



# 22/23

ANNUAL REPORT



**CAIC**



*friends of*  
**CAIC**



## MISSION



The mission of the CAIC is to provide avalanche information, education, and promote research for the protection of life, property, and the enhancement of the state's economy.



The mission of the Friends of CAIC is to support avalanche forecasting and education throughout Colorado.

# LETTER FROM FRIENDS OF CAIC

***Dear Friends,***

I present to you the annual report for the Friends of the Colorado Avalanche Information Center (FoCAIC) for the 2022-2023 season. In reflecting on the past year, I am honored to write my 16th annual letter on behalf of our organization, celebrating the incredible progress we have made in advancing avalanche safety across Colorado.

Over the past year, we have continued our steadfast commitment to supporting the vital work of the Colorado Avalanche Information Center (CAIC). Last season, we contributed \$300,900 directly to the CAIC's forecasting operations and over \$61,000 to technology development. These investments enhanced avalanche forecasts for all users and ensured that CAIC remained at the forefront of innovation in avalanche safety. This commitment reflects our ongoing efforts to provide the center with the tools and resources needed to provide statewide avalanche forecasts and meet user demand for cutting-edge technology.

One of the highlights of the past year has been the expansion of our Trailhead Outreach Program. Two dedicated staff members executed 175 trailhead visits, engaging with 8,013 users at busy trailheads and backcountry access points throughout the state. This expansion represents a significant step forward in our work to educate and raise awareness about avalanche safety, ultimately creating a safer environment for all backcountry enthusiasts.

These three investments made in the past year have collectively raised our overall investment in avalanche safety to just over \$3.1 million over the course of the last 15 years.

As we navigate the evolving landscape of winter sports, it is worth noting that a recent SnowSports Industries America survey revealed a tripling of participation in alpine touring, reaching an estimated 2.2 million users in the last three years.

This surge in popularity, growing 90% year-over-year in 2021 alone, underscores the critical importance of our work. In response to this backcountry boom, Friends of CAIC remains steadfast in our commitment to scaling our programming to meet the growing needs of our community here in Colorado.

Looking ahead, we will continue focusing on our three main goals. Firstly, we will continue to bolster our direct support to CAIC's forecasting operations, maximizing staffing capabilities, expanding the observer program, and enhancing ways for users to engage with avalanche forecast products. Secondly, we will further expand and enhance our educational programming, encompassing the Trailhead Outreach Program, avalanche awareness initiatives, and signage programs. Lastly, we are dedicated to building a robust reserve fund, ensuring the long-term sustainability of our mission and operations, especially during challenging financial times.

In closing, I extend my deepest thanks to all who have supported our work over the years. Your commitment to avalanche safety has been instrumental in our accomplishments, and we are excited to expand our impact in the years ahead. Together, we can continue to make our backcountry adventures safer for everyone.

**Sincerely,**



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Carlson'.

**Aaron Carlson**  
**Executive Director**  
**Friends of CAIC**

## LETTER FROM CAIC

The 2022-2023 winter was an amazing time to be in Colorado. The west side of the state received well above normal snowfall, and some mountain stations recorded all-time record snow depths. It was a bit of a slow start, but once the winter got rolling, the snow came fast and furious through the core months to create great spring conditions. Although the deepest snow was west of the Arkansas River Valley, the avalanche accidents were not confined to this area. Eleven people lost their lives in avalanches in Colorado last year—four more than the 10-year average. The heavy snow and heavy backcountry use made for an especially busy season at the Colorado Avalanche Information Center.

The above-average snowfall last winter produced above-average avalanche activity. There were 5,663 avalanches reported to the CAIC during the season. We documented 96 incidents last season—second only to 2018-2019 when 122 people were caught in avalanches—and 18 avalanches had multiple people caught. The 11 avalanche deaths included one roof avalanche fatality, two fatalities where people accessed the backcountry from a ski area, and four fatalities involving victims not wearing transceivers. This was the second year in a row where the number of accidents with multiple people involved in a single avalanche increased and the number of victims not wearing avalanche transceivers increased.

The season was also noteworthy because we made three significant changes to our program. We moved from 10 set forecast zones to dynamic forecast zones with forecasts issued for areas with similar conditions. We transitioned from daily morning forecasts to afternoon forecasts that cover the following two days to help with planning. These changes were launched at the beginning of the season along with a new website that offers a more stable and mobile-friendly website.

