Ski Patrol Urges Skiers and Snowshoers to be Prepared

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Recent events involving three lost climbers mobilized a team of Mt. Hood Ski Patrol (MHSP) volunteers led by patroller-in-charge Jeff Heppler to search the White River Canyon and the surrounding areas. The skills of a small handful of backcountry patrollers frequently skiing the many trails surrounding the resort areas are often tapped to rescue injured skiers in these hard-to-reach areas. MHSP Nordic Director Michael Curtis is linked by phone at all times to the Clackamas and Hood River counties dispatch centers should recreationists on Mt. Hood be in peril. "It's very humbling to work as part of a team,â€• says Heppler. "It takes the combined effort of all of us to contribute to a successful search." "We work to closely align ourselves with incident command when events reach this level," advises Curtis. "We want to ensure all clues are sent to a central information site looking at a bigger picture. They will put all the pieces together." MHSP recommends backcountry skiers and snowshoers remember: â€¢ Let others know where you are going. Make sure to let them know what trail or route you're taking; if you change your mind, let others know. â€¢ Communication devices are essential. Mountain locaters, radios, avalanche transceivers and cell phones make it easier to reach for help and be found. â€¢ Wear and carry the right gear. Forget wearing cotton, it holds the cold. Layer up in wool and technical fabrics made to keep active participants dry, thus warm. * Be prepared to stay out overnight even if only on a day trip. Carry extra food and water, equipment to build a shelter, and sleeping bag or emergency blanket. For more information about Mt. Hood Ski Patrol or to learn about joining the patrol go to http://www.mthoodskipatrol.org/.