



# 2020 MID-YEAR REVIEW & RESCUE REPORT

# DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

When I go to the TCSAR hangar for a call-out these days, the normal hugs, high fives and back slaps seem like a distant memory, but the focus of being a good teammate remains at the forefront of everyone's mind. We check in on each other's families, the workplace and how often we're able to get out into the backcountry. We review our protocols monthly to keep our volunteers and our patients as safe as possible. The TCSAR Foundation continues to support the TCSAR "family" as best as possible with pre-packaged snacks, "to-go" meals and extra support for mental wellness.

From December 1, 2019, to June 1, 2020, we had 18 call-outs—the fewest number of incidents over a six-month period in the history of our organization. The rescues we did have were life-saving, with eight helicopter operations, including four short-hauls. We are hopeful that preventative education from Backcountry Zero, regular team trainings and resources may be helping our community stay safer, be more aware, and, as a result, have more fun. We are also proud to note the seamless integration with our partnering agencies, with whom valuable relationships allow us to perform successful rescues. With a successful Heli-Yes campaign in our rearview mirror, we see another eight months of helicopter service guaranteed to help save more lives in the Tetons this year.

Despite the challenges facing our and other communities around the country, our team continues to train, respond and rescue no matter what. This is truly a result of the support you've offered through your words of encouragement and ongoing financial contributions. For all of this and more, we thank you for being part of our community and specifically part of our team.

Please have a safe, healthy and adventure-filled summer.

Stephanie Thomas  
TCSAR Foundation, Executive Director  
TCSAR Volunteer SR #75

## TCSO SAR ADVISORS AND STAFF

CODY LOCKHART, CHIEF ADVISOR

AJ WHEELER, M.D., MEDICAL ADVISOR

DOUG VAN HOUTON, LOGISTICS ADVISOR

GALEN PARKE, PLANNING ADVISOR

KC BESS, MEMBERSHIP ADVISOR

ANTHONY STEVENS, TRAINING ADVISOR

JESSICA KING, TCSO SAR SUPERVISOR

MATT CARR, TCSO SHERIFF

## FOUNDATION STAFF

STEPHANIE THOMAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CASEY LEWIS, DONOR RELATIONS DIRECTOR

MATT HANSEN, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

LIZ KING, PREVENTATIVE SAR MANAGER

CARYN FLANAGAN, DIRECT SUPPORT COORDINATOR

## FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS

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JESSE STOVER, VICE PRESIDENT

DAVID LANDES, TREASURER

LESLIE MATTSON, SECRETARY

MISSY FALCEY

JENN SPARKS

CLAY GEITTMANN

HUGH O'HALLORAN

LIZ BRIMMER

DON WATKINS

TOM CHAPMAN

HADLEY HAMMER

SCOTT GUENTHER, GTNP LIAISON

JESSICA KING, TCSO SAR LIASON

CODY LOCKHART, TCSAR ADVISOR LIAISON



FROM  
DECEMBER 1, 2019 – MAY 31, 2020  
TCSAR VOLUNTEERS SPENT  
**4,432 HOURS**  
ON SAR-RELATED ACTIVITIES  
**RESCUES = 1,925 HOURS**  
**TRAINING = 2,362 HOURS**  
**COMMUNITY EVENTS = 145 HOURS**