We continued to receive observations from all of you, with over 3,300 observations submitted last season. I want to thank everyone who took the time to document what they saw in the backcountry. These reports are extremely important for the backcountry avalanche forecasting program. They help us evaluate today's avalanche danger and make better predictions about what we'll see tomorrow.

Thank you for being a part of the CAIC community. We wouldn't have the program we have without all of you and the support of the Friends of CAIC!



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ethan Greene". The signature is fluid and cursive.

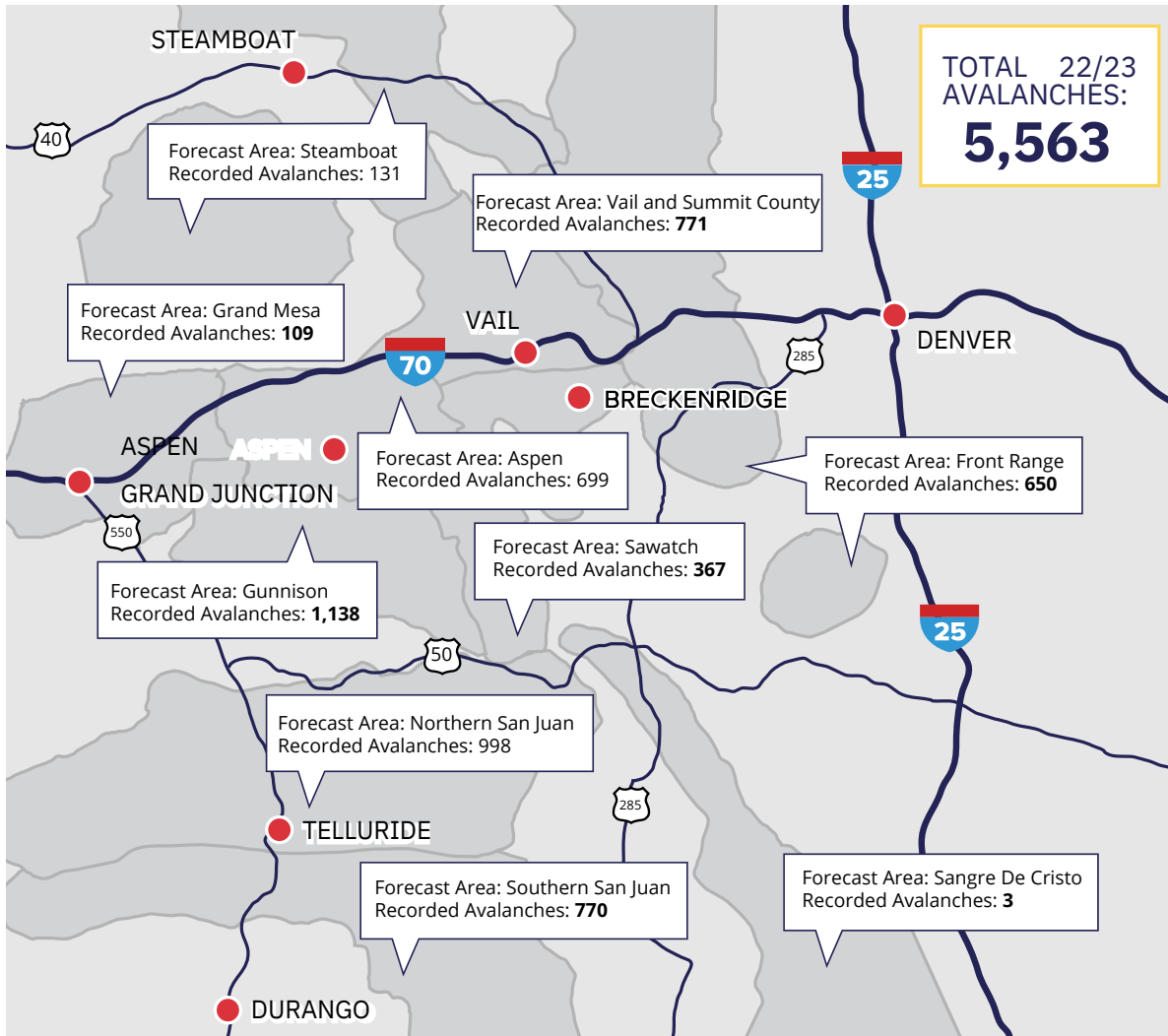
**Ethan Greene**  
**Director**  
**Colorado Avalanche**  
**Information Center**

