

# Avalanche Advisory for Friday, April 17, 2015

**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: Wet loose avalanches** continue as an unlikely threat today as temperatures hover just above freezing. Steep slopes that have seen a lot of ski traffic generally have less of this type of problem. Areas without recent ski traffic have the greatest potential for a larger sluff. The hazard of these heavy, wet piles of snow moving downhill comes from their ability to bulldoze you into bushes, rocks or over cliffs or to push your boards in expected directions.

**OTHER HAZARDS:** The typical spring hazards are showing themselves. Numerous areas of large ice have horizontal cracks forming and the Sluice ice, above Lunch Rocks, is already missing some chunks. Be aware of what is above you on a warm day and realize that eating lunch at Lunch Rocks puts you directly in the runout of large pieces of **falling ice**. Today's warm temperatures and rain showers will increase the likelihood of this annual hazard. During this period of falling ice every year we do not recommend sitting at Lunch Rocks even though it may have a long tradition for you. The vast majority of icefall injuries over the past 50 years have occurred at Lunch Rocks also dubbed, "Icefall Rocks". **Reduced visibility** due to summit fog will challenge navigation as well as your ability to identify and manage other objective hazards. The snowpack is slowly moving downhill as a unified mass and is pulling away from cliffs, creating **crevasses**. These may change quickly, so anticipate them growing in size. **Undermined snow** is creating challenges for exiting the Bowl. While the Little Headwall is still skiable, there is open water both above and below. The best exit from the Bowl may involve walking to Connection Cache and possibly farther.

**WEATHER:** The weaker of two cold fronts arrived this morning, bringing light rain and mixed precipitation showers depending on elevation, along with moderate to strong summit winds and fog. The amount of rain and precipitation associated with this front is minimal, and won't change our snowpack much. Tonight, temperatures will drop as the next cold front arrives, bringing 2-4" of snow on Saturday. Northwest winds with the potential for 2-6" (5-15 cm) total of snow by the end of the storm Saturday afternoon will change things quite a bit. After the warm spell of sunny corn skiing, followed by rain, we will return to wintry conditions Saturday and Sunday with an icy snowpack beneath fresh wind slab.

**SNOWPACK:** The near freezing conditions over the past couple of day helped to firm up and preserve our snow at ravine elevations after last Friday's rain and thaw. In Tuckerman Ravine, plenty of ski traffic Wednesday and Thursday tested and compacted our slopes and helped to ease our minds about wet slab avalanches. Being a generally cautious person, I wouldn't leave my beacon, probe and shovel behind for lots of reasons. Most of these are unlikely, but consider a large icefall or a subsurface meltwater blowout as an unusual, but not impossible, potential trigger. These are just of couple of reasons why we will continue to wearing our avalanche PPE through late spring. As our snowpack melts, thin spots develop and firm or icy surfaces are exposed so be aware that an ice axe or self-arrest ski pole and crampons may be worthwhile weapons in your quiver.

## **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 7:40a.m., Friday, April 17, 2015. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

Frank Carus, Snow Ranger  
USDA Forest Service  
White Mountain National Forest

