access to familiar UAC faces and exclusive content for our livestreamed party. We'll also be giving you some options for hosting your own party so stay, getting the limited edition UAC canned beer from Uinta Brewing, and additional details on the event. Check the UAC Instagram and Facebook pages for details!

Not only is this event an important fundraiser for the UAC, raising a large portion of the funding required to provide avalanche forecasting, education, and awareness across Utah, but it has also become the largest gathering of backcountry users on the planet. NOW it can be EVEN BIGGER because we can invite backcountry users everywhere to join the fun. Stay tuned for more details and be sure to save the date: **Thursday, September 10!**



## Meet Our Team

### **Chad Brackelsberg**

Chad is the UAC's Executive Director responsible for communications, marketing, fundraising, strategy, and UAC business operations.



### **What is your personal background?**

I grew up on a farm in rural North Dakota. I learned to ski at 3 years old at our nearby small ski resort and have loved it ever since. I developed a passion for the mountains when we started taking family ski vacations to Montana. Upon finishing graduate school, I moved to Minneapolis, MN for work and spent 8 years there. I moved to Utah in 2002 to finally fulfill a dream of living in the mountains. After a 20-year career in the corporate world of technology consulting, I was honored with the opportunity to fill the big shoes created by Paul Diegel and lead the UAC.

### **How did you become interested in working for an avalanche center?**

When I moved to Utah I didn't know anything about avalanches. I bought my first backcountry setup at the UAC's Ski Swap and immediately signed up for a Level 1 course. I fell in love with backcountry skiing immediately. I met Paul Diegel around 2009 and realized that he had my dream job of being able to use my business experience to lead an organization involved in a sport I was passionate about.

### **How did you start working at the UAC?**

Over the years I became a UAC Observer and took my Avy Level 2 and 3. I continued to develop a love of the 'geeky' side of backcountry skiing looking and talking about snow. When I learned Paul was going to retire I decided that the time was right for me to put my corporate job aside and apply for my dream job. I started with the UAC in July 2017.

### **What was your greatest learning moment about avalanches and what was it?**

My greatest learning moment came from a 2013 avalanche accident I was involved in. My main learning lesson on this was about the huge impact of human factors in decision making in avalanche terrain and in avalanche accidents. We had discussed the slope we were going to ski and felt that we were all on the same page as no one communicated any concerns. It was not until the accident debrief that we realized the communication mistakes we had made. Since that time I have been intrigued by human factors and decision making. I have implemented processes that are now part of every ski tour to help prevent these mistakes.

### **What would you tell an 18-year-old version of yourself?**

"Don't get too caught up in mapping out your entire life." At 18 I would never have guessed I would live in the mountains running a nonprofit avalanche center. "Focus on working hard and opportunities will present themselves."

### **What's one piece of advice you have about avalanches?**

Never stop asking questions and learning. The snow is different every day you go out and each of those days contains a lesson you can learn.

### **What do you like doing besides playing in the snow?**

I love most anything that gets me into the mountains. I spend my time ultrarunning, fastpacking, and mountain biking. When not in the mountains, I enjoy cooking and spending time with Emily, family, and friends.



## Education

### 13th Annual Utah Snow and Avalanche Workshop

Save the Dates!!!

Due to COVID-19 risks, USAW 2020 will be offered in a new virtual format allowing us to deliver a premier event with the kind of high-quality presentations you expect from the UAC. This year we are offering a 1/2 day continuing education and risk management session for professional avalanche workers, forecasters, and guides. Over 3 evenings, we will offer a series of presentations for all recreational users. We will be live-streaming interactive presentations giving you the opportunity to ask questions and learn from top professionals and researchers. Presentations will focus on weather and snowpack, new technologies, close calls, accident reviews, and decision-making distractions and fatigue.

- Professional Session: Friday, 06 November, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM; Cost: \$20
- Open Session: Tuesday - Thursday, 10-12 November; 6:30 - 9:30 PM; Cost: \$10/evening or \$25 for all 3 evenings

Watch the [UAC Events page](#), your email and the UAC [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts for more details coming soon.

## Tech Tips

### Summer Transceiver Storage

You may not put summer wax on your skis, but do you take the batteries out of your transceiver? Key steps to "summerize" your transceiver.

1. Inspect the outside of the transceiver for damage.
2. Check to see if all transceiver functions are working properly.

3. Remove the batteries and dispose of them appropriately or use them in a less consequential device. No matter the remaining power level, all battery brands discharge differently and even some batteries of the same brand will discharge over the summer. Always start fresh each season.
4. Check for corrosion on the batteries and in the battery compartment. If there's corrosion in the battery compartment, then clean it off with a Q-tip and rubbing alcohol—especially the battery contacts. Remember, corroded battery contacts are not warranted by any beacon manufacturer as they are considered user error.



Don't forget at the start of each season to check if there is a manufacturer firmware update for your transceiver.

## Giving Back to the UAC

### Monthly Recurring Giving

How many monthly subscriptions do you have? Cell phone, internet, Netflix, music streaming service, cloud storage service. For many of us, this list can get pretty long. Did you know that you can also support your favorite avalanche center through a monthly recurring donation of any amount? Set it, forget it, and have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping the UAC deliver our avalanche forecasting, education, and awareness programs across the state of Utah.

To become a monthly donor, go to the [UAC Donate webpage](#), under donation type select Monthly Recurring, enter your monthly donation level, enter your email address, and select subscribe. You will be redirected to PayPal to set up your donation. Each month your donation will be automatically charged to your PayPal account.

If you have questions about our monthly donation program, please [contact Hannah](#). Thank you to all of our current monthly donors who support us throughout the year!

There are many ways to give back to the UAC such as workplace giving, planned giving, affiliate sales, and more. Read about options to give back to the UAC [on our donate page](#).

## The Details

### Upcoming Classes

We are working to get our classes scheduled for the 2020-2021 season. As we get our classes scheduled for next season, they will be posted on the [UAC Education Page](#).

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## Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for the upcoming events and watch the [UAC Event Page](#) for more details of these great events.

- **10 September, 6:00 - 10:00 PM: Backcountry Benefit** - virtual event due to COVID-19
- **6 November, 9:00 - 1:00 PM: USAW Professional Session** - virtual event due to COVID-19
- **10-12 November, 6:30 - 9:00 PM: USAW Open Session** - virtual event due to COVID-19
- **6-12 December: 2nd Annual Avalanche Awareness Week**

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## Update Your Information

Have you moved, changed your phone number, or have a new email address? [Please use this link to update your UAC profile and communication preferences](#) so we can send you the information you want, where you want it. If you'd like to make changes to how your donations are acknowledged, such as having them come from you and your spouse, please [contact Hannah Whitney](#).

## Stay Connected

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