# AVALANCHES & ACCIDENTS *By The Numbers*

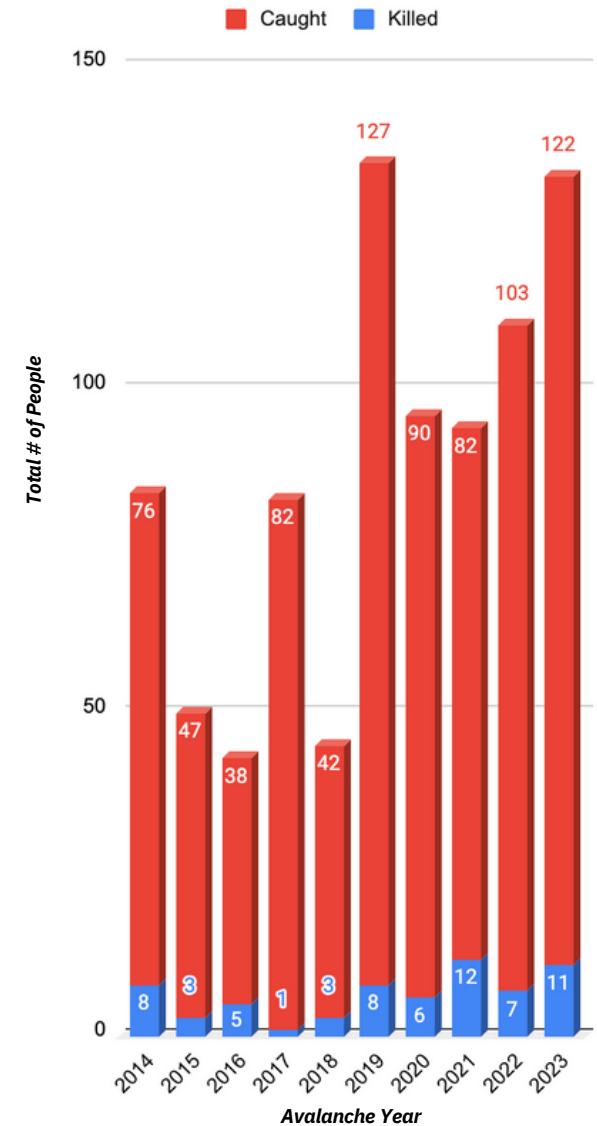
The CAIC recorded **5,663** avalanches between October 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023, **861** were human-triggered. The CAIC published **2,360** backcountry avalanche forecasts throughout the season and **11** accident reports – each one requiring staff time to research, discuss, write, and publish.

There were **122** people reported caught in avalanches. Of those caught, **11** were killed.

## AVALANCHES BY FORECAST AREA



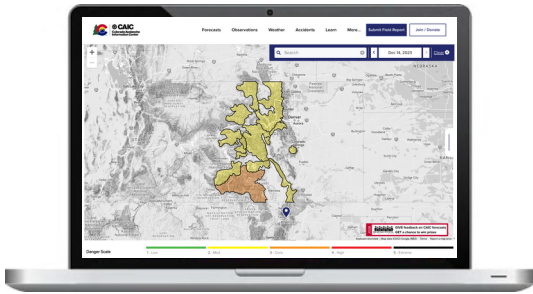
\*27 recorded avalanches outside of forecast area zone polygons