# TCSAR VOLUNTEER TEAM MEMBERS



KC BESS



TIM CIOCARLAN



RYAN COMBS



MICHAEL ESTES



PHILLIP FOX



ED FRIES



ERIC HELGOTH



TED KYLE



CHRIS LEIGH



ETHAN LOBDELL



CHASE LOCKHART



CODY LOCKHART



RYAN MERTAUGH



MIKE MOYER



ALEX NORTON



GALEN PARKE



KEEGAN PFEIL



JEN REDDY



TERRI ROMANOWSKI



ROBB SGROI



SCOTT SHERVIN



WILL SMITH



JENNIFER SPARKS



ALEX ST. CLAIR



ANTHONY STEVENS



CHRIS STIEHL



STEPHANIE THOMAS



PHIL (FLIP) TUCKER



DOUG VAN HOUTEN



CAROL VIAU



DON WATKINS



LIZZIE WATSON



AJ WHEELER



JON WIEDIE

# TCSAR EMPLOYEES



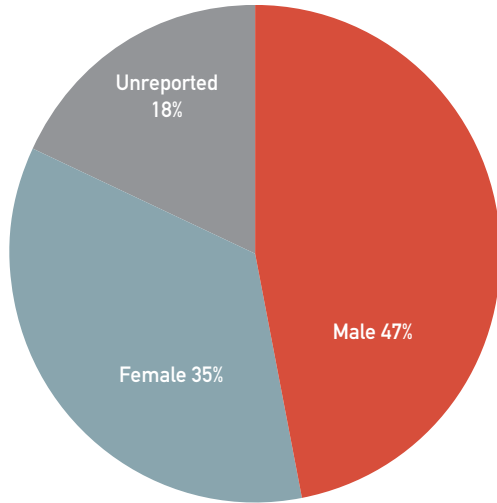
JESSICA KING  
TCSO SAR SUPERVISOR



MATT CARR  
TCSO SHERIFF

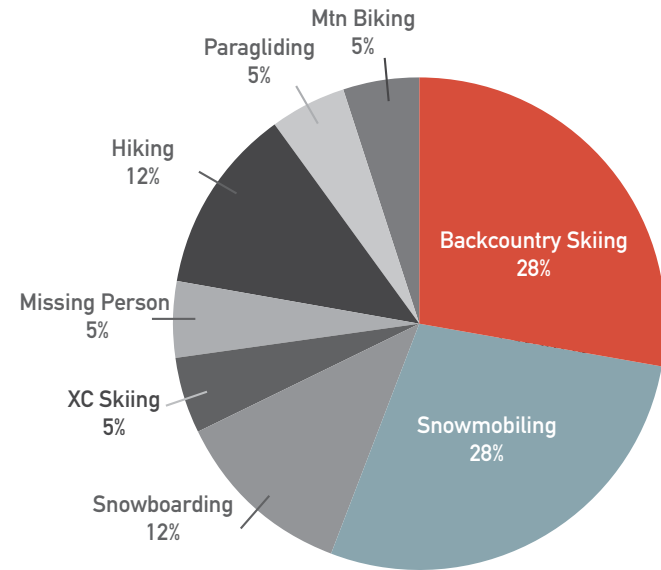
# INCIDENTS BY GENDER

WINTER 2019/20

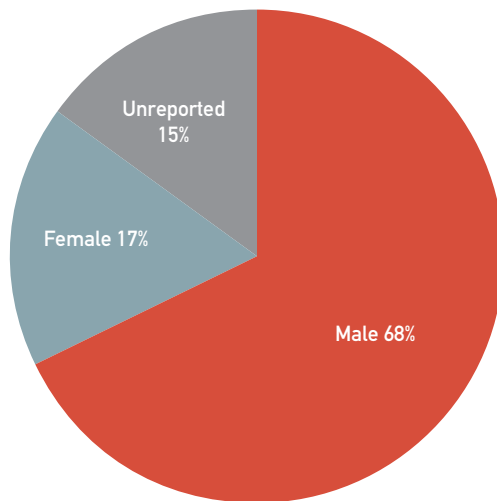


# INCIDENTS BY ACTIVITY

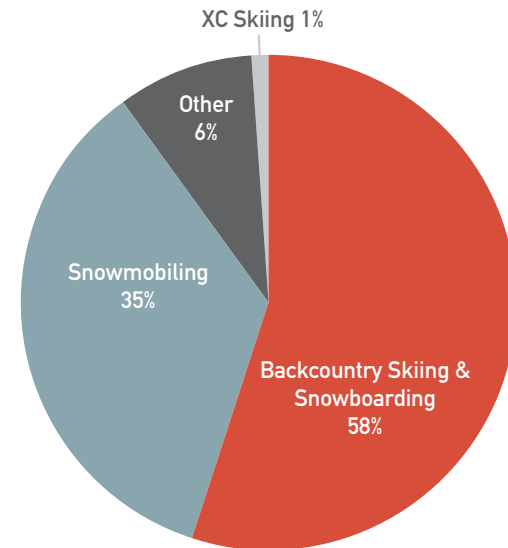
WINTER 2019/20



WINTER 10-YEAR AVERAGE



WINTER 10-YEAR AVERAGE



# Winter 2019/20 RESCUE REVIEW

## » DECEMBER

**RESCUE** Grand Targhee Backcountry Avalanche  
**DATE** 12/5/2019  
**TIME** 3:38 p.m.  
**DURATION** 54 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 16  
**PERSON HOURS** 14.4 hours

**WHAT HAPPENED?** The TCSAR Board of Advisors (BOA) got a call from Grand Targhee Ski Patrol about a skier who'd been caught in an avalanche in the out-of-bounds area known as Steve Baugh. One person was already dug out with unknown injuries, and there were two other skiers potentially unaccounted for. Ski patrol had already sent two teams and avalanche dogs in to do a beacon search. Given the late time of day, Grand Targhee and TCSAR decided to prep the helicopter with the heli beacon and short-haulers.

As the team was gearing up, Grand Targhee alerted SAR that the person caught in the avalanche was digging a pit at the time, and that he'd seen no other skiers in the slide path. He was uninjured and didn't lose any gear, and the team stood down.

## » JANUARY

**RESCUE** Snowmobile Rescue at Brush Creek  
**DATE** 1/3/2020  
**TIME** 10:26 a.m.  
**DURATION** 7 hours, 4 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 15  
**PERSON HOURS** 106

**WHAT HAPPENED?** The BOA received a page that a 25-year-old male had injured his back after driving his snowmobile off a 25-foot-high cliff in the Brush Creek area up Spread Creek. The board decided to send ground teams on snowmobiles with a helicopter as backup. Using an old Forest Service logging road north of Triangle X, two teams approached on

five snowmobiles towing two toboggans. Due to challenging terrain, the snowmachines kept getting bogged down. The teams eventually reached the patient, who complained of back pain and being cold. After refueling, the helicopter landed near the scene, the patient was loaded into the ship, and flown to a waiting ambulance.

**RESCUE** Stuck Snowmobilers on Togwotee  
**DATE** 1/11/2020  
**TIME** 2:16 p.m.  
**DURATION** 57 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 25  
**PERSON HOURS** 23.8

**WHAT HAPPENED?** The BOA got a call that two male snowmobilers were stuck near the Continental Divide Trail on Togwotee. As two hasty teams assembled at the hangar, the men extricated themselves from the snow, and no response was needed.

**RESCUE** Taylor Mountain Helicopter Search  
**DATE** 1/15/2020  
**TIME** 2:56 p.m.  
**DURATION** 2 hours, 19 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 22  
**PERSON HOURS** 51



**WHAT HAPPENED?** TCSAR received a call regarding a large avalanche on Taylor Mountain, with unknown burials. The reporting party put in the call from the Coal Creek parking lot, saying they'd witnessed a large plume of snow off the south face of Taylor down to the valley floor. Three teams were selected: a short-haul team, heli beacon team, and a UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) team. The helicopter took off from the hangar and flew to the slide path, where the team spotted tracks entering the top of the avalanche. The heli landed to let out two SAR members on standby (due to windy conditions), while the ship flew with the heli beacon up and down the slide path. Meanwhile, the Sheriff's Office received information that the tracks were present prior to the slide. The short-haul and UAV teams waited for further instruction at the top of Teton Pass. At 3:41 p.m., the heli team observed four tracks in and four tracks out. At 4:16 p.m., the heli beacon team reported no hits. The ship returned to pick up the two team members on the ground, and all personnel returned to hangar.

All photos credit to TCSAR except where noted.



© ANDY BARDON

**RESCUE** Backcountry Alerts from JHMR  
**DATES** 1/3/2020  
 1/8  
 1/9  
 1/9  
 1/10  
 2/13  
 2/15  
 2/16  
 2/17



**WHAT HAPPENED?** Under the current memorandum of understanding, anytime the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort Ski Patrol exits the backcountry gates to assist skiers, they must notify TCSAR or Grand Teton National Park, but these calls don't always require a SAR or NPS response. Last winter, TCSAR was notified 10 times about skiers and snowboarders in need of assistance in the JHMR backcountry. Nine of those incidents were handled by ski patrol on behalf of TCSAR. The incidents included skiers and snowboarders getting lost in Granite Canyon, stuck above cliff bands in Rock Springs, setting off avalanches, and other events. On the 10th call, TCSAR responded with a short-haul operation to assist an injured skier in Pinedale Canyon.



## » FEBRUARY

**RESCUE** Lost Snowmachiners on Togwotee  
**DATE** 2/16/2020  
**TIME** 6:47 p.m.  
**DURATION** 5 hours, 35 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 17  
**PERSON HOURS** 94.9

**WHAT HAPPENED?** A father and his 13-year-old daughter were reported late after renting snowmobiles from Togwotee Mountain Lodge. After a wide search from 20 snowmobile guides, dispatch of two SAR snowmobile teams, and communications to neighboring Fremont County officials, the two were located safely by TML guides at 9:34 p.m.

**RESCUE** Short-haul on 25 Short  
**DATE** 2/17/2020  
**TIME** 4:21 p.m.  
**DURATION** 2 hours, 39 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 12  
**PERSON HOURS** 31.8



**WHAT HAPPENED?** Grand Teton National Park requested short-haul assistance for a skier who'd suffered a knee injury while descending 25 Short with a guide. TCSAR team members flew from the hangar to Moose to pick up a GTNP ranger and recon the area. Once the patient was packaged, the ship came back in and extracted both ranger and the patient and flew them to a waiting ambulance.

**RESCUE** Short-haul on Olive Oil  
**DATE** 2/22/2020  
**TIME** 2:43 p.m.  
**DURATION** 3 hours, 17 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 10  
**ATTENDEES** 32.8



**WHAT HAPPENED?** A 30-year-old female was skiing with a guide in Grand Teton National Park when she sustained an angulated boot-top fracture on her right leg. A short-haul team was flown to the site and packaged the patient for extraction. The helicopter picked up the patient and delivered her to an ambulance at Teton Village.

## » MARCH

**RESCUE** Short-haul in Pinedale Canyon  
**DATE** 3/12/2020  
**TIME** 12:14 p.m.  
**DURATION** 2 hours, 46 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 18  
**PERSON HOURS** 49.8



**WHAT HAPPENED?** A female skier suffered a serious lower leg injury while descending Pinedale Canyon with a guide south of Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. Ski patrol was on scene helping with ground management as two short-haulers were inserted into the scene. The patient was packaged in a screamer suit and short-hauled to Teton Village and transferred to a waiting ambulance.

