

Avalanche Advisory for Saturday, May 2, 2015

Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight

Tuckerman Ravine has Low avalanche danger. Natural and human-triggered avalanches are unlikely. Watch for small avalanches on isolated terrain features. **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: Relatively slow moving but dense and heavy **Wet Loose** avalanches will flow from steep untracked terrain today. These slides can be dangerous if they push you into a terrain trap or over cliffs. There is a remote possibility of a **Wet Slab** avalanche from Sluice or Center Bowl/Lip area as heat penetrates further into recent new snow or if the waterfalls begin to run between and lubricate deeper layers. Due to the risk of both types of avalanches plus the potential for falling ice, Lunch Rocks and the floor of the Ravine, close to the base of the Headwall, are not a safe place to hang out. **Reduce your exposure to these threats by gathering well away from the fall line of these areas.** Wet debris has virtually no pore space for air to flow through. People have died under just a few inches of this type of debris so consider this when evaluating these seemingly benign threats.

OTHER PROBLEMS/HAZARDS: Be aware of crevasses hidden underneath the recent snow. The focus of the deepest slots is in the Lip area with others located directly beneath rock buttresses above longer slopes. These glide cracks are getting larger as the huge mass of snow moves downhill. Choosing a boot pack to ascend that avoids these hazards is a great way to eliminate the risk of a fall into one of these slots. **It is next to impossible to predict but really easy to mitigate the risk of icfall in Tuckerman Ravine.** I've watched with curiosity over the past several weeks as the 30 foot high pillar of ice on the roadcut on Rt. 16 as it delaminated from the cliff then slowly leaned to one side. The big pile of ice on the ground yesterday morning was evidence that gravity finally won, as it always does. I would not want to be beneath Sluice or Center Bowl ice when it loses the battle with gravity.

WEATHER and SNOWPACK: Light winds and high temperature in the mid 40's F on the summit with some afternoon clouds and possible rain showers are on tap for today. These weather conditions will further saturate the upper snowpack and create heavy, slushy riding conditions. Slopes such as Hillman's Highway, Left and Right Gully, have seen the most ski traffic and will be more raked off, providing easier conditions for making turns. The past two weeks brought a foot of snow which accumulated much more deeply in the strong lee areas such as Sluice through Chute. The upper right side of Left Gully also has a large area of wind-loaded mush as well. Plenty of loose, untracked snow exists so expect lots of sluffing today. People with water skiing or wake boarding skills will be most comfortable with the turns and speed required to manage this slushy snow.

The Little Headwall has open holes of water and undermined snow, but it continues to be a skiable option for descending from the Bowl. Use extreme caution if choosing this route. Another alternative is to hike down to Hermit Lake or to leave the Little Headwall at its top and thread your way through the trees towards the Lower Snowfields. The John Sherburne ski trail is disintegrating rapidly. It's currently closed at the #5 crossover, 1 mile up the Tuckerman Ravine Trail from the parking lot. At the rope, please avoid the muddy descent and cross to the hiking trail and walk down. Do not ski on the hiking 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, the AMC at the Pinkham Notch Visitor Center, or the caretakers at Hermit Lake Shelters or the Harvard Cabin.
- **Posted 7:00a.m., Saturday, May 2, 2015. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

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