

2023 | ANNUAL REPORT



Promoting avalanche safety throughout North Idaho and Western Montana since 2011.



IPAC

Idaho Panhandle
Avalanche Center



Friends of
IPAC



MISSION



IPAC

Idaho Panhandle
Avalanche Center

The mission of the IPAC is to provide avalanche information, education, and promote research for the protection of life, property, and enhancement of the state's economy.



Friends of
IPAC

The mission of the Friends of IPAC is to support avalanche forecasting and education throughout the Panhandle.

LETTER FROM IPAC

Avalanche forecasting season began this year with a dramatic flair as we issued a warning with our first advisory of the season. Early November snowfall and crust layers were left to sit and fester under clear and cold conditions for the remainder of November. These conditions created a “house of cards” upon which we built our early season snowpack.

As November left the scene, so went the high pressure, and in rolled the storm snow. It seemed we were doomed to spend the entire winter babbling about persistent weak layers and basal facets. The week prior to Christmas ushered in bitterly cold arctic air and winds that challenged the fortitude of even the hardest forecasters. The cold front broke in a big way on Christmas Day as warm air and rain made its way to the highest peaks in the area. Within a couple of days, the temperatures climbed from negative 30 and into the mid 40’s area wide. A stout rain crust blanketed the mountains, bridging our weak snowpack structure and freeing avalanche forecasters from their endless bantering about “persistent weakness” at the base of the snowpack. The “Christmas Crust” became our new benchmark in the snowpack and in many locations was thick and nearly impossible to dig through.

While winter started off strong in December with wild swings in every direction, January ushered in a new era of boring weather through the middle of February. The area had a few short spikes in avalanche danger and not much snow. We skidded around on crust layers and variable snow conditions, occasionally finding good snow. The most notable occurrence during the month of January was a new rain crust layer that developed on Friday the 13th.

We now had a new persistent weak layer to talk about, as facets developed on both sides of this crust layer. This crust layer produced highly variable results across the landscape and very few avalanches in our zone. This layer was unpredictable enough to make your average forecaster nervous, while pondering deeply about the fractional differences of likelihood terminology. The debate between “possible and unlikely” raged for weeks.

The last half of February brought a return of winter with frequent pulses of snow and another strong cold front. On February 21st, cold arctic air and fierce winds blasted the landscape from valley floor to the highest peaks reminding us that winter wasn’t ready to quit just yet. We made another brief appearance in the “Red” as northeast winds loaded the southwest aspects with thick wind slabs. As the cold front exited, we saw a return to small and frequent storms that kept the skiing fresh and delivered wind slab and storm slab problems through the middle of March.



Sincerely,
Ben Bernall

Ben Bernall
Avalanche Forecaster, FS MT.

LETTER FROM FRIENDS OF IPAC

Dear Friends,

It was an honor to work on the behalf of the Friends of IPAC this season. Our goal was to grow our support in membership and sponsorship so we could provide additional forecast days and fund another field position. With your support we not only met our goals and were able to bring on another Avalanche Tech and start forecasting three days a week but we tripled our sponsorship and membership revenue. We invested roughly \$90,000 into avalanche safety in our area this past season. This money supported IPAC's forecasting operations, developed new curriculum, created outreach for new and existing users and helped finance the professionals that instructed our education courses.

The 2022/2023 season was a major year of growth for our organization. As you read the annual report, you will learn more about our investments, partners and programs. None of this would have been possible without your support of avalanche safety.

As we continue to grow, we will also continue to evolve. We will continue our work on increasing our direct support to IPAC forecasting operations. By increasing our contribution, IPAC will be able to grow its staffing model and expand the number or days forecasted. We will continue to expand and enhance our educational programming, trailhead outreach, avalanche awareness program and motorized specific courses. And finally we will continue to build a reserve fund to support our mission and operations.

I am incredibly thankful for everyone who continues to support our work and am looking forward to expanding our impact in the years ahead.