# GROWING REACH *Media Overview*

## NEW CAIC WEBSITE

 **3.1 Million**  **22%**  
Pageviews



## PRESS INTERACTIONS

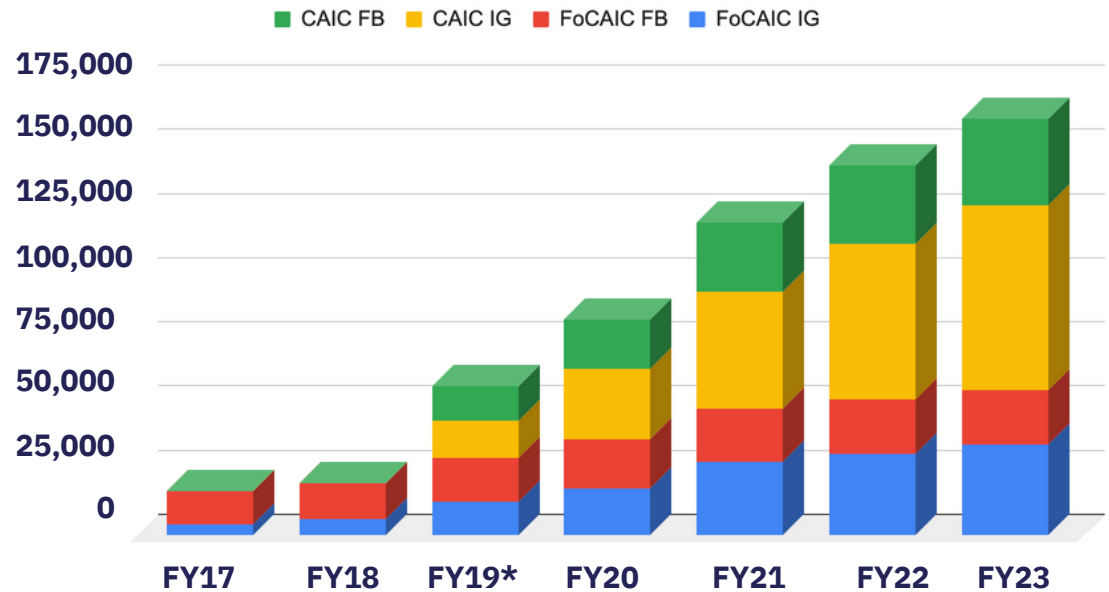
 **146**  
Media Contacts

*These interactions with the press generate local and national coverage for the CAIC and avalanche safety*



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Cumulative account followers on Facebook (FB) and Instagram (IG)



*\*CAIC separate accounts created in 2019*

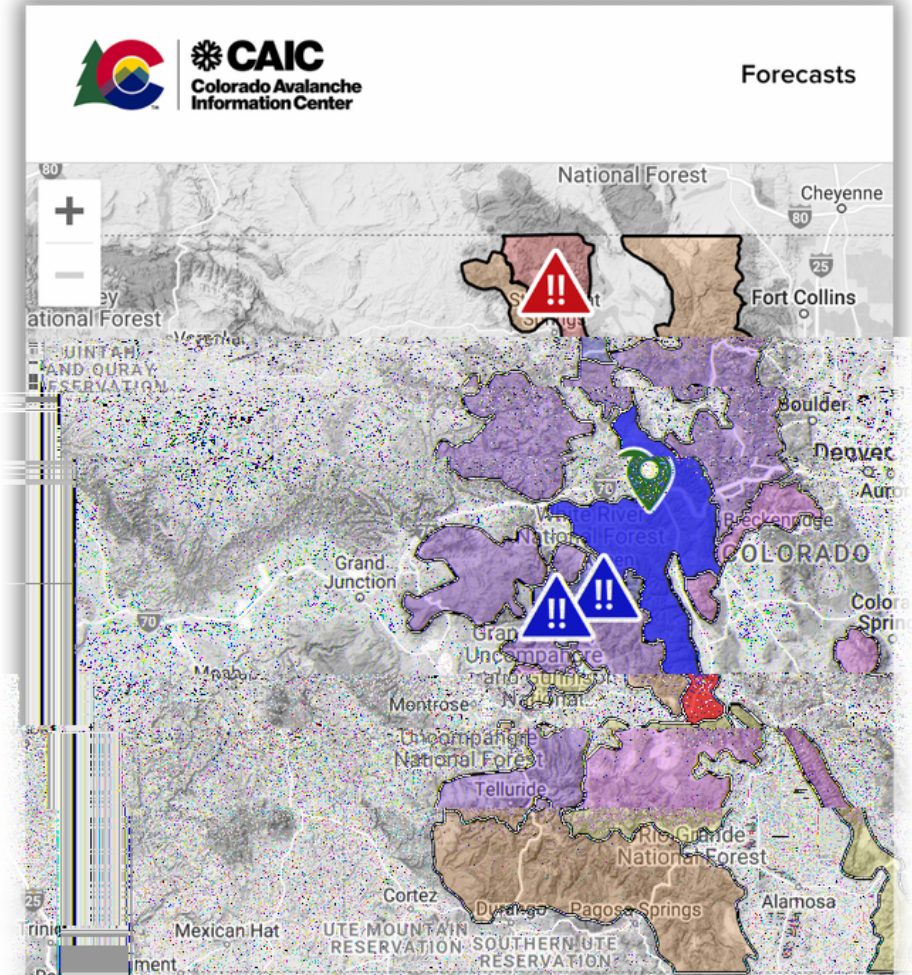
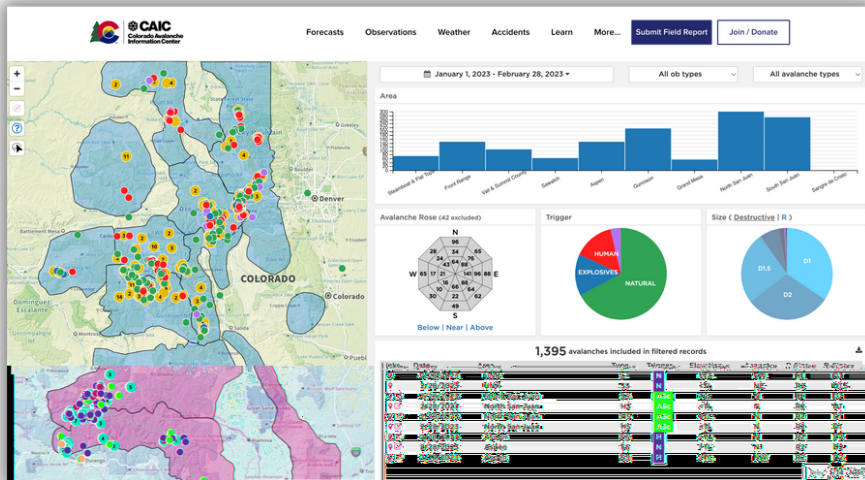
**DID YOU KNOW?**

