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Northern Division Wraps a Challenging but Resilient Season

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

As the winter season ends across the Northern Division, many patrollers are wrapping up their final days on the snow—or already looking ahead to the off-season. In true Northern Plains fashion, North Dakota offered one last surprise, delivering 8 inches of snow over Easter weekend—just after Huff Hills had officially closed. While late-season snowfall made for a brief return to winter, overall snowpack across much of the region particularly in Montana remained lighter than usual. One positive outcome of this trend is a reduced concern for significant spring flooding along the Missouri River basin.

Despite these variable conditions, Northern Division patrollers once again demonstrated adaptability, professionalism, and resilience. This season brought inconsistent snowfall, operational challenges, and ever-changing terrain conditions that tested patrol teams across the division. In the spirit of making the most of a lean snow year, perhaps it's time to celebrate the season a little differently. A "Core Shot of the Year" contest might be the perfect way to highlight both the challenges and the humor that came with this winter.

Important updates and opportunities are emerging from the National level:

National Board of Directors – Call for Candidates

The National Ski Patrol is currently seeking candidates for five open positions on the National Board of Directors. This is an excellent opportunity for members interested in shaping the future direction of the organization. The application deadline is June 1.

Outdoor Emergency Care (OEC) – 7th Edition in Development

Work is underway on the 7th Edition of the Outdoor Emergency Care (OEC) textbook, with an anticipated release in late 2027. The updated edition will reflect current medical best practices and EMR-plus protocols, while also introducing a refreshed structure designed to enhance both instruction and learning. Likely more from John on this.

Leadership Development Course Expansion

I just can't brag this up enough, The NSP Leadership Development Course continues to grow as a valuable resource for patrollers at all stages of their leadership journey. The program offers flexible learning tracks, including:

INTRODUCTORY TRACK – for those beginning leadership development

ROLE-BASED TRACK – tailored to specific NSP leadership positions

TOPIC-BASED TRACK – focused on key skills such as communication, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and strategic planning

FLEXIBLE TRACK – providing full access to all modules for a customized learning experience

Core topics include leadership fundamentals, leading in action, ethics and accountability, strategic thinking, and organizational awareness. This program is strongly encouraged for both current and aspiring leaders within the division.

Education and Compliance Reminder

As part of CAPSE compliance requirements tied to EMS

education, all instructors teaching Outdoor Emergency Care (OEC) courses must disclose any potential conflicts of interest when presenting or demonstrating equipment.

In practice, this means clearly stating whether you have any financial or professional relationship with manufacturers whose products you may be recommending. If no such relationship exists, a simple disclosure confirming that is sufficient. While this requirement has been in place since last year, it serves as an important reminder as courses and refreshers continue.

Looking Ahead

Updates to the OEC refresher process are expected, with efforts focused on creating a more streamlined and user-friendly system. While initial changes may bring some confusion, the long-term goal is improved clarity and efficiency.

Additionally, ongoing discussions at the leadership level will continue to refine the Senior Program, ensuring alignment from the National organization down to individual patrollers.

Beyond winter operations, the Northern Division is also exploring opportunities to expand Bike Patrol programs, reflecting a growing interest in year-round patrol engagement.

In closing,

This season may not have delivered consistent snowfall, but it did showcase the strength, adaptability, and dedication of Northern Division patrollers. From challenging conditions to creative problem-solving, the commitment to safety and service remained constant.

As we transition into the summer months, take time to recharge, reflect, and prepare for the opportunities ahead.

Thank you for your continued dedication—and enjoy the off-season.

Dan Schaefer Respectfully,

Dan Schaefer HHSP

serving you as the Northern Division Director.

Hello Mountain, Travel & Rescue Followers!

I am assuming most of us all had a shorter patrolling season with the snow levels slacking this year! Early Spring and into the summer activities came quicker this year is another great way to see things.

We had a great MTR course this year in the Northern Division. Flathead Nordic held an MTR1 level course this year. Conor O'Neil our Western Region MTR Advisor along with local MTR instructors, put together and implemented a great MTR1 course.

For those of you who have never done an MTR course that have ever wondered what it is about and what you will learn well here you go Below. Conor O'Neil wrote up a short version of what transpired with the course as follows.

MTR 1 – Flathead Nordic Backcountry Patrol

Flathead Nordic Backcountry Patrol (FNBP) was proud to host an MTR 1 course this season. The course began with an 8-hour classroom session in Whitefish, MT, where we focused on the essential skills required for mountain travel and overnight backcountry rescue operations.

We started with personal layering systems and nutrition/hydration strategies, then moved into sleeping systems, emergency shelters, and the gear necessary to maintain comfort in winter environments. Navigation was a key component, including the use of maps, compass, and GPS. We also emphasized safe group travel techniques—spacing, communication, and teamwork.

Additional topics included Search and Rescue (SAR) fundamentals such as the GAR (Green-Amber-Red) risk assessment model, ropes and rescue equipment, and patient care. Patient handling covered assessment, packaging, and improvised toboggans (which were built during the session). Risk management was a central theme throughout, reinforced by our instructors to ensure the safety of both rescuers and patients.