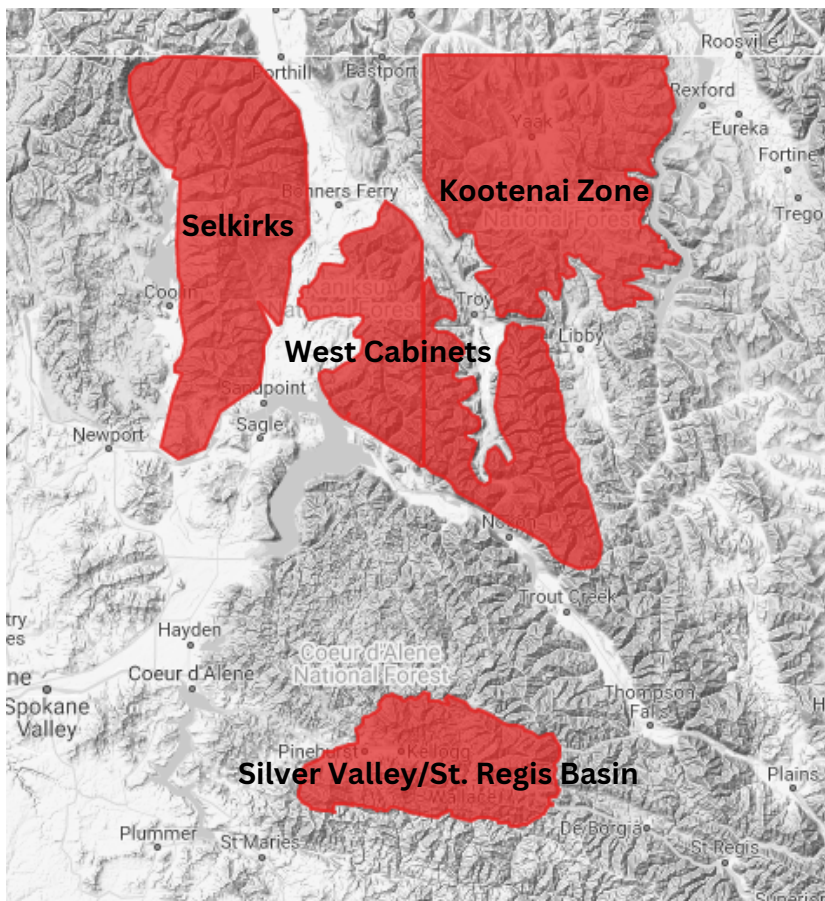
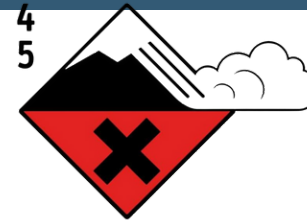


Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danica Gilbert". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Danica Gilbert
Membership/Development
Friends of IPAC

FORECASTS & OVERVIEW



IPAC issued regular avalanche forecasts each **Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday** through the forecast season with general avalanche information statements issued the day following each forecast.

Over the course of **19 weeks** a **total of 53 forecast cycles** across **three forecast zones** resulted in **166 total avalanche forecasts** and **111 total general avalanche information statements**.

We issued a combined total of 16 high avalanche watches, warnings, and special avalanche bulletins.

