

Avalanche Advisory for Sunday, April 26, 2015

Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight

Tuckerman Ravine has Moderate avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are unlikely **and human-triggered avalanches are possible.** The only exceptions are the Lower Snowfields and Little Headwall which have Low avalanche danger. Huntington Ravine is under a General Advisory. You will need to do your own snow stability assessments when traveling in avalanche terrain in Huntington.

AVALANCHE PROBLEM: Wind slabs exist throughout much of the ravine, providing snow stability conditions from the upper end of the Moderate range right down through the lower end of the range. Your terrain choices will certainly play a role in how much exposure you have to the avalanche hazard. **Remember, by the time you have reached the floor of Tuckerman, you have already entered avalanche terrain and are at risk of an avalanche hitting you and your group from above. The areas of greatest concern are in the Sluice, Lip, Center Bowl, and Chute, as well as in the flat terrain beneath these areas.**

WEATHER: Today will be much like yesterday as far as weather is concerned. We currently have some visibility, but with the forecast as it is, I think the prudent thing would be to expect thick fog to obscure sight lines at elevations above Hermit Lake. If visibility gets better, we should consider ourselves fortunate. There is a chance for a light snowfall to bring a trace to 2" to the summits, though I doubt if we get this it will affect snow stability to a great degree. Temperatures in the ravine will rise to somewhere near the freezing mark, but the fog and humidity makes things feel much less comfortable than a typical 30-35F day.

SNOWPACK: The story of the snowpack begins with a buried melt-freeze crust layer that is still holding heat and moistening the snow immediately above it. However, you don't have to look far above the crust to find cold dry snow with a layer of weak rimed crystals mixed in. Slab that built from the recent snow on top of this weak layer is denser and dry. If you are on foot, you'll feel the discomfiting "upside-down" snowpack, which should raise the hairs on the back of your neck. If you're on skis, you might not notice this underfoot, but a couple pole-probes should alert you to the presence of weak snow under strong snow. The majority of the new wind-loaded slab has built in the mid-elevations of the ravine, such as directly above and below the ice in the Center Bowl. Hillman's has old surface showing in places all the way to the top, but the narrow section just above the fork appears to be holding deeper slab. Where we poked around under Right and Lobster Claw, the slabs were between knee-deep and thigh deep, but there are pockets of old surface showing here and there as well. This leads us to believe that there is a wide variety of stability falling within the Moderate range throughout all areas.

OTHER HAZARDS: Be aware of the potential of falling ice, crevasses, and undermined snow. The best you can do to mitigate the risk from these objective hazards is to avoid them, especially during times when they are more probable. Recent cold has kept these in check to some extent. Emerging crevasses in the ravine and holes in the Little Headwall may be hard to recognize today due to being hidden by new snow. **The greatest hazard today is the threat of avalanches and debris running on to the floor of the ravine.**

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 8:30 a.m. Sunday, April 26, 2015. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

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