**RESCUE** Snowmobile Injury on Togwotee  
**DATE** 3/17/2020  
**TIME** 7:27 p.m.  
**DURATION** 14 hours, 7 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 26  
**PERSON HOURS** 367

**WHAT HAPPENED?** The BOA received a call about an injured snowmobiler in need of assistance on the Continental Divide Trail east of Muskrat Flats. The man, who was in a group of four, had compressed a large bump in the trail, wherein the impact broke his sled's handlebars, rendering him in pain and the machine inoperable. He and his group were discovered by another party, who used an inReach emergency device to contact emergency dispatch. TCSAR formed two response

teams on snowmobiles, along with a communications team in an incident vehicle. Upon reaching the patient via snowmobile, the SAR team found him conscious but complaining of head and back pain. By 10:40 p.m., the team had transported the patient to the trailhead and a waiting ambulance.

## » APRIL

**RESCUE** Taylor Mountain Avalanche Operational Period 1  
**DATE** 4/1/2020  
**TIME** 3:05 p.m.  
**DURATION** 13 hours, 55 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 29  
**PERSON HOURS** 171.6

**WHAT HAPPENED?** The TCSAR Board of Advisors received a call about a person presumably buried in an avalanche on the south side of Taylor Mountain.

The missing person was described as a 28-year-old male snowboarder. His partner had seen him descending the mountain but lost sight of him after the avalanche was triggered. The partner snowboarded down the avalanche path doing a beacon search, but was unable to get a signal. The partner descended to the Coal Creek parking lot and called emergency dispatch with a borrowed cell phone.

At approximately 4:05 p.m., TCSAR team members, along with representatives from the Wyoming Department of Transportation, entered the scene, climbing Taylor to the



slide path. While limited visibility prevented the use of the helicopter, ground teams spread out on the mountain, searching the top, middle, and bottom of the slide path. They used avalanche transceivers, probe poles, and an aerial drone. A dog team from Jackson Hole Mountain Resort Ski Patrol was on standby in the Coal Creek parking lot.

The team was unable to locate the man, but did find his snowboard near the toe of the slide. It was intact and not broken. The search was called off due to nightfall, and the team reported back to the TCSAR hangar at 8 p.m.

**RESCUE** Taylor Mountain Avalanche Operational Period 2  
**DATE** 4/2/2020  
**TIME** 7 a.m.  
**DURATION** 8 hours  
**ATTENDEES** 26  
**PERSON HOURS** 208



**WHAT HAPPENED?** The TCSAR team returned to the hangar at 7 a.m. With a clearing in the weather, the TCSAR helicopter was able to conduct aerial avalanche mitigation on the south face of Taylor, with members of the Jackson Hole Ski Patrol dropping six explosives by 10:37 a.m. The ground teams moved in, and at 11 a.m., a search dog got a positive hit on the slide path. The man was dug out, and transported via helicopter longline to the Coal Creek parking lot.

Representatives from WYDOT and Bridger-Teton Avalanche Center stayed in the field to conduct an investigation. That investigation revealed that the burial victim had an avalanche transceiver on his person but that it had not been turned on.

**RESCUE** Injured Nordic Skier at Turpin Meadows  
**DATE** 4/12/2020  
**TIME** 12:04 p.m.  
**DURATION** 3 hours, 56 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 21  
**PERSON HOURS** 82.6

**WHAT HAPPENED?** TCSAR received a call that a 63-year-old woman had sustained a suspected neck injury after falling while Nordic skiing near Turpin Meadows. A strike team assembled with three snowmobiles and toboggan, with the helicopter as backup if necessary. As the team approached the accident site, Turpin Meadows Ranch sent two staff members

who were certified as Wilderness First Responders. By the time the team arrived at the parking lot near the site, the patient had been moved out of the field. She was transferred to a waiting ambulance, and the SAR team returned to the hangar.

» **MAY**

**RESCUE** Yellowstone National Park Assist for Missing Person  
**DATE** 5/6/2020  
**TIME** 12:01 p.m.  
**DURATION** 1 day, 2 hours  
**ATTENDEES** 12  
**PERSON HOURS** 317.8



**WHAT HAPPENED?** Yellowstone National Park requested helicopter assistance from TCSAR to search the Lewis Lake area for a missing minor. Three short-haul members flew with the pilot to the area, and another team member drove the fuel truck. After doing a low-level flight search, the team spotted a potential clue. Due to the difficult terrain and lack of adequate LZ, two rangers skied into the site, but discovered the clue to be false. No other clues were found, and the teams returned to the hangar.

**RESCUE** Wheeled Litter Response in Cache Creek  
**DATE** 5/8/2020  
**TIME** 12:50 p.m.  
**DURATION** 8 hours  
**ATTENDEES** 19  
**PERSON HOURS** 152

**WHAT HAPPENED?** A mountain biker was reported to be having a seizure on the Putt Putt trail up Cache Creek. By the time TCSAR arrived with the wheeled litter, the patient had already been transported to the trailhead and taken home to recover. No further response was necessary.

**RESCUE** Paraglider Stuck in Tree  
**DATE** 5/26/2020  
**TIME** 9:51 a.m.  
**DURATION** 2 hours, 39 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 21  
**PERSON HOURS** 55.7