*The CAIC hosts weekly avalanche televised forecasts on Thursdays, available on MTN TV and CAIC YouTube/FaceBook*

# MAJOR CHANGES TO THE CAIC *Forecast & Web Updates*

2022-2023 brought major changes to the CAIC. These exciting updates to the website, forecast zones, and scheduling were the result of several years of work behind the scenes funded in part by Friends of CAIC.

- Dynamic forecast zones - avalanche forecasts are now be issued for areas with similar conditions
- Forecasts in the afternoon - avalanche forecasts issued in the afternoon for the following two days helps users plan their next trip
- A new website - a more stable and mobile-friendly website to help users get the right forecast, upload observations, and explore data and reports across the state



## OUT AND ABOUT *Trailhead Outreach Program*



CAIC staff made 97 appearances and talked to an additional 2,896 people in 22/23!

During the 2022-2023 season, Friends of CAIC utilized generous grant funding from the National Forest Foundation's Ski Conservation Fund to continue and expand upon the successful Trailhead Outreach Program. Adding a second employee specific to the Dillon Ranger District of the White River National Forest allowed increased presence at some of the most popular access points in the state, while freeing up the other employee to add additional visits and areas of focus across the state of Colorado.



Combined, the Friends of CAIC Trailhead Outreach Program Coordinators visited **175** trailheads and documented **8,013** conversations with users of all ages, experiences, and recreation type.



## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE *Third year accomplishments*

The Friends of CAIC launched our membership program in the fall of 2020. Since then, members have contributed over \$547,995 towards avalanche forecasting and education in Colorado.

2022-2023 season membership totaled 1,898 members with 61% of those renewing on an annual basis.

Our course partners Colorado Mountain School, Colorado Adventure Guides, Kent Mountain Adventure Center, Silverton Avalanche School, and Mountain Trip contributed donations to offer 1,566 complimentary 1 year memberships to their avalanche safety course participants over the year.

Friends of CAIC Members received the second print edition of the Member Photo Annual in addition to stickers, partner discounts, and level-specific gifts from Osprey and Arcade.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support Friends of CAIC's mission by joining!



*Members gather for a State of the Snowpack meeting in Steamboat Springs*



## PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: *DYNAFIT/POMOCA*

Oberalp North America, parent company of Dynafit and Pomoca Skins, recently extended their agreement as the official uniform supplier of Friends of CAIC and the CAIC for another 3 seasons.



