

Challenges in Forecasting, Chile 2005

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When accepting an Avalanche Forecasting job on the other side of the hemisphere it is hard to know exactly what you are getting yourself into. E-mails and short phone calls help keep the details hidden, and often this is the desired effect because once you're there, you're there. My scenario: Eighty miles of high altitude dirt road (fifty miles of it littered with avalanche paths), four mine portals, one hundred twenty miners, fifteen beacons, a mining camp and a road camp all located in two separate drainages. Within a few days of my arrival I found myself alone. My forecasting tools: a handheld anemometer/ thermometer, and a couple homemade snow stakes. This presentation is about my experiences trying to keep a struggling mining operation alive during a big winter, and in the end how it came down to getting out alive.