

Avalanche Advisory for Saturday, April 19, 2014

Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight

Tuckerman Ravine has Low avalanche danger. Natural and human triggered avalanches are unlikely. **Huntington Ravine is under a General Advisory.** You will need to do your own snow stability assessments when traveling in avalanche terrain in Huntington. A danger of falling ice exists, and will persist until it all comes down.

AVALANCHE PROBLEM: Snow stability in Tuckerman is generally quite good at this time. Other hazards such as icy surfaces and long falls should get your attention today. Read on for more details. Snow is forecast as a possibility today. If we receive a significant amount, wind slabs may be developing. However, we would need to reach or exceed the upper end of the 2" forecast to have this become a real threat.

WEATHER: The weather forecast for today is not ideal for spring skiing. It will feel more like a harsh winter day. Expect dropping temperatures, falling into the 20s F or even lower in the ravines. Summit winds will be on the increase, rising to 50-70mph from the NW. While it won't be blowing quite this strong in the ravine itself, you'd be mistaken to say it won't be windy even in protected areas. To top this all off, a trace to 2" of snow may fall during the day. My recommendation to anyone out hiking around today: bring warm boots, extra dry layers, and a thermos full of piping hot coffee.

SNOWPACK: We are clearly into the melt-freeze cycle of springtime. Yesterday there were two dominant surfaces, an older gray colored crust and a pure white layer of windblown snow that was transported in on Weds/Thurs. Both of these were warmed yesterday and refrozen again overnight.

With the temperatures expected to decrease today, these surfaces aren't likely to soften. If you decide to climb steep terrain, choose your route carefully. Not every route has a fall line that is free from rocks and other hazards. You don't want to slip and fall today. The snow surface will be abrasive, to put it mildly. Additionally, you might quickly generate more speed than you could ever imagine. An ice axe and crampons are good tools to help navigate steep icy terrain, but using your good judgment to choose appropriate terrain is even more important.

OTHER HAZARDS: We are at the beginning of the icefall season. There is currently a large chunk perched threateningly over Lunch Rocks, but much of the largest ice is still in the usual locations.

The best exit from the bowl is to hike down the trail. The Little Headwall is blown out completely for the season. The streambed has also deteriorated beyond what a reasonable person would call "skiable". Trying to negotiate the trees on either side is sure to generate laughter from anyone on the hiking trail or the porch who happens to see you flailing in there. You can take this as advice from someone who's been there, or you can take it as a challenge, it's your choice.

The Lion Head Winter Route is still open. This is a steep icy trail. An ice axe, crampons, and the ability to use these tools effectively are highly recommended. Lightweight trail crampons lose their effectiveness in terrain this steep!

The John Sherburne Ski Trail remains open to the parking lot. Expect lots of bare patches, icy sections, and enormous bumps throughout the trail.

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 or the staff at Hermit Lake Shelters or Pinkham Notch Visitor Center.
- **Posted 6:40a.m. Saturday, April 19, 2014. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

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