

slope. His partner rode to help him, observed the slide release, and saw his friend try to swim with the snow. The survivor turned his sled around and gave it full throttle, narrowly outrunning the slide. They had no beacons, shovels, or probes. The survivor searched for his partner using a tree limb for about 15 minutes before leaving the scene and contacting the Bear Lake County Sheriff's Office.

No rescue equipment

**RESCUE SUMMARY**

Confusion over the exact location of the accident site and difficulty getting rescuers there limited rescue efforts. The debris was randomly probed by about 30 people until the search was called off for the day, by which time they had found only the victim's helmet and jacket.

On Sunday morning, the rescue team returned to the site, this time with five rescue dogs. In less than an hour, searchers found the victim's body beneath six feet of snow near the toe of the debris. The report did not mention whether a probe or dog located the victim. The snowmobile was not located.

**AVALANCHE DATA**

The avalanche was classified as HS-AMu-R4-D3-O. It ran on a rain crust formed on January 19. The crown depth was two to four feet and was approximately 300 feet wide. The slide released on a 37-degree east-facing slope at 9,200 feet and ran to 8,600 feet. The avalanche path narrowed quickly into a gully and dog-legged to the left in the runout.

Persistent Slab avalanche

**COMMENTS**

All evidence points to two snowmobilers who gave no thought to avalanche danger. They were highmarking during a time of elevated avalanche danger. They were both on the slope together. They had no rescue gear.

After numerous accidents involving multiple riders, a cardinal rule of highmarking has become apparent: If a person gets stuck, do not send a second sledder to help. Doing so adds weight to the slope, which increases the chances of triggering an avalanche—one that involves two avalanche victims rather than one.

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**WRIGHT PEAK, SOUTH OF LAKE PLACID, NEW YORK**

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February 19, 2000

Six backcountry skiers caught; five injured, one buried and killed

**WEATHER AND SNOWPACK CONDITIONS**

Few details are available on conditions before and at the time of the accident, other than that a storm had brought snowfall, wind, and blowing snow to the Lake Placid area.

**ACCIDENT SUMMARY**

This fatal accident occurred in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York, about five miles south of Lake Placid. At 4,580 feet elevation, Wright Peak stands adjacent to Algonquin Peak, which is taller and better known. But in September 1999, Hurricane