CAIC staff depend on Dynafit apparel as they move through the backcountry to collect the data behind the forecasts, and Friends of CAIC staff spend hundreds of hours in the uniforms per year at trailheads across the state. Thank you to Dynafit and Pomoca for their continued support of avalanche safety and education in Colorado.





# 2022/2023 STAFF & BOARD

## CAIC STAFF

**Ethan Greene**  
Director

**Brian Lazar**  
Deputy Director/  
Lead Forecaster

**Mike Cooperstein**  
Lead Forecaster

**Rebecca Hodgetts**  
Lead Forecaster

**Spencer Logan**  
Lead Avalanche Scientist

**Amy Pertuz**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**Andrew McWilliams**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**Austin Divesta**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**Ben Pritchett**  
Weather and Avalanche  
Forecaster

**Brandon Levy**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**Chris Bilbrey**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**Colin Mitchell**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**Drew Gibson**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**Dylan Craaybeek**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**Ian Fowler**  
Weather and Avalanche  
Forecaster

**Jacob Barney**  
Technical Product  
Manager

**Jason Konigsberg**  
Weather and Avalanche  
Forecaster

**Jeremy Yanko**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**John Snook**  
Numerical Prediction  
Specialist

**Julie Pomerantz**  
Program Assistant

**Matt Huber**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**Ron Simenhois**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**Ryan Zarter**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**Troy Nordquist**  
Avalanche Forecaster

**Will Barrett**  
Avalanche Forecaster

## FRIENDS OF CAIC STAFF

**Aaron Carlson**  
Executive Director

**Brian Rodine**  
Marketing and Events Director,  
Trailhead Program Manager

**Kia Soden**  
Membership and  
Development Coordinator

**Katie Thibideau**  
Development  
Manager

**Sam Gifford**  
Trailhead Outreach  
Program Coordinator

**Justina Liss**  
Trailhead Outreach  
Program Coordinator,  
Dillon Ranger District

## FRIENDS OF CAIC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Markian Feduschak**  
Board Chair

**Brent Brown**  
Board Vice Chair

**Bill Mueller**  
Board Treasurer

**Rusty Perry**  
Board Member

**Jonathan Lantz**  
Board Member

**David Clark**  
Board Member

**Samantha Killgore**  
Board Member

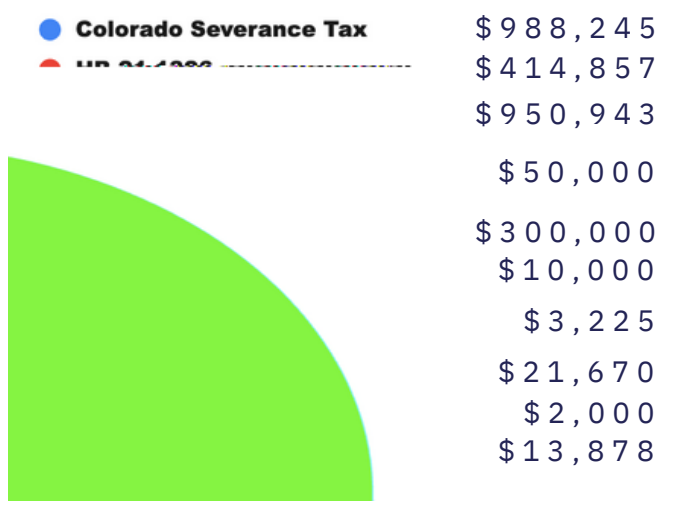
**Ethan Greene**  
Non-Voting CAIC Liaison

