



Figure 7. Accident 81-9, East Fork of Mineral Creek Canyon, Utah, February 22, 1981.

Accident Summary

At 0800 on February 21, about 11 miles from the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon, Wasatch Powderbird Guides bombed the north-facing slopes in the East Fork of Mineral Creek. There were no avalanche releases. The guides subsequently skied a portion of the bowl without incident. The same day, though, avalanche control at nearby Snowbird Resort produced a few avalanches that pulled out to the ground.

On the 22nd, helicopter ski guide Peter Schory took a party of seven skiers to the slope that had been controlled the day before. He told the group he would ski to the left through some large trees to ski-check the slope, and that they wouldn't be able to see him through the trees. He pointed out where he wanted them all to meet, and to ski down one-at-a-

time in one minute intervals to the designated spot. While Schory checked the adjacent area, two members of the group skied the slope per his instructions.

While ski-cutting to their left, Schory released a small, soft-slab avalanche, with a 2-foot fracture, at 1001. He yelled through the trees that he had just triggered a slide. Pam Starr, 45, had just started her run but stopped when she heard Schory yell. He told her to tell the remaining clients at the top of the slope to follow the traverse and tracks of the previous day. Two of them followed the old tracks and joined the first two skiers at the bottom. Lowell Whitney, 34, began the traverse and fell. Peter Logatto, 24, skied over to help him and as he did, a second avalanche released. This one ran between the old tracks on the skiers right, and adjacent to the slide released