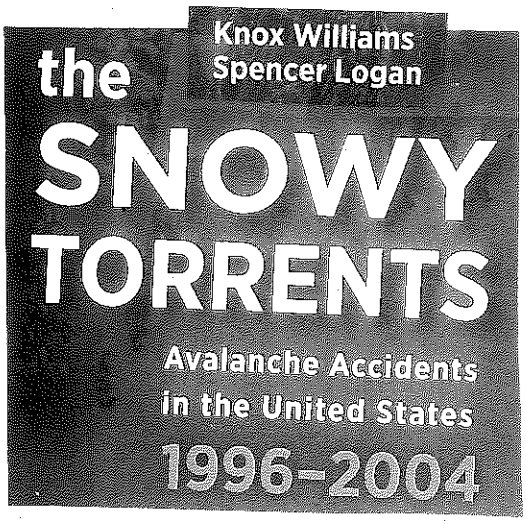

20001127 **HOODOO CREEK, NORTHWEST OF CODY, WYOMING**

November 27, 2000

One hunter caught, buried, and killed

ACCIDENT SUMMARY

Traveling alone

The steep country of the North Absaroka Wilderness is located about 40 miles northwest of Cody, Wyoming. On Monday, November 27, Mark Nielsen (41) of West Linn, Oregon was hunting in the Crandall Creek drainage. He was crossing a steep snowfield above Hoodoo Creek when he triggered an avalanche that swept him down the slope and buried him.

RESCUE SUMMARY

Sometime later, outfitter Buck Porter went looking for Nielsen. Porter followed Nielsen's tracks in the snow, which led to the avalanche—with no tracks coming out the other side. Porter made a cell phone call to the Park County Sheriff at 14:50.

Later in the day, a rescue team arrived at the area. They found Nielsen's body at 17:00. He had died from severe neck, head, and chest injuries. Poor weather and darkness postponed the body recovery until the next morning, when Nielsen's body was evacuated by horseback.

COMMENTS

Persistent Slab avalanche

Over the years, there have been several fatal avalanches involving hunters. See 19981115 for another example. Because hunting season occurs during late fall and early winter, these avalanches are usually shallow, with depth hoar being the weak layer that fails at the ground. The shallow snowpack makes it easy to underestimate avalanche danger but increases the potential for trauma, as in this incident.