

To Whom It May Concern,

Gabi Benel has been a member of the Snowmass Ski Patrol since 2016. He takes an active role participating in and leading snow safety activities, including avalanche mitigation routes, snow stability evaluation, daily weather discussions and avalanche hazard evaluation.

The Snowmass Ski Area is located in the Elk Mountains on the western slope of Colorado. This location creates a continental snow climate with relatively shallow snowpack heights and generally cold winter temperatures. Average seasonal snowfall is approximately 300 inches. The ski area generally faces north, though the aspect of individual slopes can vary significantly due to terrain configuration. The dominant wind direction is west-southwest. The ski area ranges from 8,100' to over 12,500' in elevation, with tree line at approximately 11,500'. Ground cover consists of conifer and aspen forests, grassy meadows, alpine tundra, talus, boulders, and cliffs.

There are over 160 named avalanche control routes in the Snowmass Ski area. Gabi has participated in avalanche mitigation on all of these routes, whether using explosives, ski cutting or protective skiing measures. He makes recommendations on opening and closing terrain and deciding if additional measures are needed to reduce the avalanche risk to the public. He also classifies natural and artificially triggered avalanches according to SWAG standards.

Explosives mitigation techniques Gabi uses at Snowmass include both high and low explosives, hand thrown charges, aerial tramway explosives delivery systems, and air blasts using various other techniques.

Gabi is also a member of the bootpacking team on Snowmass which covers hundreds of acres of avalanche terrain on the ski area every year in the early season.

Avalanche rescue at the Snowmass Ski Area is conducted under the Incident Command System (ICS) and is performed by patrol personnel. Gabi has been actively training on a daily basis for avalanche rescue, including multiple burial scenarios with different search techniques (i.e. beacon, RECCO, avalanche rescue dog teams, and probe lines). Scenarios and training have included multi team rescue scenarios.

Gabi takes a lead role in training other ski patrollers in both snow science and avalanche rescue. I strongly recommend him for the AAA Pro 2 course.

Sincerely,



MARK FALENDER

SNOW SAFETY DIRECTOR | SNOWMASS SKI PATROL
ASPEN SKIING COMPANY
AMERICAN AVALANCHE ASSOCIATION PROFESSIONAL MEMBER