

Avalanche Advisory for Wednesday, January 28, 2015

Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight

Tuckerman Ravine has HIGH and CONSIDERABLE avalanche danger. Lobster Claw, Right Gully, the Sluice, Lip, Center Bowl, and Chute have High avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are likely and human triggered avalanches are very likely. Left Gully, Hillman's Highway, and Lower Snowfields have Considerable avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are possible and human triggered avalanches are likely. The Little Headwall has Moderate danger. Natural avalanches are unlikely and human triggered avalanches are possible.

Huntington Ravine has HIGH and CONSIDERABLE avalanche danger. North, Damnation, Yale, Central, and Pinnacle have High avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are likely and human triggered avalanches are very likely. Odell, South, and Escape Hatch have Considerable avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are possible and human triggered avalanches are likely.

Although the Winter Storm Warning has expired, avalanche conditions will remain very dangerous. Travel in avalanche terrain is not recommended.

AVALANCHE PROBLEM: Wind slab is the primary avalanche threat today. These will continue to develop as winds redistribute recently fallen snow into the forecast areas. S-facing slopes will be the areas of greatest concern, such as North and Damnation in Huntington and Lobster Claw, Right Gully, and Sluice in Tuckerman. Anticipate large avalanches reaching farther into the lower portions of the ravines, as well as avalanche runouts crisscrossing in flat ground well before you enter anything steep. You don't need to be on a steep slope to be at risk today!

WEATHER: It looks like we're in a good pattern right now, with two more storms possible in the short term. Yesterday's winter storm was a good one, even if we didn't get the 2+ feet that coastal towns received. The snow plot at Hermit Lake had 9.5" (24.5cm) of 5% density snow. Given the wind speeds and drifting that complicate snow collection and measurement at various locations, this is the amount that I'll hang my hat on. Other measurements such as the summit and at Pinkham show ~10% density snow, but I can tell you that what fell yesterday was not that dense. At Hermit Lake the snow was relatively unaffected by wind at the measurement site. Strong NE winds blew during the event yesterday, gusting to 111mph (179kph) on the summit (hence the challenge with measuring snow!). Today they will be shifting the the N and remaining strong, which will continue to load snow into avalanche paths around the mountain.

SNOWPACK: Once again your attention should be focused on what's going on at the surface rather than looking for deeply buried weak layers. Obviously, we weren't about to go poking around the ravines at the height of the storm yesterday, so at this time we don't have much direct information about what actually happened. This is the kind of day where we rely on a long history and experience forecasting for this mountain. **Today we expect continued loading of S and E facing aspects. Although it is very likely that these slopes have already had some avalanche activity, it remains likely that there will be more avalanches today.** As one runs on top of the other, they often go farther down the slope than previous slides, extending the reach of avalanche terrain. It's a good day to be cautious about where or when you decide to turn around.

We will begin to switch over to the Lion Head Winter Route. All signs should be swapped out and the summer trail closed by later this morning. If you are on either of these trails today, pay attention as they both will bring you very close to, or even into, avalanche paths. This will be especially true in the flat section from the Lion Head to the base of the summit cone. The John Sherburne Ski Trail improved tremendously with this storm, but remember that there may be some wind-exposed sections of thick ice crust.

Please Remember:

- Safe travel in avalanche terrain requires training and experience. This advisory is just one tool to help you make your own decisions in avalanche terrain. You control your own risk by choosing where, when, and how you travel.
- Anticipate a changing avalanche danger when actual weather differs from the higher summits forecast. For more information contact the Forest Service Snow Rangers, the AMC at the Pinkham Notch Visitor Center, or the caretakers at Hermit Lake Shelters or the Harvard Cabin.
- **Posted 8:10a.m. Wednesday, January 28, 2015. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

