

**A History of Mitigation and Operational Forecasting  
On Red Mountain Pass, Colorado**

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The San Juan Mountains are an abrupt and youthful mountain range notorious for a very fragile and unstable continental snowpack. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mining interests penetrated the San Juan Mountains. Precipitous wagon roads were created from animal trails, which eventually became routes of transportation for trains and automobiles.

Many explorers, miners and road builders lost their lives to avalanches mainly because they traveled, built structures and worked in hazardous mountain terrain. Several of these traveled routes evolved into paved highways. Today these transportation arteries require avalanche mitigation to insure the safety of those who travel upon them.

This presentation describes the history of mitigation and operational forecasting by the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Colorado Avalanche Information Center in the mountains around Silverton, Colorado from 1956 to 2006.

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