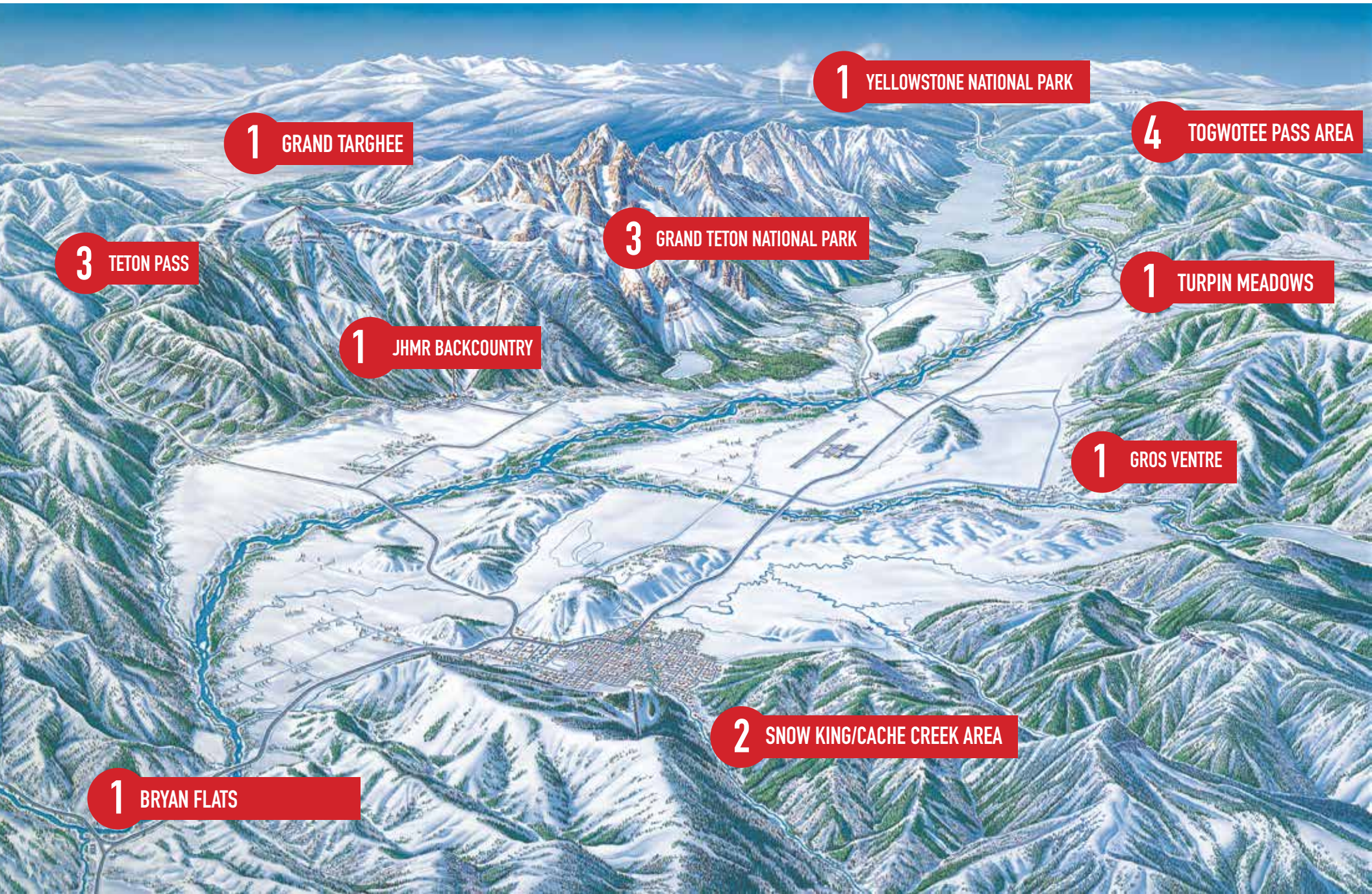


**WHAT HAPPENED?** While conducting helicopter work for WYDOT, the TCSAR pilot spotted a parachute in a tree in the Beaver Mountain area of Hoback Canyon. The BOA decided to send short-haulers to the scene to insert rescuers if needed. About 20 minutes later, the recon flight spotted the paraglider waving from up in the tree. The team assembled for short-haul, but soon afterward saw the man out of the tree and walking on his own power. The teams returned to the hangar.



**RESCUE** Ankle Injury on Josie's Ridge  
**DATE** 5/29/2020  
**TIME** 1:33 p.m.  
**DURATION** 2 hours, 27 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 16  
**PERSON HOURS** 39.2

# SEARCH AND RESCUE LOCATIONS - DECEMBER 1, 2019 - MAY 31, 2020





**WHAT HAPPENED?** The BOA received a call out to assist a hiker with a broken ankle about halfway up the Josie's Ridge trail. A team member who was already mountain biking in the area was the first on-scene. Using a wheeled litter, the SAR team maneuvered the patient down the trail to further medical treatment.

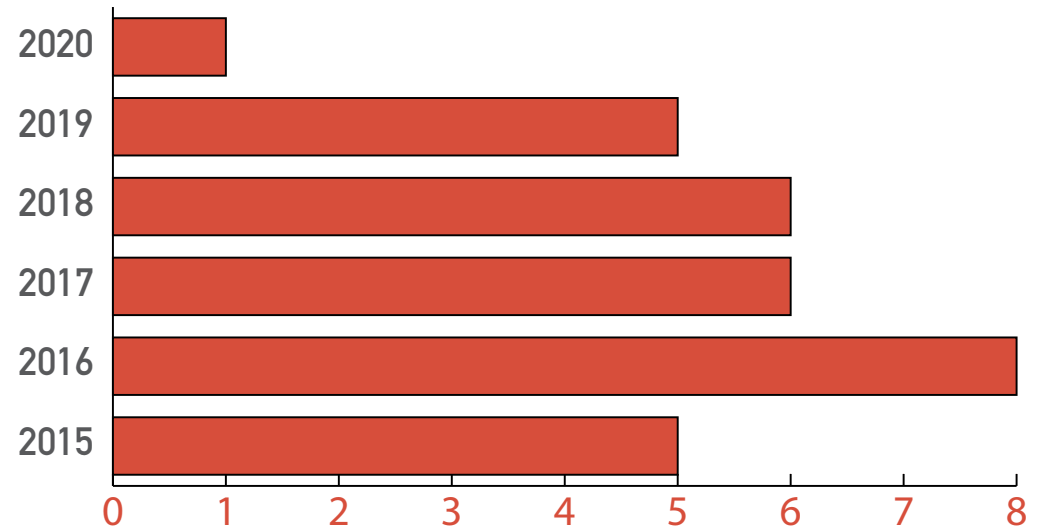
**RESCUE** Short-haul in Glacier Gulch  
**DATE** 5/29/2020  
**TIME** 5:31 p.m.  
**DURATION** 3 hours, 24 minutes  
**ATTENDEES** 4  
**PERSON HOURS** 13.6



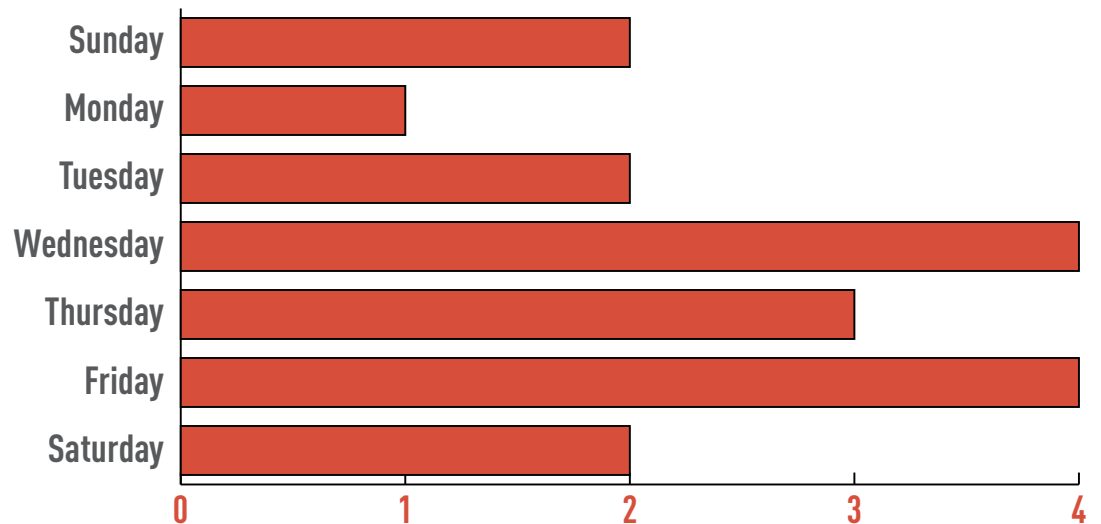
**WHAT HAPPENED?** Emergency dispatch in Jackson received a call about an injured person at Amphitheater Lake in Grand Teton National Park. A male hiker in his early 20s had fallen hundreds of feet down a snowfield. He had reportedly hit his head, lost teeth, possible rib fractures, possible loss of consciousness, and was hypothermic. The call was forwarded to GTNP, which then requested helicopter assistance from TCSAR to pick up the patient. The team responded with helicopter and fuel truck.

From the reporting party's description, the team believed the injured person to be at Surprise Lake. But on a recon flight, he was spotted at Delta Lake. The group had apparently hiked from Amphitheater/Surprise Lake over to Delta via a steep snowy slope, which is where the man fell. With no place to land, the helicopter equipped for short-haul extraction. One TCSAR short-hauler partnered with two GTNP rangers and was placed at the scene. The TCSAR member short-hauled the patient to a waiting ambulance at Lupine Meadows, while one ranger stayed behind to hike out with the rest of the party. After completing the short-haul mission, the TCSAR member drove the fuel truck back to the hangar.

