



- OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHERN DIVISION NATIONAL SKI PATROL-

POLARIS

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THIS ISSUE

From the Director	1-2
Hello All from	3
Michael Jasumback MD	
The Women of Northern.	4
Gathering	
Patroller Wellness Update	5
What Patroller Wellness Is	
Hot Dog Dayz and	6
Rucksack Challenges	
THANK YOU, Brian Beattie	7
News and Updates	8
from the NSP Avalanche World	
Good Day and Welcome	9
from Michael Marlow	
Why Become a Board Member?	10
Calendar of Events.	11



Hello Northern Division Ski Patrollers!

From the Director's Desk,
Dan Schaefer Division Director,

By now most of you are wrapping up your ski season! Sorry or happy it is almost over and now awaiting the warmth of Summer. It has been an interesting season for some of us. Snow cover was questionable for a while, a bit short in some places and then as per the normal, heavy later in the season just in time for the close of the season. North Dakota did not have a great snow season. 12 whole inches in Bismarck/Mandan. Huff Hills Ski Area made 6.5 million gallons of snow this year! It held on to the hill for the cold "62 days" of January, giving us good snow to ski on for a while. But like most drought years, the weather was unpredictable. Warming trends quickly cut the ski season down in its prime, showing us, we are not in charge of some things in life. Maybe next year.

As patrollers, we need to be flexible while we maintain our provenance as adaptable and conformist to our situation while still holding strong to the fundamental fact that we are there to provide for the folks we serve in our outdoor communities. The U.S. Marine Corps phase, as some are aware, "overcome and adapt" should be the NSP motto as well. I only know that from the movies as I am not a veteran of the Marine Corps. I will not try to steal valor. This year was the year that many of you had to do just that! Overcome and adapt and get the job done. Thank you for doing that. We all need to have some encouragement with what we do! So "Bravo" to you Northern Division Ski Patrollers!

Speaking of adapting, Holy Cow, I have been learning things! Karl was less than clear on his explanation regarding DD duties when he handed me the keys to the Directors Job! Just sayin....

The NSP national business is interesting. The national board of directors is an eclectic group working hard to try to make the needed corrections and guidance and lead the NSP in the right directions. Stephine Cox and her team have finally begun to gel together and work toward a better place to work and provide for us. While I would be hard pressed to say I agree with all that is happening at times, I have faith that the main goal is progressing the NSP to better fiscal footing.

Last year, the NSP took a huge dues increase. I know a lot of us have been asking what the NSP is funding and why can't we see more results? While we don't always understand the logic being used, I do see the new leadership working hard to correct some of the less than prudent decisions made by their predecessors. While not as transparent, we do see improvements in some of the processes in the NSP process. This is coming with both fiscal and physical investments into making things more "Patroller" friendly regarding the main mission.

MISSION STATEMENT FROM THE NSP *"To ensure the safety and well-being of individuals engaged in skiing, snowboarding or biking activities, through education, rescue services, and community support."*

The cost of everything climbs with inflation. The NSP is no different. Seldom if ever do we get good news with inflation and cost of business. The National Ski Patrol is a non-profit business and sadly some of the past leadership took that literally. They did not plan well. (Kinda like my 401k frankly) Sorry I had to joke there. Quality staff regardless of who they work for need to be paid. Quality computer programs and management systems cost money and as well as the people who maintain them. Hence costs go up.

While prudent, dues increase still bite, NSP Board Chair Richard Pietrafesa is a businessperson in real life. He is fiscally sharp and understands sustainability. He and the board are working hard to position the NSP on the right trail. He assured us that the board and executive director Stephine Cox with her team are working to "Right the Ship" on building a secure fiscal plan. I hope you have taken the time to read the letter sent out by Mr. Pietrafesa March 16th 2025. He laid out the plan for a more predictable dues schedule that we can use to budget without surprises. His plan to use the CPI (Consumer Price Index) to determine the dues schedule plan makes sense versus the previous no dues increase for few years then a massive dues increase for us the patrollers. We at least know it is coming each year, and we can plan

Last year the Northern Division did something different with dues. We decreased the Division Dues by 8 bucks to help offset the large National Dues increase. With our current situation, the Northern Division is not looking to change our \$40.00 dues this year. The Division did not have the expense of the senior program, always helpful to the budget. We do, however, look forward to having a senior program offering in the 25/26 season.