166
Forecasts

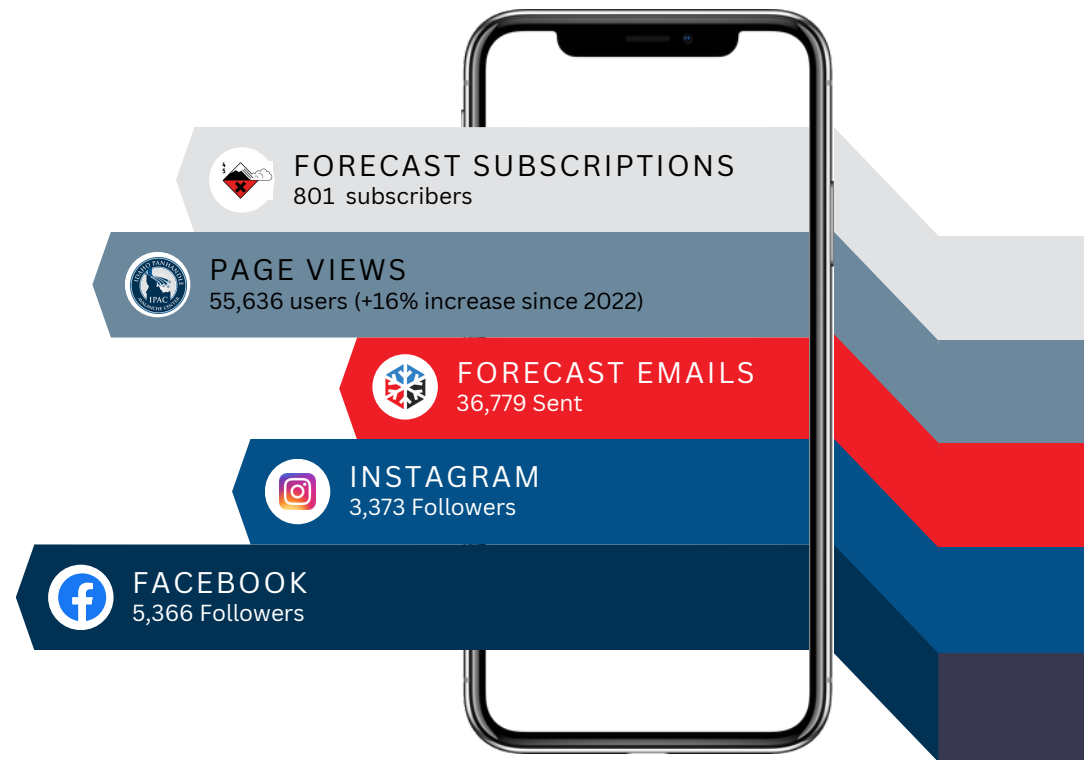
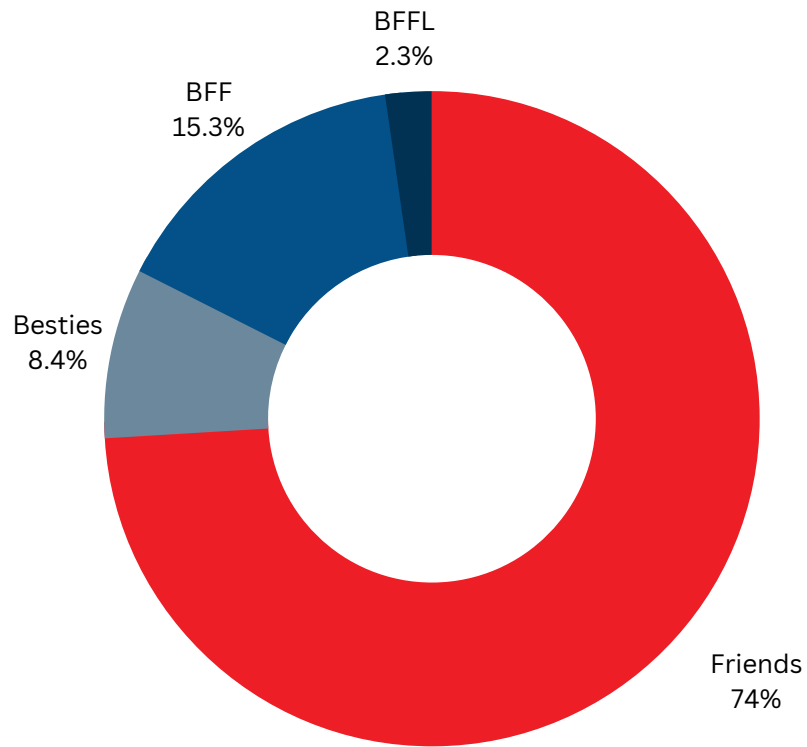
53
Forecast Cycles

16
Notices

3
Forecast Zones

GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

133 Active Members



Website & Social Media

ANALYTICS (DEC-APRIL)

EDUCATION & OUTREACH AWARENESS TOUR

Education program coordinator Jon Totten offered **23 courses** and **6 community awareness nights** across the Panhandle this season.



FIPAC saw record numbers of participants in its avalanche education program this season with **373 students** participating in 23 courses led by 18 instructors and 13 volunteers.

SPONSOR HIGHLIGHT

Alpine Shop

Westside Motorsports

Powder Hound Pizza

Tobler Marina

MickDuffs Brewing Co.

Sand Creek Custom Wear

Evans Brothers Coffee

Grand Teton Brewing

Doma Coffee

Two Wheeler Ski Dealer

Schweitzer

Silver Mountain Resort

Radio Brewing Company

Coeur d'Alene Bike Co.

Harper Motorsports

Continental Door Co.