**Aaron Carlson**  
Ex-Officio

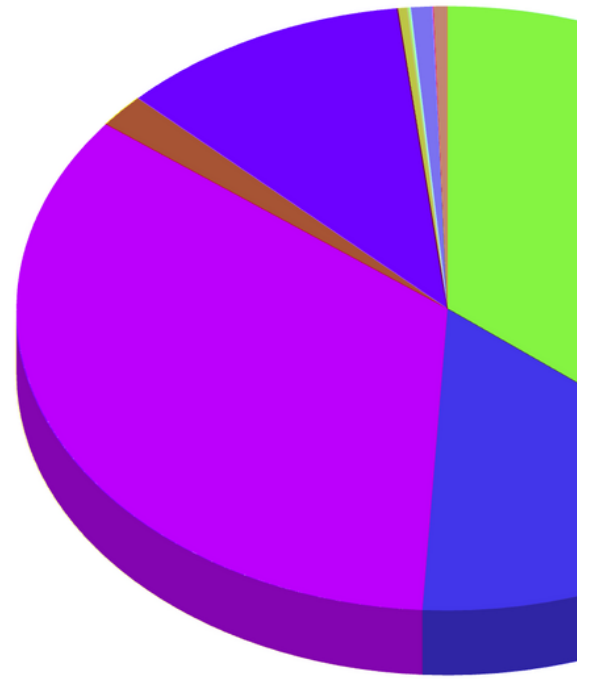


# FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN CAIC

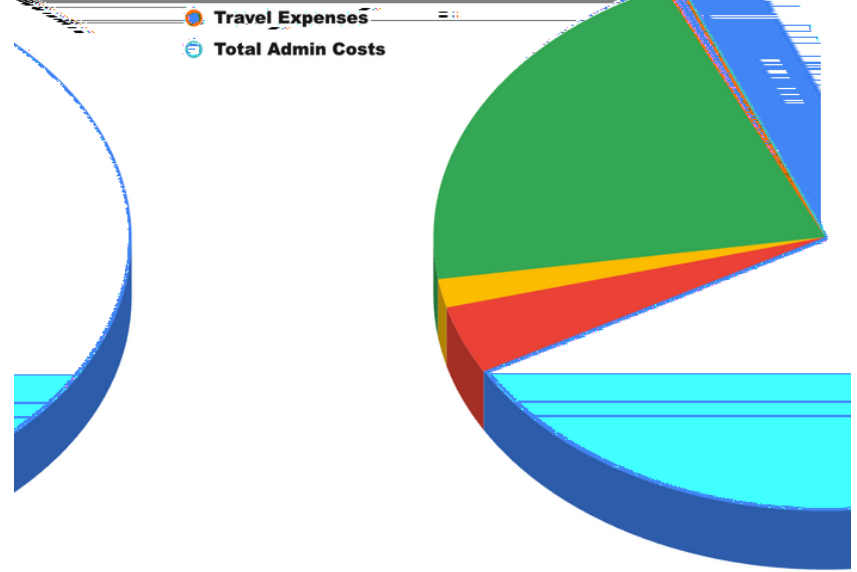
22/23 CAIC REVENUE \$2,754,819



- Colorado Department of Transportation
- United States Forest Service
- Friends of CAIC
- Colorado Ski Country USA
- Donations from Private Sources
- Interest Income
- Transfers
- Education presentations



Cost of Goods and Services



22/23 CAIC EXPENDITURES \$2,919,108

|                    |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Personnel Services | \$1,951,279 |
| Rentals            | \$117,123   |
| Materials          | \$49,119    |
| Co Se              | \$604,579   |
|                    | \$19,182    |
|                    | \$177,826   |

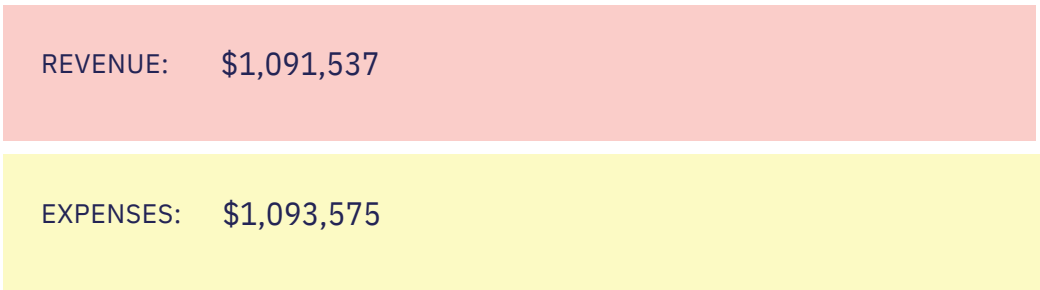


# FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN *Friends of CAIC*

## EXPENSE BREAKDOWN BY CLASS



## REVENUE & EXPENSES



## PROGRAM EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

The Friends of CAIC invested \$645,567 into avalanche forecasting and education in Colorado during the 2022/2023 season.





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Boulder, CO 80305

**Friends of CAIC**  
PO Box 1117  
Evergreen, CO 80437



**CAIC**

