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LaChapelle took over Atwater's duties, along with continuing his scientific research efforts.



Ron Perla at Alta, circa mid 1960's

By the mid 1960s, the winter snow safety activities at Alta had expanded. Ron Perla was hired to join the AASC staff. During his tenure at Alta, he completed his Ph.D. at the University of Utah. In the early 1970s, Perla joined the Forest Service research group in Fort Collins, Colorado.

During the 1970s, because of funding limitations by the Federal Government, the avalanche study facilities at Alta were greatly diminished, with most of the research programs transferred to a similar facility, called the Alpine

Snow and Avalanche Project, located in Colorado.

LaChapelle left Alta in the early 1970s and began an academic career at the University of Washington. LaChapelle, in leaving Alta, summarized his feelings on the demise of the AASC program by saying, "Perhaps some day the AASC, like the fabled phoenix, will rise from the ashes of neglect under a new banner and resume work in the Wasatch Mountains of Utah, surely one of the finest places in the world for avalanche research." LaChapelle passed away at the age of 80 on February 1, 2007, following a ski outing at Monarch Mountain in Silverton, Colorado.

Another Alta snow safety expert who provided contributions during the 1960s through late 1980s was Bengt "Binx" Sandahl. Binx first came to Alta in 1953 and worked as a bar tender in the Alta Lodge. The following year, he left Alta and moved to Alaska where he worked for the Alaska Highway Department and also worked as the snow safety director at the Alyeska ski area. In 1964, he moved back to Utah and following a brief stint as a ski instructor in the Alf Engen Ski School, began work full time with the Wasatch National Forest as a Snow Ranger at Alta.



Binx Sandahl, circa mid 1970's

One of Sandahl's primary early beliefs in the 1960s was that the ski patrol at Alta could, and should, also play a primary role in snow safety activities. He was able to persuade then Alta Ski Lifts General Manager, Chic Morton, to provide a team of ski patrolmen to work with the Alta Snow Rangers on avalanche control work. By working as a collective team, they were able to perform avalanche control efforts during storms as well as during the early hours following a heavy snow fall. This resulted in the area being able to be opened earlier to the public—this was and is greatly applauded by Alta's "Powder Hounds."

Sandahl retired as Alta's Snow Ranger in 1990. One of his lasting contributions was erecting a weather station on top of Cardiff Peak, elevation 10,500 feet above sea level. Using an antenna on the building, Binx formed the shape of a pine tree, with electric lights. During the Christmas holiday, the lights are turned on, adding to the festive spirit. Binx was particularly proud of the artificial tree and would comment that it was "the highest Christmas tree in the U.S." Throughout his years at Alta, Binx brought a great amount of personality, team building, and community support to both the highway and ski-area avalanche programs.

Alta Ski Area's first Snow Safety Director was a family friend of John and Jack Herbert's, a young ski patroller from Ogden, Utah, named Dave Hamre. Dave, with the help of the Snow Rangers, laid out the original avalanche-control routes that are still used today. He left Alta in the late 1970s and moved to Alaska where he still remains involved with snow safety work for

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Alyeska Ski Area, the Alaska Railroad, and Chugach Mountain Guides.



Snow Safety Director Onno Wieringa, circa 1979

Beginning in 1972, Alta Ski Area's current President and General Manager, Onno Wieringa, began work on Alta's ski patrol. Prior to coming to Alta, Wieringa served several years on the ski patrol at Bridger Bowl near Bozeman, Montana. Because of Wieringa's knowledge and interest in snow safety, he was named Alta Snow Safety Director when Dave Hamre left in 1978, a position he retained until taking the general manager reins from Chic Morton in 1988. Snow safety was then taken over by Titus Case, who to this day is assisted by his cohort, Dan "Howie" Howlett. They have continued to refine and evolve the Alta forecasting and control activities into a highly effective state-of-the-art program.



Titus Case at Alta, circa 2008

During the early years when Wieringa was Alta Snow Safety Director, he also worked on the ski patrol and lived in the Alta Forest Service Guard Station with Forest Service Snow Ranger Binx

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