

**CANADIAN AVALANCHE ASSOCIATION  
QUEBEC COLLABORATIVE AVALANCHE PROJECT (2001-2004)**

Marc Deschenes

**ABSTRACT:** Snow avalanches largely remain an unfamiliar phenomena to the general population of the province of Quebec of eastern Canada. However avalanches are a real risk in Quebec in particular to backcountry recreationists (skiers, snowboarders, snowmobilers, snowshoers) venturing into avalanche terrain. Over the last three decades, avalanche accidents in Quebec have included 80 victims of which 33 were killed and over 50 were injured. These statistics do not take into account the numerous unreported incidents. In response to the need to mitigate the risks from avalanches in Quebec, the Canadian Avalanche Association (CAA) was invited in 1999 by avalanche safety stakeholders in Quebec to provide collaborative assistance to enhance their capacity to deliver avalanche accident prevention measures and Search and Rescue best practices in Quebec, whose population is predominantly French-speaking.

The CAA, along with its supporters, sponsors, and partners initiated the Quebec Collaborative Avalanche Project (QCAP) in 2001 and successfully completed the project in 2004. The project was made possible through the financial support of the National Search and Rescue Secretariat's New Initiatives Fund Program and the sponsorship of Parks Canada. The goal of QCAP was to develop and deliver, through collaboration with Quebec stakeholders, a comprehensive package of targeted training and avalanche awareness programming that would increase preparedness, reduce risk of involvement and improve response capacity resulting in a high quality, self-sustaining avalanche safety capacity in Quebec.

The results and outcomes of QCAP have surpassed expectations of the CAA. The project's initiative managed to greatly increase over the past 4 years the long-awaited need for avalanche awareness, training and education in Quebec. The CAA and its partners are currently broadening their scope to Eastern Canada and aligning Quebec into national public avalanche safety initiatives through federal and provincial funding.

Corresponding author address:

Marc Deschenes  
Canadian Avalanche Association  
917 Hall Street  
Nelson, BC  
V1L 1Z7 Canada  
(250) 352-9857  
mdeschenes@telus.net