

# Avalanche Advisory for Sunday, January 18, 2015

**Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight**

**Tuckerman Ravine will have Considerable and Moderate avalanche danger today.** The Sluice, Lip, Center Bowl, Chute, Left Gully, and Hillman's Highway will have Considerable avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are possible and human triggered avalanches are likely. Right Gully will have Moderate avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are unlikely and human triggered avalanches are possible. Natural and human triggered avalanches are unlikely. The Lobster Claw, Lower Snowfields and Little Headwall are not posted due to a lack of snow.

**Huntington Ravine will have Considerable and Moderate avalanche danger.** Central, Pinnacle, Odell, and South gullies will have Considerable danger. Natural avalanches are possible and human triggered avalanches are likely. North Gully, Damnation, Yale and the Escape Hatch will have Moderate danger. Natural avalanches are unlikely and human triggered avalanches are possible.

**AVALANCHE PROBLEM:** Today's ratings are primarily based on incoming snow late today, therefore **storm slabs** are threat number one. The new snow is expected to fall mainly in the afternoon and overnight, so the storm slab problem will be causing the avalanche danger to rise up to their posted ratings near the end of daylight or slightly beyond, from where they are starting the day, i.e. Low or Moderate. This problem is going to impact N, NE, and E aspects the most, such as Hillman's, Left Gully, and Chute in Tuckerman or South, Odell, Pinnacle, and Central in Huntington.

Early birds getting out before any new accumulations and slab development should be alert for existing **wind slabs and persistent slabs** that we have discussed in previous avalanche advisories. These problems are dispersed around the terrain with a great deal of spatial variability. Tuckerman's Lip and Sluice yesterday held the most newly developed wind slab followed by the north side of the Huntington Fan, whereas in all other areas persistent slabs existed.

**WEATHER:** It's been a slow month for snowfall in the White Mountains, which leads to eager anticipation of the incoming weather. I'll leave you to read the forecast for yourself, but the avalanche-related highlights include 0.2-0.4" (5-10mm) of water equivalent forecasted through 7pm today and another 0.8-1.35" (20-34mm) from 7pm to 7am. If temperatures were colder, this would be a lot of snow. Much to our dismay, warmth will prevent us from choking on powdery face shots. Most of this precipitation is coming in overnight, but how much falls during the day and early evening will determine how far the actual hazard goes up the danger rating scale. Another key factor will be whether or not it remains snow, mixes with sleet, or becomes either freezing rain or plain rain. Through today, winds will be slowly shifting from the WSW to the S at good speeds for loading snow and creating slab.

**SNOWPACK:** Prior to incoming snow, much of the avalanche terrain consisted of strong, wind-scoured snow. Some locations had stiff persistent slab as well, and in other areas there were a varying amount of faceting taking place beneath the surface snow. The extent of the faceting and the strength of the snow above had led us to danger ratings in the Moderate to Low range, depending on the location. As usual, the ravines offer a wide variety of snowpack situations, especially if you were to put in the effort to get to some of the harder to reach locations.

## **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 8:25a.m. Sunday, January 18, 2015. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

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