

Avalanche Advisory for Sunday, May 3, 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: We have built strength due to settling, consolidation, and skier compaction from 2000 people on Saturday. Some steep untracked slopes could still produce dense and heavy skier induced **Wet Loose** sluff avalanches today, but these should be minimal. A number of these occurred yesterday until slopes were fully tracked. These slides can be dangerous if they push you into a terrain trap or over cliffs so use sluff management techniques and have a preplan. Think about this if going to other less used Ravines and Gulfs. There is a remote possibility of a Wet Slab avalanche in the coming days with intense heating, around the clock melting and percolating of freewater deep into the snowpack hunting for an impermeable layer to lubricate. This may be exacerbated by afternoon thunderstorm potential through tomorrow. We will trend away from this Wet Slab potential in several days. Stay tuned.

OTHER PROBLEMS/HAZARDS: ICEFALL IS OUR PRIMARY HAZARD TODAY. It is next to impossible to predict, but really easy to mitigate the risk of icefall in Tuckerman Ravine. Avoid hanging out under the most probable fall lines from the Center Headwall and the Sluice and the risk of injury or fatality diminishes greatly. **LUNCH ROCKS IS A DANGEROUS PLACE TO SIT AND IS NOT RECOMMENDED.** Of all places, although traditional, this place gets hit with a lot of ice and has the distinction of producing the most icefall injuries in the Ravine. A set of rocks further away would be better for setting up as your base for the day. Hot sun today will continue weakening large automobile sized chunks. I would not want to be beneath the Sluice or Center Bowl ice when either loses the battle with gravity.

Be aware of crevasses hidden beneath wet and weak snow bridges. The focus of the deepest slots is in the Lip area with others located directly beneath rock buttresses. These will grow today, and all week, with warm temperatures and round-the-clock melting. 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. Just because other people are skiing somewhere it doesn't mean it is a safe, hazard free area. As an example, the most heavily used Lip has more hazards than other gently used locations areas like the Lobster Claw, Right Gully, Left Gully and Hillman's Highway.

WEATHER and SNOWPACK: Today an increasing cloud trend will occur with the potential for afternoon showers and thunderstorms. Temperatures will shoot up into the upper forties on the summit and is already there at mid-elevation on the mountain. These factors will continue to produce heavy, slushy riding conditions. I would not want to be caught above treeline during a lightning event, especially with a saturated snowpack.

The Little Headwall has open holes of water undermined snow, and has become more hazardous over the past 24 hours. Collapsing around open holes occurred overnight evidenced by some cracks visible this morning. Based on this continued decay we can no longer recommend a ski descent and believe the walk out is a vastly safer option. The John Sherburne ski trail is disintegrating rapidly and the majority is currently closed. At the rope, please avoid a slippery and muddy descent down the ski trail and cross to the hiking trail to 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 8:15 a.m., Sunday, May 3, 2015. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

Christopher Joosen, Snow Ranger
USDA Forest Service
White Mountain National Forest
(603) 466-2713 TTY (603) 466-2856