

Opening the Mt. Rose Chutes: Transformation of a Control Program From Road Protection to Skier Protection

Michael Ferrari, Mt. Rose Patrol

Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe, Reno, NV, USA

The 200-acre avalanche prone area historically called The Chutes was open for the first time as part of the developed Mt. Rose ski resort on December 9th, 2004. This culminated 10 years of planning and marked the official change in emphasis of the control work performed in The Chutes from protection of Nevada State Route 431 to skier protection. The steps leading up to this opening included going through the NEPA process, developing a boundary management plan, and developing secondary control routes and alternative control methods. Since that opening date the procedures and control methods for operating The Chutes have continued to evolve over the course of the first four operational seasons at times as a reaction to significant events. Going forward future evolutions will be evaluated on the basis of their effect on worker and guest safety. In conclusion, the result of opening The Chutes terrain has been to provide the public with a challenging recreational opportunity previously unavailable at Mt. Rose.