Speaking of the Senior Program! The NSP has revisited the Senior Program and have made some very interesting changes. I am looking forward to the new program logic and philosophical changes that will be a game changer. The new focus appears to be more focused on leadership and decision making. While we still need to provide great patient care, we need advanced patrollers that can lead with confidence. Look at your patrols and get some folks ready for the Senior this year. I challenge you to raise up a few patrollers to take part in this worthwhile endeavor.

Thank you for reading! Enjoy your summertime activities.

Dan Schaefer HHSP

Northern Division Director.

Hello All!!

Well spring has arrived (or is it false spring??), anyway..... Spring means lots of things. One of which is a new start. And that's where the National Medical Committee is!!!

We have a new National Medical Advisor, Dr. Lauren Altschuh is a 20+ year member of NSP as a Senior Patroller & OEC IT patrolling at Northstar, Roundtop, Deer Valley & Dartmouth. Dr. Altschuh is boarded in Emergency Medicine and currently serves as the Medical Director at Northstar, Assistant Medical Director for San Diego Mountain Rescue Team & serves as Assistant Fellowship Director, Wilderness Medicine at UCSD.

We are also having a Medical Advisor Face to Face meeting for the first time in several years at the end of April. A big goal of this meeting is to begin the update process for OEC and to thank Chuck Allen for his leadership over the last 6 years!

With that I will leave you with my usual safety lecture (eyeroll emoji). It may be springish in the low country, but risks still abound. Bears starting to move around, avalanche and whitewater risk increasing due to late snow and runoff. Be safe, be vigilant. Go home safely every day, after every adventure, patrol day and work.

Michael Jasumback MD

Medical Advisor Northern Division National Ski Patrol

The Women of Northern Gathering

Well, it happened again. We gathered again to laugh, learn, and lounge (not really, although I do believe those staying in White Sulphur Springs did so some soaking). This year's Women's Event coincided with International Women's Day, and just so happened to be held at one of two women owned (in the WORLD) and managed mountains – so much coolness! And soooooo much glitter!

This year also found us doubling the numbers of women attending – WHOOP! We had toboggan clinics, PSIA clinics, and by far one of the funniest and friendliest avalanche sessions. We were lucky enough to have Morgan (Lost Trail) and Skadi (who stole our hearts) join us in our avalanche session. We learned about Skadi and Morgan's training, did some beacon and probe work, and even "rescued" a "victim." We spent some time at Top Rock building our relationships throughout the division, as well as collecting of info during lunch.

Maggie and I are super excited to take the information we gathered and use it to make the Women of Northern program AMAZING! We have some ideas brewing and look forward to rolling them out to you all.

We want to give a GIANT thank you to all the Women that came for the companionship, learning, and skill building.

We would like to thank our support team that guided us in the planning and executing of this year's event. A big thank you to Showdown for hosting and feeding us, the Great Falls Ski Patrol for their hospitality, Josie our PSIA instructor, Morgan and Skadi for their enthusiastic avalanche session, our OET Instructors – Colleen, Bridget, and Maggie. Shout out to our Antelope Butte ladies that passed their OET test the Sunday after the event – WHOOP! A special thank you to our hosts and hostess with the most for our Après Ski snacks and organizing of lunches.

Deb A. Huestis





PATROLLER WELLNESS UPDATE

What Patroller Wellness Is

It is looking out for each other in times of stress. It is pre-planning and education what stress injury is and how it affects us when a stressful event happens to our patrol.

It is making those contacts ahead of time with the right people to help your patrol get through it.

It is providing peer support or being a “wingman” to our friends in need.

It is creating a culture so that if you do have a stress injury, you talk to someone and not suffer in pain.

This last year in the Norther Division we have had some events that have put some stress or even created some stress injuries. Loss of life on our mountains, loss of someone that leaves a hole in our hearts. Traumatic injuries, Missing people.

The Norther Divisions Patroller Wellness officially started to get rolling with the Help of our own Dr. Chuck Allen. He is the Chair of the National Patroller Wellness Task Force and helped push me to get the Norther Division up and running. I am also now on the National Task Force. We are putting on some webinar training during the year.



We now have a site on the Divisions web page. Please take a look. There are also links to other divisions sites that may be useful.

