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AST and Chugach National Forest Avalanche Center Warn Public of Increased Avalanche Danger

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – According to the Chugach National Forest Avalanche Center, the avalanche danger in the mountains surrounding Girdwood all the way down to the Lost Lake recreation area remains incredibly high.

“Usually we see most avalanches occur on 38 percent slopes or greater,” said Avalanche Forecaster Carl Skustad. “However, with the current instability, we are seeing avalanches triggered on slopes as low as 28 percent.”

Since March 15, Chugach National Forest received 8 to 11 feet of snow. All this snow is resting on multiple weak layers of snowpack that formed in mid-January. Now, reports of numerous natural and human-triggered avalanches from Girdwood to Lost Lake have been reported to the Alaska State Troopers and the Avalanche Center.

AST and the CNF Avalanche Center encourage recreationists to prepare themselves with the appropriate gear and avalanche forecast information prior to going out in the back country. Always travel in groups and have personal locator beacons, shovels and probes for everyone traveling in your group. Remember, the most likely time for natural avalanche activity is during periods of wind, snow, rapid warming, or direct sunlight. If any of these ingredients are present the avalanche risk for avalanches to occur goes up.

Also, remember to respect motorized closure areas on Public Lands. The Center and Divide Creek area is closed to motorized use. Skookum Drainage near the Placer River is closed as of April 1. For a complete list of open and closed areas in the Chugach National Forest refer to <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/> or the avalanche advisory page at cnfaic.org