## BACKCOUNTRY FATALITIES BY YEAR



## INCIDENTS BY DAY OF WEEK WINTER 2019/2020



# » CELEBRATING 20+ YEARS AS TCSAR VOLUNTEERS



Of the 36 volunteers on TCSAR, three (Tim Ciocarlan, Mike Moyer, and Mike Estes) have been on the team since its inception in 1993. This year, we honor three additional volunteers who've been on the team for 20-plus years. Jenn Sparks joined in 1998, while Carol Viau and Chris Stiehl came on board in 2000. As a small gesture of honoring their commitment, we wanted to make sure you know who they are and why they continue to show up and give back. Here, they reflect on two decades as TCSAR volunteers.



**JENN SPARKS**  
SR#21  
Mutual Fund Portfolio  
Manager

When Jenn Sparks moved to Jackson in 1989, she got a job housekeeping at the Hostel X in Teton Village. She lived there too, paying \$1 per night. Though she grew up in Vermont, graduating from UVM, she didn't ski until she got to Jackson. So working near the base of the tram helped. Her turn toward community service came later, when

she'd been in the valley long enough to appreciate the need to start giving back. As well as being on the TCSAR Foundation Board, she's also treasurer for the Jackson Hole Land Trust Board, a member of the Friends of Bridger-Teton Avalanche Center Board, and most important of all, a mom and wife.

#### **ON WHY SHE JOINED TCSAR:**

I felt like I'd been here a while and needed to give back to the community in some fashion, and I saw an ad in the paper looking for SAR volunteers. I applied, and there were some women but not a lot. But I needed to give back to the community and do what I like to do, which is be outside and in the mountains.

#### **ON HOW TCSAR HAS CHANGED:**

When I joined, there were a lot of jeans, and I was a struggling waitress and we had to buy our own gear. Most of what I had was men's extra small, and we had pagers. The team had the same mindset—safety first, you got my back, I got yours—but it was

a slightly different frame of mind. It was not unusual to turn a snowmobile upside down to get some gas out of the tank to light a fire.

We're rescuing a different person these days. To get somebody now, we have to cover a much longer distance. Back then there weren't as many backcountry skiers, and today, people go much farther.

#### **ON A CRITICAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE:**

In 2001, a skier fell while he was coming down the backside of Mount Glory, and his ski pole cut his femoral artery. His friends were maybe a 10-minute hike below him, but he died by the time they were able to get to him. That really showed me that you don't have to be doing something crazy or wrong to have something bad happen. He was just skiing and enjoying a powder day.

#### **ON WHY SHE'S STAYED WITH IT:**

The fact that I am able to give back to the

community and give some time. Plus, it's exciting. It gets me in the mountains and gives me a great skill set. And my teammates. There are always going to be ups and downs, but the core reason you're there has remained the same.

#### **ON HOW SHE'S CHANGED:**

I'm way more cautious than I used to be. I always overpack. I'm constantly bringing 14 coats and two headlamps, extra food, and a water purifier.

#### **ON HER APPROACH TO RESCUE PATIENTS:**

I don't ever judge our patients or victims. The minute I start judging people is when I need to leave the team. We all make mistakes.

#### **ON BACKCOUNTRY ZERO:**

The education and outreach and visibility of Backcountry Zero is amazing with how quickly it's taken off. Seems like people are adhering to that and helping each other out.

#### **ON SOMETHING PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT TCSAR:**

It's Joe Schmoe your neighbor that's just giving back to the community. It's a humble team, and there are people who have exceptional skills in all facets of recreation. But it's the guy that owns the tire shop, the glass shop, the rancher, the EMT, the guy who does IT at the hospital.

#### **ON A PERSON OF INFLUENCE:**

Tim Ciocarlan was instrumental in guiding the team to where it is today. He has been a great mentor.

#### **ON THE TEAM:**

We have evolved in a positive way. We're much more knowledgeable, and we have the tools to be more safe. Having our own home at the hangar has been huge. For a lot of years we were in a garage bay and storing gear in our cars. Now, we have a common place where we can meet, educate ourselves, train, and keep everything together. But deep down, it's the same people who have the same passion for being outside and giving back to their community.

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### **CHRIS STIEHL**

**SR#47**

Fire Captain, Paramedic,  
Jackson Hole Fire/EMS

Chris Stiehl moved to Jackson in 1997 after graduating from Washington and Lee University, in Lexington, Virginia. He planned to stay for two years. While working at Plaza Liquors, he heard that Jackson Hole Fire/EMS was giving away free hot dogs as part of a public awareness campaign. As every 22-year-old ski bum knows, you let no free hot dog go by. The meeting propelled him to get his EMT, and he began volunteering to drive the ambulance. A few years later, in 2000, he applied for Teton County Search and Rescue. Today, he's a fire captain, paramedic, husband, and father of two.

#### **ON WHY HE JOINED TCSAR:**

It seemed fun. You get to go do cool stuff, get trained, and helping other people was something that had an appeal to it.

#### **ON WHAT MAKES A GOOD SAR VOLUNTEER:**

People assume it's a collection of skill sets of a high level recreator. But it's not. Nobody is ready to go right out of the gate because they are a climber, kayaker, or backcountry skier. The unexpected part is whether or not you are available. If you have a schedule to drop what you're doing and respond, that's a major asset.

Another big piece is if you fit into a team. It's not a cool kids club. If you're a jerk, you're not going to be the best asset.

You also have to have an eagerness and humility to learn new things, and be able to accept mentoring and guidance.

#### **ON WHO INFLUENCED HIM:**

Mike Moyer was always out ahead of me. He's an OG on the SAR team, and a longtime high level medical provider in the valley. He showed me that doing frontcountry medicine is fun and rewarding, but taking those skills and applying it to backcountry conditions is about as rewarding as it gets to the way I'm wired. Also, Tim Ciocarlan and Ray Shriver were very important to our class of volunteers.

#### **ON FINDING BALANCE:**

Having a super supportive spouse has been the cornerstone of my success. Beyond that, the team feels as committed to me as I'm committed to them. As my participation ebbed and flowed due to work or family, I put pressure on myself but I never felt like I was on thin ice. It's helped that the industry of SAR has evolved, allowing for better risk mitigation strategies, which has kept it interesting and exciting. Plus, you don't just learn something once. You have to continue to get better.

#### **ON HOW TCSAR HAS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS:**

We're better able to support volunteers. We have better gear, and provide mental health and childcare support. Jet boats weren't a thing when I joined the team. RZR's are new now, and, of course, the helicopter, which has changed the way we respond. It's for the better, but I'm always cautious of having an overreliance on technology. You still have to do the ground work.

#### **ON THE BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO JACKSON IN THE LAST 20 YEARS:**

The opening of the backcountry gates at Teton Village. It seemed like all the adults got in the room and said, 'This is the right thing to do.'

#### **ON WHAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT SAR:**

The risk they impose on rescuers when they go out unprepared. If you need help, we don't have the luxury of not going. Maybe we're not going tonight, maybe the risk is too high for right now, but sooner or later, we're dropping everything and we're going to come.

### ON KEEPING WITH IT:

It's a great family of rescuers to be part of. At this point, I might have some hard-earned wisdom to offer the next generation of folks. But I still want to be able to give back to a pretty awesome community and a really great team.



**Carol Viau**

**SR#48**

Ski Instructor, Guide,  
Caregiver

The year 2000 was a big one for Carol Viau. After moving to Jackson from Layton, Utah, first in 1988, then returning in the early '90s, she spent several years doing mostly seasonal work. This included ski instructing, construction, and waiting tables in Jackson, as well as commercial fishing and working for a heli ski company in Alaska, and spending a winter in Chamonix. But in Y2K, she started putting down roots, and got an office job. Then, she saw an ad in the paper that Teton County Search and Rescue was looking for new volunteers. She applied, went through training, and has been on the team ever since.