There are several Patrol's that have plans already and are using the idea of taking care of ourselves before and after an incident. Some patrols are getting started and some have nothing.

I was told by other Divisions that it may be a slow process to get everyone on board. I am learning myself on all the things that is needed to get this going. I will be reaching out to all the patrols for a representative. I do have some names already, thanks for volunteering.

I'm looking forward to this next year to get this project moving forward.

Jeff Azure

Patroller Wellness Supervisor, Norther Division.

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“HOT DOG DAYZ and RUCKSACK CHALLENGES”

On March 29th Flathead Nordic held their third “Hot Dog Dayz” event of this ski season. With the expansion to a third event this year over 900 hot dogs were grilled (by the Northern Division Outstanding Patroller of 2023-24 Conor O’Neil). An avalanche beacon park is set up at the top of Flower Point lift at Whitefish Mountain Resort and members of Flathead Nordic give one on one instruction to skiers on Avalanche beacon use. Those successful in locating the transmitting beacon under the snow receive a free hot dog. In addition to this public avalanche training Flathead Nordic also maintains 10 Beacon Checkers (some at the resort and others at popular trail-heads).

On February 18th at 7 pm. seven members of Flathead Nordic set of on the 90 Pound Rucksack Challenge created in 2024 by Christian Beckwith of Jackson Hole to pay tribute to the 10th Mountain Division and to commemorate their climb of Riva Ridge in Italy 80 years ago in WWII. The idea was for participants to carry packs of “challenging

weight” (up to a third of their body weight or even as much as 80 pounds) on a 1600’-2400’ ski ascent. Unable to secure permission from WMR for an after hours ski we skied a xc-ski trail 5.5 miles and 1600’ elevation gain. I was last to arrive in at 3 hours.

We’re working already trying to obtain permission to skin the ski hill next year. After all, WMR (Big Mountain) was started by Toni Matt of the 10th Mountain Division and Ed Schenk of NSP just as Showdown was. For the record, I did not carry a 90 pound rucksack or even a third of my body weight. I reasoned the average GI carried a third of their weight but was only 19-20 years old. I took a third of my body weight then deducted my age as a percentage. Just like Montana Club Restaurants do for your Birthday meal.

Ruisty Wells

Nordic Advisor



THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

This is my first column in the Polaris in my new role as Northern Division OET Supervisor. I've been thinking about what words of wisdom I should impart on everyone. It seems the best place to start is at the beginning.

The beginning in this case is why do we ski patrol. I'm truly in awe of the level of commitment that's demonstrated by volunteer ski patrollers. Think about your initial OEC and OET classwork and ski training. That was a huge commitment of time and also a lot of pressure taking and passing tests. Then there's the yearly refreshers in each discipline. That's not enough for a lot of us so we go in to take electives that we really don't need but we are driven to be the best patroller that we can be.

There's also the physical and emotional strain that can be part of the job. It's not easy loading a patron in a toboggan or tail roping it down the mountain. Helping the injured, during what could be their worst moment, is sometimes stressful.

This calling also requires a fair amount of money. Equipment and clothing aren't cheap, even with the discounts that we get. Oh, that's right, we have to get to the ski hill and sometimes need a place to stay.

What I really want to say is thank you for volunteering your time and talents to this worthy endeavor. You are a special breed of people that understand serving and helping others is the best kind of satisfaction. I don't think you can ever be thanked enough for what you do. I always love the response from the public when they asked what we are paid. 'Your volunteers? You do this for free!' And my respect to the paid patrollers as well.

All of the challenges I've mentioned, day after day, for a modest income.

I am honored to serve the skiing public with all of you.

Brian Beattie

Northern Division OET Supervisor



News and Updates from the NSP Avalanche World

Greetings everyone. The NSP continues to support A3 membership for NSP Avalanche instructors for Level 1 classes. While some continue to disagree with A3 membership, NSP leadership and Board members are crystal clear that A3 membership and therefore accreditation by A3 of the NSP Avalanche program continues to provide legitimacy of our NSP program within and across the Avalanche Industry as a whole.

