Preliminary Accident Report
Blackstone Glacier, Kenai Mountains, Alaska
May 2nd, 2018

Location: Upper Blackstone Glacier (~8 miles South of Carpathian Peak)
Lat/Lon: 60.568981 N 148.80959 W

Preliminary Report:

Three snowmachiners were caught in an avalanche on the upper Blackstone Glacier Wednesday, May 2nd, 2018. One rider was partially buried, one successfully deployed an airbag and came to rest on the surface and one rider was fully buried (except for a hand breaking the surface) and killed. The victim’s party was able to establish an airway and begin CPR within 5 minutes of the avalanche. They were in a group of four riders at the time of the avalanche. Several other snowmachiners in the area responded within 15-30 minutes of the initial avalanche.

Avalanche Details:

CNFAIC avalanche specialists were not able to visit the scene of the avalanche given the remote nature and inclement weather. Based on photos and witness reports, this appears to be a hard slab avalanche triggered remotely from below by the party. The avalanche was medium in size relative to the path with all of the debris funneling into a terrain trap (gully). It was on a Northeast facing slope around 5,000’ in elevation. Rough size estimates at this time are crown depth 2-4’, width up to 300’ and running approximately 1,000’. The debris was enough to bury a car, destroy a small building or break several trees. Avalanche code: HS-AMr-D2.5-R3-U.

*A more extensive final report will be posted when further details become available.

Report by: Chugach National Forest Avalanche Center Staff
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**Thank you to the riders who have shared their information and photos to help us write this report.
View of avalanche crown and debris. Photo: Koltan Lucas
View looking South on the upper Blackstone Glacier. Photo: Koltan Lucas