"I remember asking my boss to have a certain schedule so that I could waitress in the evenings, and possibly leave the office to go on rescues," she says.

Her first rescue was a search for a hunter who'd been injured after falling off his horse near Bryan Flats south of town. As the team combed a ridgeline in the dark, she made a loud whistle, to which the hunter and his guide responded with a gun blast. When they approached the injured party, Carol saw the two men sitting next to a campfire. But in the flickering light of the flames, she was confused to

see two legs hanging from one of the horses. The legs turned out to be prosthetics belonging to the injured hunter. A double amputee, he'd lost his legs in a farming accident after falling into a grain silo. When Carol asked him what his pain level was, he responded, "Not as bad as when I lost my legs." The team loaded the large man into the wheeled litter, and trudged through the night. As Carol describes it, "We basically carried him through deep, slippery muck for hours and hours over a thousand downed logs."

The team got the man to an ambulance at 3 a.m. Exhausted, Carol drove home but still made it to work the next day, on time, at 7:15 a.m.

### ON HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED AT TCSAR:

We used to meet in the County Commissioner chambers. Sometimes, the chambers would be full, and so we'd go to the Brew Pub and meet there.

### ON WHY SHE HAS STAYED ON:

I like problem solving, and each rescue is a little bit different. Sometimes it's straightforward and you see similarities. But it's interesting to see the ways in which people get stuck and how you're going to get them out. It's definitely sent me to places in the county where I'd never been before, and a lot of times it's not on a trail.

### ON THE PHYSICAL DEMANDS OF BEING A SAR VOLUNTEER:

After that first rescue, I thought, 'Holy crap, that was exhausting. But that was awesome!' It really opened my eyes to how physically hard this job can be.

### ON THE HARDEST PART ABOUT BEING A VOLUNTEER:

Having to choose between making money to pay my bills and going to help someone else. I like to joke that if I didn't join SAR, maybe I'd be in a market home instead of an affordable home.

### ON FINDING BALANCE:

My partner has been very supportive. He has a great understanding of how important SAR is to me. If we get a call-out, he'll make me some food really quick or some hot tea for me to take. Now,

the balance is figuring out a job that's flexible so I can go out on rescues, as well as not be exposed to the coronavirus. The person I care for is elderly and can't be exposed to the virus, and my mom is in assisted living and I want to be able to go visit her.

### ON SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT SAR:

People look at it as this exciting thing, but maybe they don't realize the toll it can take on some rescuers. If you join SAR, you're going to see dead bodies, and a lot of times there will be physical trauma involved. Some people deal with it better than others, and I try not to judge. There will be times we have a fatality and we have to package the patient or victim, and if there's enough of us, I'll say, 'If anyone doesn't want to see this, you can step back.' And sometimes that happens. I've tried to offer that to my teammates.

### ON THE BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO JACKSON IN THE LAST 20 YEARS:

You can finally buy a good baguette in town.

### ON THE BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO TCSAR IN THE LAST 20 YEARS:

I never thought we'd have our own building or Foundation. We have a lot of equipment, support, and we have a place to meet. Not that it was bad before and I didn't mind it, but we have a lot more resources now. Which is good because of the simultaneous increase in call-outs. If we didn't have the resources, we wouldn't be able to handle it. The burn-out rate would be really high and the team would not be nearly as efficient.





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## How will the funds be used?

1. Maintain our helicopter contract for eight months, covering critical spring and fall seasons in the Tetons in 2020.
2. Create, train and maintain a universal short-haul team between GTNP and TCSAR for more complete coverage throughout Teton County.
3. Train with other agencies (including JHMR, Togwotee Mountain Lodge and Grand Targhee Ski and Summer Resort) to ensure on-ground resources are trained effectively to operate around and near the helicopter during a rescue. This creates more efficient and safer rescues for patients and rescuers.
4. Increase the complexity of training to match the challenges of rescues. With increased fundraising, TCSAR can now train where rescues actually occur, creating confidence in difficult terrain during stressful situations.
5. Fully train 17 volunteers to be certified short-haulers for our most tactically challenging rescues.
6. Educate our community members on helicopter best practices for before, during and after a heli rescue.

Thanks to the amazing support of our community and a group of generous donors, we surpassed our heli campaign goal on June 1. By raising more than \$177,000, you've helped TCSAR have access to a rescue helicopter for a full eight months in 2020. This will undoubtedly help our team continue to save lives in the Jackson Hole backcountry, and we are so grateful for the support.

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# »» WISH LIST 2020/2021

We are approaching the 20/21 budget cycle with determination, transparency and gratitude to continue to support our Search and Rescue volunteers at the highest possible level.

Requests this year include personal safety gear, team readiness equipment, a focus on mental health and volunteer well being and equipment that is necessary for SAR to safely and responsibly do their work. It also includes life-saving education through our Preventative SAR programs, advanced training critical for volunteer readiness and partnership programs to keep our entire community prepared, practiced and ready. For more information or to talk more about specific projects, please get in touch with Stephanie Thomas at (307) 413-0604.

## INDIVIDUAL INVESTMENTS

### ❑ SWIFTWATER GEAR

**\$2,500**

Accessing the river quickly is essential to saving lives. With the purchase of additional swiftwater equipment our team will be able to train and rescue more efficiently.

### ❑ LIFESEEKER TRAINING

**\$3,000**

One of our newest technologies to assist in finding lost persons, Lifeseeker is a state of the art technology that needs helicopter training time for volunteers to be successful in using it.

### ❑ ELECTRIC MOUNTAIN BIKES

**\$6,000**

Having a diverse set of tools is imperative to reach people in the backcountry as safely and effectively as possible. With the explosion of biking in Jackson Hole, it's no longer an option to not have bikes to reach them. We continue to depend on individuals to supply their own mountain bikes for most rescues but adding electric mountain bikes to our gear allows a small team of first responders to quickly access patients with lifesaving gear such as an AED or splinting materials.



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### ❑ PARTNERSHIP TRAINING

**\$10,000**

Working with partners throughout the valley is important to creating a team that is safe, efficient and ready to rescue. Partners include Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, Togwotee Mountain Lodge, Snow King, Grand Teton National Park and others.

### ❑ SNOWMOBILE

**\$16,000**

As technology changes so do we to keep up with our patients. Snowmobile technology changes often and we must be ready to respond.

### ❑ SHORT-HAUL PROGRAM

**\$25,000**

Short-haul training involves precision and time, something our unique set of volunteers must work on often. Sponsoring this program guarantees flight time for their training.

### ❑ VOLUNTEER READINESS REMODEL

**\$35,000**

In the past eight years, our volunteers have transitioned from responding out of their personal vehicles to basing operations out of the TCSAR hangar. This has led to a need to adequately store their equipment in an accessible and organized manner. This fund will help remodel a portion of our building to allow for more personal safety equipment to be stored for our team to aid them during call-outs.



## [ ] PERSONAL SAFETY GEAR \$50,000

Keeping volunteers safe is our number one priority (physically and mentally) so funding the actual clothes, gear and equipment our volunteers use is key to our success.

## [ ] VOLUNTEER WELLNESS \$50,000

Keeping our volunteers physically ready and mentally sound is our number one priority. This fund helps pay for SAR meals, wellness reimbursements, trauma therapy, volunteer spouse support and more. Mentally and physically fit volunteers means our patient get the best care possible.



