



Canadian Avalanche Centre Increases Number of Forecast Regions Avalanche information will be issued daily for 12 regions across Western Canada

Nov 16, 2011, Revelstoke BC: The Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC) marks the start of a new season of avalanche forecasts with a new bulletin format and a significant increase in the number of bulletin regions.

“These two developments go hand-in-hand,” explains CAC Executive Director Ian Tomm. “With help from the efficiencies of our new bulletin system, we will split some of our larger regions into smaller ones. As a result, the CAC will provide daily avalanche information for 12 regions, up from seven in the past.”

The new bulletin format was developed in partnership with Parks Canada and uses icons and other graphic elements to communicate avalanche risk. At the CAC website, advanced backcountry users can also access more detailed, text-based information if they wish.

Dividing some of the larger regions into smaller segments is a long-held goal of the CAC. “Here in Canada we deal with an unprecedented magnitude of scale,” says Tomm. “We have long recognized the need to split some of our regions into smaller segments. This affords our forecasters a greater degree of accuracy and allows them to be even more precise with their travel advice to recreational backcountry users.”

Most of the new forecast regions have been created within the established boundaries of existing regions but there are plans to add new territory as well. In partnership with the Yukon Avalanche Association, the CAC is working on a pilot project to produce a bulletin in the White Pass and Wheaton Valley, an area that straddles the BC-Yukon border and a popular destination for backcountry skiers and snowmobilers in Whitehorse.

In addition to Parks Canada, the CAC’s bulletin expansion received vital support from other agencies. The Canadian Avalanche Foundation, a registered charity that supports the work of the CAC, increased its annual donation in aid of this program. As always, the Government of BC played an essential role, with core funding and collaboration with a variety of ministries. The expansion into the Yukon is supported by a federal grant program and the local stakeholders that make up the Yukon Avalanche Association. “The CAC is a tremendous example of the power of public-private partnerships,” adds Tomm. “As a non-profit organization, we work with many layers of government and a broad cross-section of avalanche safety stakeholders to create programs and services that are the envy of alpine nations around the world.”

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For more information please contact:

Mary Clayton
Communications Director, Canadian Avalanche Centre
250.837.2141 (228)
mclayton@avalanche.ca