

# Avalanche Advisory for Thursday, January 22, 2015

**Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight**

**Tuckerman Ravine has Moderate and Low avalanche danger.** Right Gully, the Sluice, Lip, Center Bowl, Chute, Left Gully, and Hillman's Highway have Moderate avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are unlikely and human-triggered avalanche are possible. Heightened avalanche conditions exist on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully to identify features of concern. The Lobster Claw, Lower Snowfields and the Little Headwall have Low avalanche danger. In these areas, natural and human-triggered avalanches are unlikely, but watch for unstable snow in isolated terrain features.

**Huntington Ravine has Moderate and Low avalanche danger.** Central and Pinnacle Gullies have Moderate danger. Natural avalanches are unlikely and human-triggered avalanches are possible. Heightened avalanche conditions exist on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully to identify features of concern. All other forecast areas have Low avalanche danger. Natural and human-triggered avalanches are unlikely; however, watch for unstable snow in isolated terrain features.

**AVALANCHE PROBLEM: Wind Slabs** that developed on Tuesday coupled with the hang fire from the avalanche cycle on Sunday night are the primary concerns today. Of particular concern would be the upper start zone of Right Gully, Sluice and the Lip. Most of the wind slabs are likely to be stubborn and resistant to triggering. A close second to these wind slabs are sluff piles beneath steep features which did not avalanche or were reloaded on Tuesday such as in Center Bowl and Chute. Huntington was more scoured by these winds, which were near 100 mph (160 km/h), on Tuesday. That said, Central and Pinnacle should be assessed for remaining wind slabs.

**WEATHER:** Highs in the teens F today coupled with light winds out of the west will do little to affect snow stability in either direction today. Winds are expected to shift from the W to NW and ramp up a bit from its current calm 5 mph (8 km/h) to around 30 mph (50 km/h) with higher gusts through the afternoon and evening.

**SNOWPACK:** As Chris discussed yesterday, a wide range of snowpack issues exist in the Ravines. Not much has happened since then to either increase or decrease stability. A wet snow and freezing rain storm on Sunday was responsible for a widespread avalanche event on slopes and gullies with a more northerly facing aspect. The good news is that in many areas the cycle swept out the older persistent grain types associated with the January 4 crust. However, Sunday's snow/freezing rain line was right around the bottom of the Ravines and is already producing another layer of facets. A frozen crust also capable of producing these facets may have developed in some slightly higher elevations in the Ravines as well but its extent remains to be fully understood. Travellers should remember that firm or hard wind slabs that exist in many areas now can still be triggered if the right sweet spot is found. Often that spot is a thinner part of the slab. Multiple quick hand pits and continual assessment of your position relative to the hazard are more helpful in cases like these than one deep pit.

Sections of the Sherburne trail are very icy due to the freezing rain on Sunday.

## **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 8:10 a.m. Thursday, January 22, 2015. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

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