At the Northern Division level, this next season, NSP Avalanche Instructors will be expected to pay for and maintain their own A3 membership, which includes signing into and transferring their A3 email confirmation of membership in A3 into the Badging system within MyLearning (please let me know if you need a guide for how to do this, use "NSP Avy Badging" in your email subject line). NSP Avalanche instructors are expected to maintain continuing education efforts as a personal responsibility of their title and staying current within the Avalanche field. Maintaining your own A3 membership meets the requirements of NSP Avalanche continuing education requirements for instructors. We thank the Northern Division for providing two years of financial support as the NSP Avalanche program transitioned into the new A3 membership requirement. At the next N. Div. Board meeting I will ask our board if that support can be made available for new Avalanche instructors, for one year, as an incentive to recruiting new Avalanche instructors.

Nationally, there is a new Avalanche Director that has been hired as a paid, salaried position within the NSP. His Name

is Josh Olson. Josh does not start until April 2025. There will also be a Volunteer NSP Avalanche leader position. Not much is known about either position or roles or duties or directions at this time.

There is talk of Lost Trail Ski Patrol hosting an Avalanche Level 1 class next season (2025-2026) at Lost Trail. Please let me know if you are interested in taking the class or know of, or have patrollers interested in the class. I need Names and email address of all future students for this class. This Avalanche class will be a Division-wide class available to any N. Division, Active duty patrollers. A limited number of non- patroller class student openings may be available. Therefore, send me names and email addresses of any folks interested in the Lost Trail NSP Avalanche level 1 class. I will be in touch with our outstanding cadre of N. Div. Avalanche Instructors over time about this class. Finally, the Avalanche discipline will host a refresher station at the Northern Division September meeting, please remember to bring your Avalanche beacons and prepare to have a great time.

Thank you all for your volunteerism and please continue to do what you do for the good of the public and our NSP. Any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to email me or text.

Steve Porcella

N. Div. Avalanche
sfporcella@gmail.com
406-360-7931



Good Day and Welcome!

As the ski season winds down, Northern patrollers are looking forward to hiking, camping, biking, fishing, golfing, and many other outdoor adventures. However, I'd like to plant a seed for next ski season!

Do you know anyone who could benefit from becoming a Senior Patroller? Could it be you or your ski buddy? We are making plans for next year's Senior program, which will be limited to 9 to 12 patrollers. If you're interested, please inform your patrol representative so we can finalize the plan after the next Division meeting.

Speaking of the upcoming 2025 Division meeting, it's scheduled to take place in the Billings area. The exact location is being determined, but the dates are set for September 19, 20, and 21, 2025.

Returning to the Senior program, a new elective course has been approved: Outdoor Risk Management (ORM). This is an excellent course that should be fairly manageable for most Northern patrollers, as we not only patrol but also have a good understanding of what happens on our local hills.

Lastly, I want to give a shout-out to Brian Beattie for his outstanding work in his first year as OET Supervisor. We should all thank him for stepping up!

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to reach out!

As they said in M*A*S*H... That is all!

Michael Marlow

Assistant Division Director

Assistant OET Supervisor





Why Become a Board Member?

By joining our Board, you have the unique opportunity to help shape the direction and future of an organization that's been a trusted leader in outdoor sports safety for 87 years. Your leadership, strategic insights, and passion can directly influence our efforts to provide the highest standards of care, education, and safety for patrol members and the public.

At NSP, our mission is far greater than simply patrolling slopes. We're building a legacy of safety, community, and excellence. And we believe that with your support as a Board member, we can continue to evolve and inspire future generations of adventurers.

Consider becoming a candidate for the national Board of Directors.

This election will fill four open seats. Applications are due on June 1 at 4 p.m. MST.

We would be honored to have you join us in this pivotal role, ensuring that National Ski Patrol remains at the forefront of outdoor sports safety.

If you'd like to know more, speak with current board members and attend board meetings to learn about their work and the impact they make.

You can find schedules and access information for all Board and committee meetings on NSP's Meeting Calendar.

VISIT ELECTION PAGE

<https://nationalskipatrol.cmail20.com/t/y-l-chhudlt-hyukkdqij-y/>

NATIONAL SKI PATROL

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Calendar of Events

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
May 15, 16, 2025	Northern Division eBoard Meeting	Bozeman
June 6,7,8, 2025	PNW Nuts and Bolts	Timberline Ski Resort, Government Camp, OR
Sept 19, 20, 21, 2025	Northern Divison Meeting and Refresher	Billings Area
February 2026	Powder Rendezvous	TBD
February 2026	Senior Clinic(s)	TBD
March 2026	Senior Final	TBD