

Wyssen Reference Project  
**Wyssen Avalanche Towers Protect Alta Ski Area**



**Safety** through **innovation**

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## Wyssen Avalanche Towers Protect Alta Ski Area

Project:	Wyssen Avalanche Towers Protect Alta Ski Area
Place:	Alta Ski Area, Little Cottonwood Canyon, Utah
Country:	USA
Year:	2021 / 2022
Customer:	Alta Ski Area
Protected Object:	Ski slopes
Installed Systems:	- 9x Wyssen Avalanche Tower 12 shots

### Initial Situation

Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) and Alta Ski Area have a long history of avalanche mitigation. Utah State Route 210 is threatened by numerous avalanche paths as it weaves its way to Snowbird, the town of Alta, and Alta Ski Area. Today, with the ever-increasing popularity of skiing, there is frequently bumper to bumper traffic during the winter season. Avalanche professionals in LCC have a lot of pressure to keep the road and ski slopes open.

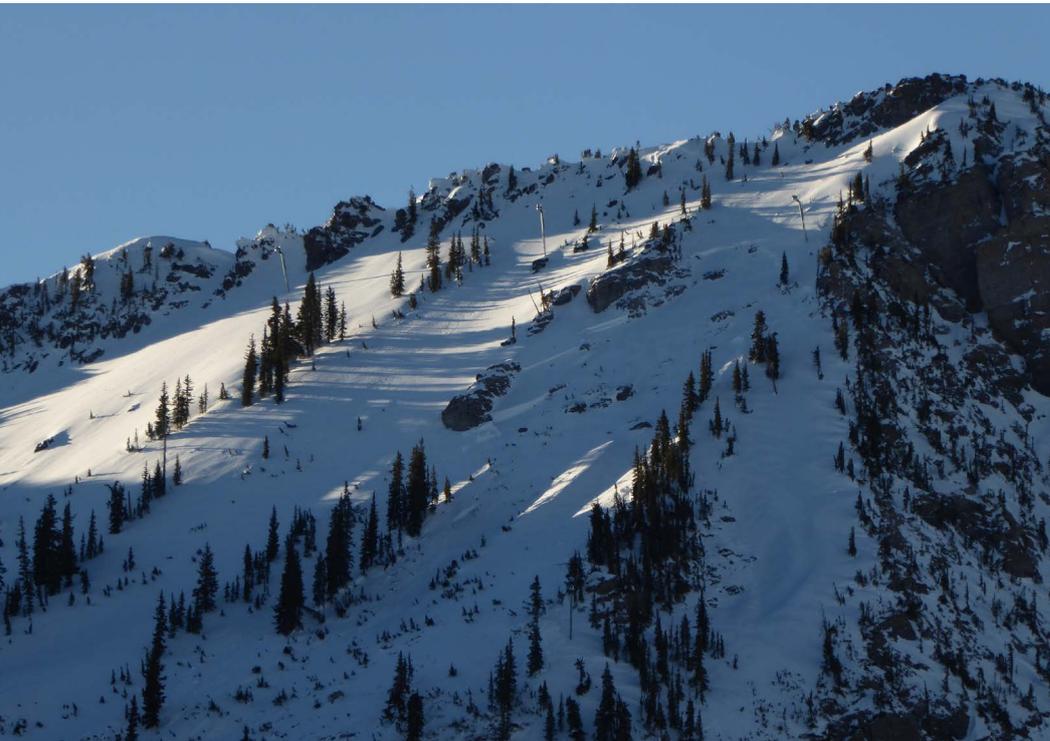
The use of artillery for avalanche mitigation in the United States was started by Monty Atwater in Little Cottonwood Canyon in 1949. Since then, avalanche specific technologies have been developed worldwide, and utilized in LCC to perform avalanche mitigation missions. The first Wyssen Avalanche Tower in the United States was installed across the highway from Alta Ski Area by the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT). Alta Ski Area, UDOT, and Snowbird currently use howitzers to release avalanches. However, the United States military is recommending avalanche artillery programs seek new avalanche mitigation solutions due to aging equipment and ammunition.



## Our Solution

In 2021, Alta Ski Area installed four Wyssen Avalanche Towers in East Castle to protect groomed ski slopes below. This replaced an avalauncher previously used for avalanche risk mitigation in this terrain. After one season of using the new RACS, Alta ski area proceeded to install five Wyssen Avalanche Towers on Mt Baldy replacing howitzer targets. With plans to install an additional five towers on Mt Baldy, in 2023, Alta Ski Area will no longer require howitzers to mitigate avalanche risk in the ski area.

Wyssen Avalanche Towers have proved to be an effective and efficient solution to replacing projectile explosive targets at the ski area. They decrease the time needed for avalanche control which can lead to faster opening of ski slopes. With the installation of Wyssen Avalanche Towers to mitigate avalanche hazard at the ski area, avalanche mitigation can be conducted remotely, and Alta Ski Area employees can trigger avalanches out of harm's way.



## First Ski Areas in North America

Alta Ski Area, and neighboring Snowbird, were the first ski areas in North America to install Wyssen Avalanche Towers. Due to their effectiveness, Dave Richards, the head of the Alta Avalanche Office, calls them “true avalanche hunters”. This name bears historical significance as it was used to refer to Monty Atwater and his team as the first preventative avalanche mitigation program in the canyon. Wyssen Avalanche Control is proud to provide an innovative next step to Monty Atwater and The Avalanche Hunter’s pioneering work in Little Cottonwood Canyon.



Monty Atwater

Image sources:

Left: [www.backcountrymagazine.com](http://www.backcountrymagazine.com)

Right: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

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## A Project of:

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