Field Session

The outdoor portion of the course took place at Summit Campground off Marias Pass (MT Hwy 2). The group met at 0900 in the parking lot. After coffee and gear prep, we conducted a full group gear check and reviewed the route plan established during the classroom session.

Before departing, all avalanche transceivers were checked for battery life and proper send/receive functionality. Once on the trail, we paused to review safe travel techniques in avalanche terrain and discuss group management strategies. Instructors also shared insights on how local SAR teams and Glacier National Park utilize the GAR system to manage operational risk.

Using navigation techniques, teams traveled to and established their overnight camp. During setup, a surprise rescue scenario was initiated involving a lost/injured skier nearby. The team demonstrated strong organization,





communication, and leadership. The scenario was ultimately called off when an air rescue resource became available.

Back in camp, participants constructed overnight shelters, established a kitchen area, and built a fire. The evening included a group dinner and informal team building around the fire. Later, a night scenario required the team to implement an Incident Command System (ICS) to locate and assist an injured instructor who had fallen while gathering firewood.

The team successfully located the subject using radios and avalanche transceivers, then performed patient assessment, splinting of a lower leg injury, and transport using an NSP backcountry sled. Their execution was efficient and textbook—highlighting excellent decision-making, communication, and teamwork.

The evening concluded with a debrief around the fire under clear skies.

Thanks to Conor O'Neil and all the Flathead Nordic MTR instructors that put the course together and taught it this season!

As a reminder if you feel you would benefit at your local patrol area and are in need of some more information in regard to our MTR program, I always look forward to hearing from those of you that may have questions or more interest into the program to enhance your skills and or your patrol area needs. If you are interested in learning more about becoming an instructor in the MTR program, please reach out and let's get you on the road to that accomplishment.

Have a Wonderful Summer

Troy Walker – MTR Supervisor
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Happy Spring!

It was an interesting season to say the least – we hope that you found some joy in the season though!

We held the fifth or sixth (hard to keep track when you are having FUN!) this March at Showdown Montana! And the ladies did not disappoint in bringing the fun and laughter! So much laughter! Our numbers were smaller than in the past, but you wouldn't have known from the ladies that showed up! We had some excellent skiing skills training and toboggan handling on Friday. Everyone brought their openness to learn and apply new skills to their techniques! So much growth happening on the hill – thank you Mother Nature for your excellent support in fresh snow! We learned tools for taking care of ourselves – the caretakers of all, with Christine Lustik. Of course, the traditional Après Snacks was had as the day ended. We shared things we learned, were appreciative for, and enjoyed the companionship of all! Saturday was spent learning skills that support the work we do on the hill – free skiing (patrolling is not just about work) and learning knots that help us to keep our Hill's Snowsport public safe. To top off the event we held an Amazing Race! Following clues to work our way through patroller skills – avalanche beacon search, finding a buried avalanche “victim” and “opening the airway,” trusting our teammates, and surviving the “wild” by starting a fire and ensuring we stayed hydrated and fortified – very creative versions of s'mores resulted from our success!

We look forward to the off season to refresh and relax (hopefully) and have started to dream of the next Women's Event. Please let us know if you have ideas or thoughts!

Take care of you and find the joy in each day! Until the snow flies! Maggie and Deb





I hope everyone had a great season. I know it was frustrating in a lot of locations due to a lack of snow.

Now it's time to store equipment for the summer. Toboggans should be stored out of the sun and moisture. It's also a good time to put on a coat of automotive wax to the exterior as well as doing any repairs. Check tail ropes, the rope carry handles, equipment straps. And elastic cord on the chain brake. Doing all of this now will make your opening next season much easier.

Like the Boy Scouts say, be prepared.

Have a great summer!

Brian Beattie

Northern Division OET Supervisor



Ends and Odds ...

Well ... wasn't THAT a season! We had great fun at the Powder Rendezvous at Red Lodge - I mean Showdown - with the PSIA and National OET crews.

We also had a good Senior Clinic at Showdown, and a good Senior final at the Great Divide. Congrats AJ Korslein for passing Senior!! And best of luck to our Senior returnees over the next couple years - Ed Armstrong, Becky Schatz, Bob Striebel, Ryan Smith, Tyler Haffner and Joe Metcalf.

Let's also thank Showdown and the Great Divide for their hospitality and generosity! If you see Katie and crew, or Travis and crew, out and about, please thank them in person for all they do for the Northern Division NSP!

Until next year .. see you on the tee boxes!

Mike Marlow

Ass't Division Director



Calendar of Events

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
May 1 & 2, 2026	ND eBoard Meeting	Bozeman
June 5, 6, 7, 2026	PNW Nuts & Bolts	Mount Hood
August 2026	Patrol Taxes Documents Due	
Sept 11, 12, 13, 2026	Northern Division Meeting	Fairmont
Sept thru Nov, 2026	Patrol Refreshers	
Jan 29, 30, 31, 2027	Powder Rendezvous	Lost Trail
February 2027	Regional Senior OEC/OET Clinic(s)	TBD
March 20, 21, 2027	Senior OEC/OET Final	Antelope Butte

Add your NSP photos here so we can share them in the newsletter!!

<https://join.photocircleapp.com/D3WX46FWV3>



NSP Northern Division
25-26

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