## [ ] VOLUNTEER MEAL SPONSOR \$500 or in-kind donations

Do you love supporting volunteers at the ground level? Many businesses have stepped up to donate a meal to our volunteers. Sometimes they even serve it themselves! This is a great chance to say thanks to the volunteers on the most personal of levels.

## [ ] WIYP SPONSORS \$500 per class

What's In Your Pack classes are for adventurers of all ages. We offer classes with seasonally relevant topics including Bear Awareness, First Aid, Hypothermia Aid, avalanche beacon practice, and more. This is a great opportunity to align your business with a popular, intimate learning experience.

## [ ] AVALANCHE AWARENESS EDUCATION SPONSOR \$500

Hosting a class for your employees or customers is a great way to show them you care. Bring in our experts for your next holiday party or team-building exercise to truly leave a lasting impression. Education opportunities can be customized.

## [ ] WYSAW SPONSORSHIP \$1,000 - \$10,000 levels

Our premier winter outreach event, the Wyoming Snow and Avalanche Workshop, scheduled for October 23-24, 2020, reaches over 500 people with preseason education and awareness. This event has grown in recent years and is considered a top Snow and Avalanche event in the West. Sponsorship for your business includes logo placement and free entrance.

## [ ] PODCAST SPONSORS \$2,500 - \$10,000 levels

*Sponsorship deck available.*  
With over 5,000 listeners per episode, The Fine Line podcast is produced monthly and includes stories of rescues, preparedness, and lessons learned from all over the Tetons. Sponsorships can be tailored to your needs and budget, and is one of the most effective ways to reach your customers in an engaging way.

## BUSINESS INVESTMENTS

## [ ] BACKCOUNTRY ZERO BUSINESS SPONSOR \$250 - \$5,000

Take your business employees and customers to the next level with a Backcountry Zero business sponsorship. Many opportunities available to help make a positive influence on backcountry culture and safety in Jackson Hole.

TCSAR Foundation raises money to support SAR volunteers with equipment, personal support and advanced training. If you are interested in funding one of our "Wish List" items for 2020, please contact us.

**DONATE:**  
[tetoncountysar.org/donate](https://tetoncountysar.org/donate)  
[info@tetoncountysar.org](mailto:info@tetoncountysar.org)  
(307) 413-0604

TCSAR Foundation  
PO Box 1063, Jackson, WY 83001

# » TCSAR IN THE TIME OF COVID-19



Throughout the ongoing pandemic, Teton County Search and Rescue has consistently taken measures to protect its team members, patients, Foundation staff, board members, and supporters from contagion. As first responders, the team of 36 volunteers is acutely aware of the risks of being exposed to the virus, and has made it the top priority to be operationally healthy to perform rescues.

The team and Foundation continue to stress the need for backcountry users to exercise caution and be aware of the risks and consequences of their actions—not only to themselves but to the men and women who respond to emergencies.

## What We've Done:

In mid-March, TCSAR instituted the following steps to mitigate exposure to the virus:

- From March 13-June 13, group trainings were canceled for the volunteers. During that period, team members took on individual exercises. As part of a winter-long fitness routine, team members timed themselves climbing the Snow King bootpack, with the best times coming in under 30 minutes.
- During call-outs, team members wore personal protective equipment and masks,

observed social-distancing guidelines, limited the number of volunteers in vehicles, and had PPE for patients if necessary. Tables and other surfaces were frequently disinfected.

- The Foundation helped secure masks for the team to use during rescues as part of their uniform.
- The hangar was closed to outside visitors. Foundation staff and volunteers visited only during essential trips.
- On March 25, Dr. AJ Wheeler, TCSAR's medical advisor, led a video conference to answer questions about the outbreak.
- Board meetings were held via Zoom.
- Volunteer Keegan Pfeil launched the Jackson Hole Community Mask Project to help generate PPE for local healthcare workers. That effort eventually led to the creation of more than 4,000 masks.



- Volunteers helped move 400 pounds of donated food to families in need for Hole Food Rescue.
- The Foundation acted as the organizer and distributor of hand sanitizer, donated by Still West Distillery, to first responders. This provided 25 gallons of hand sanitizer every week for eight weeks to 25 different agencies on the frontline.
- All education and community events were canceled, with a soft opening on June 16.

## What We Are Doing:

The team continues to take adequate precautions to mitigate their exposure to the virus. As the Foundation slowly re-opens the hangar, education workshops, such as What's In Your Pack classes, are being held at much smaller sizes, and when possible, outside. In addition to the WIYP classes, we partnered with the Snake River Fund and Jackson Hole Babe Force for a women's swiftwater class in late June. We are also conducting our first-ever mountain bike safety class on July 9, sponsored by The Hub.

Attendees to all of our classes are being asked to do the following:

- Each participant will have a designated zone, with marked boundaries, that encourages appropriate spacing.
- Hand sanitizer is required upon arrival.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Materials and learning tools will not be shared, each person will have their own gear.
- Group size will be limited to 12 participants.
- Masks are required.

This fall, we look forward to giving our full support to a re-imagined Old Bill's Fun Run on September 12.

We are also moving forward with the Wyoming Snow and Avalanche Workshop, scheduled for October 23-24. Whether this event will be in person has yet to be determined. But whatever the format, we are committed to hosting one of the best SAWs in the Northern Rockies, with presentations and speakers on the leading edge of snow and behavioral science to kick off the 2020/21 winter.

For all event information, please visit [BackcountryZero.com/events](http://BackcountryZero.com/events). For updates, check out the Latest News tab at [TetonCountySAR.org](http://TetonCountySAR.org).

# » BACKCOUNTRY BASELINE

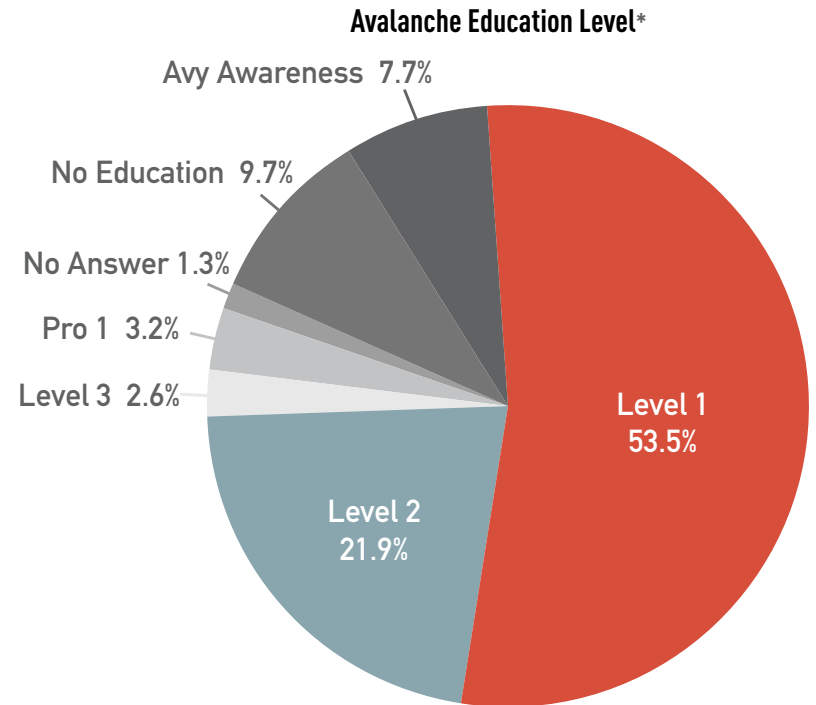
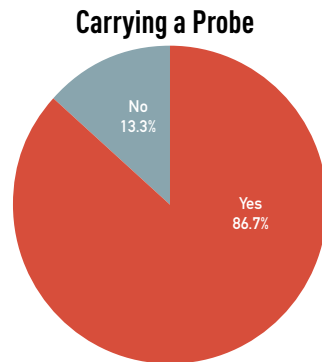
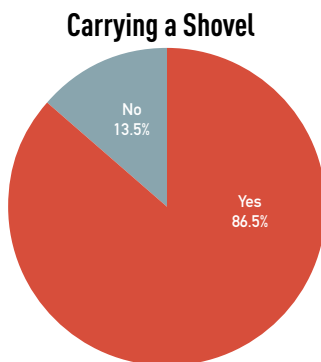
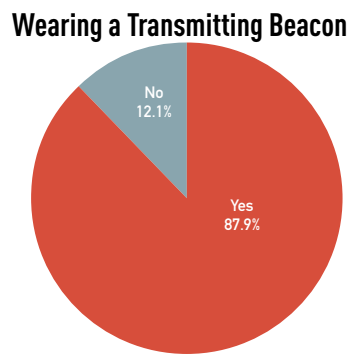
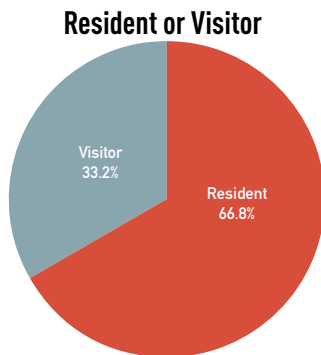
## Gate surveys at JHMR reveal skiing and snowboarding habits

