

**Pajarito Mountain Ski Patrol & K-9 SAR and  
New Mexico Emergency Service Council**

**Saturday, January 22, 2005**

**6:30 PM, Ski Lodge  
(raffle drawing at 6:15 PM)**

**Present**

***Case Studies of Four Avalanche Missions in the  
Sawatch Range of Central Colorado***

***Sue Purvis***

***Crested Butte Search Dog Team***

***American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education (AIARE)***

**[www.cboutdoors.com](http://www.cboutdoors.com)**

Avalanches in the Rocky Mountain region occur at high altitudes and in extreme terrain and conditions. Access is often unknown and continued avalanche danger is always a possibility. The Rocky Mountain backcountry offers many challenges to rescue teams. Through first hand experiences, avalanche dog handler Sue Purvis from Crested Butte, Colorado will describe mission by mission account of what happened in four separate avalanche missions over a thirteen month period in the Sawatch Range in Central Colorado.

This talk will describe the following about each case study:

- What were the human factors that caused the avalanche fatality
- Victims without avalanche beacons
- Rescue attempts by the accident party prior to calling in SAR Avalanche dogs
- Avalanche dog deployment –including preparedness, access to scene, search strategy, and search results
- Lessons learned



**Sue Purvis** started her SAR and wilderness medicine career ten years ago when she and her family moved to Crested Butte, Colorado. Sue and her black lab Tasha are certified in wilderness, water and avalanche work. Together they deploy to wide variety of search missions in the State of Colorado. They received acknowledgement in the US Congress for their efforts in locating two avalanche victims in 3 days in the high country of Colorado last winter. Sue is a Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician, assists with orthopedic trauma and emergency medicine at an Urgent Care Clinic, is an active member of Crested Butte SAR team, an AIARE avalanche instructor and has served as an ambulance EMT, professional ski patroller and a backcountry ski guide. Sue currently owns and operates Crested Butte Outdoors. Her company is affiliated with Wilderness Medical Associates and teaches courses to students from all over the world.

Lecture is open to the public. \$5.00 donation includes raffle ticket for Pajarito Ski Lift Tickets, \$200 off a CBOutdoors Wilderness First Responder class and an assortment of backcountry gear. Additional raffle tickets can be purchased for \$2.00 or 3 for \$5.00. Contact Ryan Hess, [hess@lanl.gov](mailto:hess@lanl.gov), 412 -0106, or Scott Hsu, [scotthsu@lanl.gov](mailto:scotthsu@lanl.gov) 661-9097. Pajarito Mountain Ski Patrol & K-9 SAR and NMESC are non-profit organizations.