



Flathead National Forest
www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead

Media Release

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Glacier County Avalanche Center and Flathead National Forest

Request Public Input on Services

Glacier Country Avalanche Center, Inc. (GCAC) and the Flathead National Forest are seeking public feedback to improve services offered through their partnership. The public is encouraged to participate by responding to a survey that is available on the Center's website, www.glacieravalanche.org through the end of April. A hard copy of the survey is also available by calling 863-3561.

The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The results of the survey will be shared on the website and a public presentation will be scheduled at the start of the 2011-2012 winter season.

Glacier Country Avalanche Center and the Flathead National Forest have been partners since the mid 1990s with a purpose to cooperatively develop and present avalanche safety education programs and backcountry avalanche advisories in Northwest Montana. The Glacier Country Avalanche Center region is approximately 10,000 square miles and encompasses seven mountain ranges.

The Center is responsible for fundraising, educational classes, networking with backcountry groups, clubs and organizations, the website and hotline. Glacier Country Avalanche, Inc. is a registered non-profit corporation with an elected volunteer board of directors that meet monthly from September through May.

The Flathead National Forest has two avalanche specialists that collect weather, avalanche and field observations to formulate the avalanche advisories. The forest also provides formal educational programs and community outreach.

Recent partnership programs have included basic avalanche awareness classes with lecture series and field sessions, town hall series presentations, education programs for various school and learning groups, user group presentations, and more. The programs focus on avalanche terrain, mountain weather and snowpack, stability evaluation and decision making, avalanche rescue and winter survival.

The Forest Service backcountry avalanche advisories are issued twice a week throughout the winter. The advisories are posted on the Center's website, and available by calling the backcountry avalanche advisory hotline or subscribing to an email notification process.

The Center's website is a key component of the partnership's outreach to the community. Besides the advisory posting, there is information on the beacon park atop Big Mountain at Whitefish Mountain Resort, observations and incidents posted by volunteers and avalanche specialists, educational opportunities, and weather forecasts. The mountain weather forecasts are based on information produced by the National Weather Service in Missoula, Montana, and local Forest Service weather stations. The website also includes information on avalanche conditions on the Kootenai National Forest.

For more information about this survey, or to obtain a hard copy of the survey, contact Glacier Country Avalanche Center, Inc. Board President Joe Grabowski at 863-3561.

REMINDER:

The Flathead National Forest issues avalanche advisories for Northwest Montana throughout the winter. Advisories are issued twice a week, on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Advisories include information about snowpack conditions, weather forecasts, and hazard evaluations. Visit www.glacieravalanche.org or call 406-257-8402 for these advisories. Anyone traveling in the backcountry will always need to make their own time and site specific avalanche hazard evaluations.

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