

BANFF CENTRE MOUNTAIN FILM AND BOOK FESTIVAL

2022 SUMMIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

Grant Statham



With 35 years of wide-ranging experience in alpine and avalanche risk management and critical incident response, Statham has an extensive background in climbing and skiing, on-the-ground emergency first response, leading the Government of Canada critical incident response actions and private sector consulting for incident investigations, risk assessments, and program risk reviews.

As a young ACMG mountain guide at the age of 24, Statham worked his first 16 years in the outdoor industry ski patrolling, guiding rock, ice and alpine climbing, ski touring, helicopter skiing, expedition climbing, teaching avalanche courses, and working as an avalanche consultant. Beginning in 2003, Statham has been guiding part-time and working for Parks Canada, first as their Avalanche and Mountain Risk Specialist, and since 2013 as a Visitor Safety Specialist where he often has to climb or access extremely difficult routes via a helicopter sling to rescue those in peril.

Statham has taken on the role of post-incident liaison with family members, along with developing first responder mental health programs for Banff National Park. In 2019, Statham was part of a team that led the difficult search and recovery operations on Howse Peak where Jess Roskelley, David Lama, and Hansjörg Auer tragically died attempting a second ascent of

the route, M16. For this work he was awarded the CEO's Award of Excellence by Parks Canada.

Statham is perhaps most recognized as a pioneer and leader in avalanche safety. Following the tragic avalanche deaths of 2003 at Roger's Pass, he was responsible for conducting Parks Canada's Backcountry Avalanche Risk Review and he subsequently developed and implemented the policies and regulations around Custodial Groups in the National Parks. At the same time, he led the development of the Avalanche Terrain Exposure Scale, North American Public Avalanche Danger Scale, Conceptual Model of Avalanche Hazard, and the AvalX public forecasting system, the main tools and resources still used by avalanche forecasters and in public avalanche bulletins in Canada and worldwide.

He helped found Avalanche Canada, has been an Adjunct Professor since 2016 at Simon Fraser University, and an alpine risk management consultant since 2013. He is the author of dozens of papers, conference proceedings and articles on the subject of avalanches, risk, and snow safety.

Statham continues to work as an avalanche risk advisor with all levels of government and the private sector, having written many consultancy reports in Canada as well as New Zealand, Sweden, Norway, and Japan. Statham has written expert reports to legal and investigative teams in military, public and private sector incident investigations.

Through all this, Statham has maintained his passion for climbing and skiing and is recognized as a friend and mentor to many.