

# Avalanche Advisory for Friday, March 21, 2014

**Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight**

**Tuckerman Ravine has HIGH and CONSIDERABLE avalanche danger today.** The Sluice, Lip, Center Bowl, and Chute have High avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are likely and human triggered avalanches are very likely. **Travel in these areas and their runout zones is not recommended.** Lobster Claw, Right Gully, Left Gully, Hillman's Highway, and the Lower Snowfields have Considerable avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are possible and human triggered avalanches are likely in these locations. **Dangerous avalanche conditions exist; careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route finding, and conservative decision making are essential.** The Little Headwall has Moderate avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are unlikely and human triggered avalanches are possible.

**Huntington Ravine has CONSIDERABLE avalanche danger.** Natural avalanches are possible and human triggered avalanches are likely in these locations. **Dangerous avalanche conditions exist; careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route finding, and conservative decision making are essential.**

**AVALANCHE PROBLEM:** Wind slabs are the primary avalanche problem. Light, but continuous snowfall, brought another 6" (**15cm**) of snow to the summit yesterday. Wind from the west and northwest loaded, and will continue to load, avalanche start zones as 1-3" (2.5-7.5cm) more fall today. Very low visibility will make terrain assessment and safe route finding difficult. Rimed new snow may pile beneath steep terrain and will add to the Wind Slab problem.

**WEATHER:** Spring is nowhere to be seen on Mount Washington. New snow, graupel and thick fog is limiting visibility to about 200' now at Hermit Lake. The forecast indicates that these conditions are likely to continue through most of today as upslope effect wrings moisture out of the regional airmass before some clearing tonight. Snow shower activity may diminish to some degree this afternoon, but I would not bank on much improvement in visibility today as NW wind in the 60-80 mph range with higher gusts continue to blow snow during the daylight hours.

**SNOWPACK:** Very little field observations have been possible over the last 48 hours due to new snow and clouds. Brief clearing yesterday in Huntington revealed debris ran to the bottom of the current avalanche paths in South and Escape Hatch. It is highly likely that Left Gully, Hillman's and other avalanche paths on Boott Spur also avalanched due to early south winds. I mention this not only as a reminder that this obvious red flag exists, but also that all of our avalanche tracks have grown rapidly over the past week or so. Avalanches today could also still step down to these deeper layers. New snow this afternoon may also fall on weak layers of large graupel that may have pooled in pockets beneath steep terrain. Recent trolling of social media indicates everyone is eager to get into the terrain to play in the new snow, but today is going to be a sketchy day to do it. I would be respectful of avalanche paths throughout the area due to the probability of larger natural avalanches running out into lower angled terrain and crossing the approaches to lower rated terrain. Spring is on hold for another day and into the foreseeable future.

## **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 8:30am Friday, March 21, 2014. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

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