

Amateurs in Action

Recounts of ham radio operators who have used their time and skills to help others in a time of need



Colorado call for help

Calling Doug Morse, N2MZU, an avid outdoorsman is an understatement. A rock climbing instructor, back-country guide, and do-it-all outdoor adventurer, the man knows his way around the mountains. While skiing with his wife out in the [Pennsylvania Creek Drainage](#) near Breckenridge, Colorado, in February 2019, Doug's wife fell and fractured her fibula near the ankle.

Right away, Doug found that he had zero bars on his cell phone, meaning he was out of cell tower reach. He could have hiked up higher for a couple of hours, until he got a signal, but he didn't want to leave his wife alone for that long. And not having his satellite communicator with him at the time, he turned to his remaining solution, a handheld ham radio. Even though the two were somewhat hidden in a deep ravine, Doug managed to reach a nearby repeater that was part of the [CERN](#) (Colorado Emergency Reporting Net) system.

Mike Ranalls, KYØJAM, heard Doug's call for help, and relayed their location coordinates and condition to Summit County Search and Rescue. Eventually, the SAR team launched a snowmobile rescue, and within hours, the Morse couple was brought back to safety.



Doug, doing what he does best

Doug Morse has regularly carried his ham radio with him into the woods, since getting licensed in the mid-90s, and says that the benefits of real-time emergency communication is invaluable. Doug often heads into the back country with his cell phone, a satellite communicator, and his handheld ham radio. *That way, I can assume that I should be able to get help with one of those items, if something goes wrong.* This time, it was the oldest of the three technologies that did the trick.

This story was mentioned by [the online magazine blog](#).

— Reported by Ryan Wichelns in [Elevation Outdoors](#), Oct 2019, p. 10-11