Ride 509

Roots Up

PNW Lawncare

7B Boardshop

Meridian Trophy

Ramble Raven Gear Trader

Longleaf Wilderness Medicine

OnX Backcountry

We are incredibly thankful for our supporting businesses that contributed this season. With the additional support the Friends group was able to add field support and expand our forecast days.



2022/23 STAFF & BOARD

IPAC STAFF

- Ben Bernal**
Avalanche Forecaster
- Nate Stephens**
Avalanche Forecaster
- Jeff Thompson**
Avalanche Forecaster
- Kevin Davis**
Avalanche Forecaster
- Mikey Church**
Avalanche Forecaster
- Brian Hilland**
Field Assistant
- Issy Davis**
Field Assistant
- Micah Kromptich**
Field Assistant
- Kyla Berendzen**
Field Assistant

FRIENDS OF IPAC STAFF

- Jon Totten**
Education Director
- Danica Gilbert**
Development
- Cass Higgins**
Instructor
- Brett Vangen-Weeks**
Instructor
- Cortland Nutt**
Instructor
- Dash Kamp**
Instructor
- Scott Rulander**
Instructor
- Sarah Klintworth**
Instructor

Katie Heil
Instructor

Ian St. John
Instructor

Mark Terry
Instructor

FRIENDS OF IPAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Tom Eddy**
Vice President
- Gary Quinn**
Director
- Sean Mirus**
Director
- Larry Banks**
Director
- Mike Brede**
Secretary
- Miles Rinne**
Treasurer

VOLUNTEERS

- Paul Ainsworth**
- Li Ciavola**
- Tyler Wilson**
- Devon Laprath**
- Breydon Weygandt**
- Lane Stidham**
- Mike Manion**

FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN FRIENDS of IPAC

REVENUE & EXPENSES

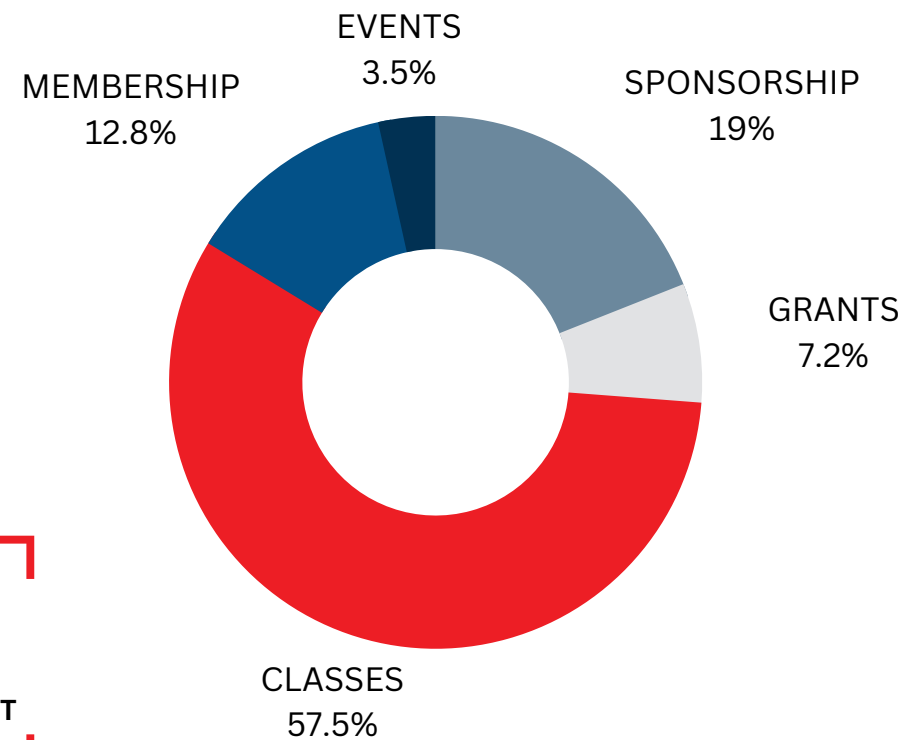


COST BREAKDOWN

The Friends of IPAC invested \$87,450 into avalanche forecasting and education during the 2022/2023 Season.



REVENUE BREAKDOWN BY CLASS





Friends of IPAC
PO Box 405
Ponderay, ID 83852



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idahopanhandleavalanche.org