For the last five years, TCSAR Foundation have posted community volunteers at the various backcountry gates at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. As a project of Backcountry Zero, these volunteers ask basic questions about the preparedness of those leaving the gates; participation among those questioned is entirely voluntary. To date, the effort has resulted in the collection of hundreds of survey responses, including 810 people from 339 parties during the coronavirus-shortened 2019/20 winter season.

The program remains one of the very few organized efforts in the U.S. to gather backcountry-skiing data at a ski area. Historically, capturing habits, numbers, and trends on backcountry travel has been based primarily on anecdotal evidence. This makes the program at JHMR that much more valuable as it helps establish a baseline for backcountry use and builds awareness about avalanche safety, and should be considered a model for the rest of the country. The graphs below show just some of the data collected last winter.

If you are exiting the resort boundary (or backcountry skiing anywhere else, for that matter), always make sure you have a partner, the proper gear, and a plan. As they say on the Aerial Tram, "If you don't know, don't go."

Thanks to Jackson Hole Mountain Resort for their continued embrace of this program, and for support from Stio, Flylow, and Kate's Real Food.



\*Responses are from those who self-identified as experts.

# SHRIVER SOCIETY

The Shriver Society is a group of dedicated supporters of Teton County Search and Rescue who make a long term, significant contribution to the volunteer team.

**RAY SHRIVER** served on the Teton County Search and Rescue team from its inception in 1993 until his death in 2012. Ray died on February 15, 2012, in a helicopter crash while on a Search and Rescue mission. The Shriver Society was created in his honor. Your three-year gift augments training, equipment and other ancillary support, directly impacting our mission.

For more information please visit [tetoncountysar.org/shriversociety](http://tetoncountysar.org/shriversociety) or call us at (307) 413-0604.



## SHRIVER SOCIETY MEMBERS

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***The Fine Line* is a monthly podcast series that tells real stories of adventure, risk and rescue in the backcountry of Jackson Hole, Wyoming.**

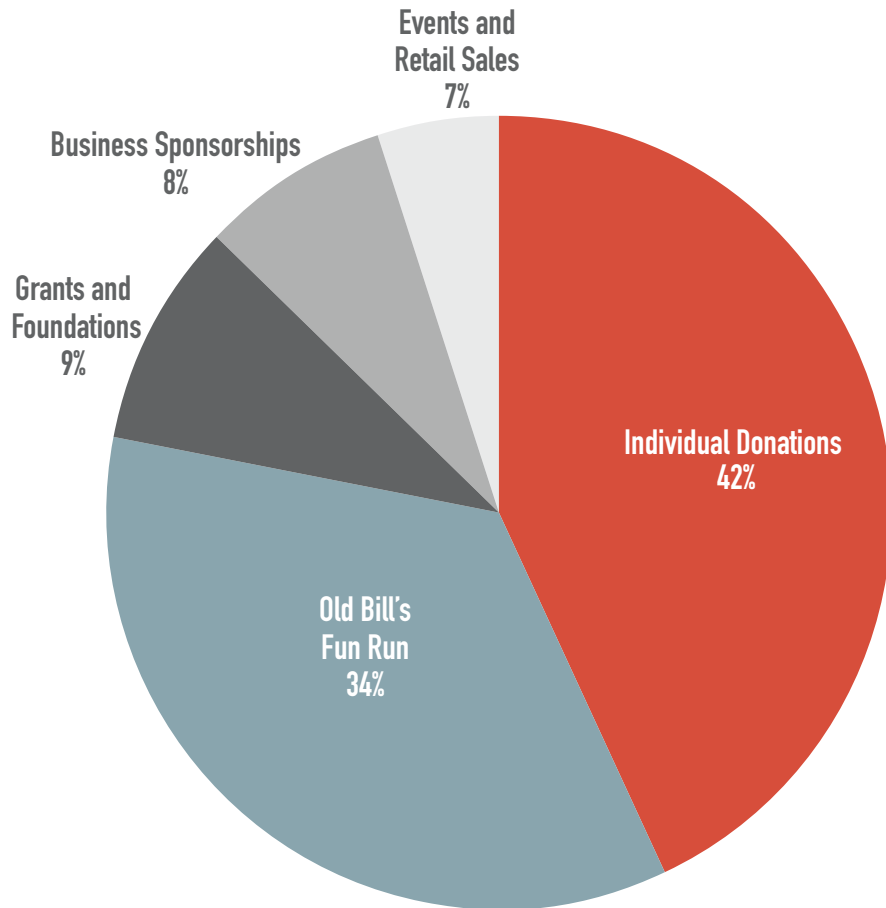


"Thank you for the opportunity to tell our story. So many of the little things have come and gone from my memory over the years. Everyone always said I needed to write it down but hopefully this podcast will be a great way to capture it in time. It was pretty emotional for me to go back and re-live a lot of that, so I'm glad you gave me this opportunity!"

–Matt Walker, climber, from Episode 23,  
"Struck by Lightning on the Grand Teton!"

Listen to *The Fine Line* on  and every Thursday at 2 p.m. on 

# HOW TCSAR FOUNDATION IS FUNDED



## TCSAR FOUNDATION MISSION

TCSAR Foundation supports Teton County Search & Rescue through direct volunteer support, community education and advocacy.

Our volunteers respond to calls  
**365/24/7.**

THANK YOU TO THESE LOCAL EMPLOYERS FOR THEIR FLEXIBILITY AND SUPPORT OF OUR VOLUNTEERS!

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- Central Wyoming College
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- Chris Leigh, Attorney at Law
- Cultivar Emergency Medicine of Jackson Hole
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- Jackson Hole Mountain Resort
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- St. Johns Medical Center
- Teton Conservation District
- Teton County Parks and Recreation
- Teton County Search and Rescue Foundation
- Teton County Sheriff's Office
- Teton Timber Frames
- Teton Valley Ranch Camp
- Wind River Capital Management



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