

Avalanche Advisory for Monday, May 4, 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 terrain today. These slides can be dangerous if they push you into a terrain trap, crevasse or over a cliff. A lot of loose surface snow was cleaned off of our forecast areas yesterday but warm temperatures last night and baking temperatures today will loosen the surface snow and set the stage for more sluffing.

OTHER PROBLEMS/HAZARDS: It is next to impossible to predict but really easy to mitigate the risk of icefall in Tuckerman Ravine. Reduce your time spent beneath frozen waterfalls in Lunch Rocks, Center Bowl and elsewhere and you will reduce your risk of injury or death due to this hazard. Don't underestimate the speed and random trajectory of chunks of falling ice. **Beware of crevasses and undermined snow.** The focus of the deepest slots is in the Lip and Sluice area with others located directly beneath rock buttresses above longer slopes. These glide cracks are getting larger by the day as the huge mass of snow melts and creeps downhill. The main waterfall beside the Lip is also growing rapidly which is a sure sign that the channel beneath the slope growing and melting the snow above. Choosing a boot pack to ascend that avoids these hazards is a great way to reduce the risk of a fall into one of these holes.

WEATHER and SNOWPACK: Sunshine and warm temperatures will turn slopes to mush and saturate the snowpack with water today. Temperatures will hit 50F (10C) on the summit with breezy and increasing winds and gathering clouds in the afternoon as a cold front approaches. Soft conditions are setting the stage for further erosion of the snowpack as sluff channels develop from flowing wet, loose snow and moguls develop on heavily trafficked slopes. Today's soft snow will once again create ideal conditions for various lower leg musculoskeletal injuries. Don't forget to develop a preplan for handling an emergency and step up to help others if necessary. It is remarkable how fast a warm, bluebird day can turn on you when you are lying in the snow unable to walk the 3.5 miles to the road.

The Little Headwall has open holes over the waterfall and undermined snow in the drainage above and below. It was virtually unrideable on Sunday and is easily assessed on the hiking trail from Hermit Lake. A better descent alternative is to hike back down to Hermit Lake and rejoin the John Sherburne ski trail there. The trail is disintegrating rapidly and is currently closed at the #7 crossover, 2 miles 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 7:30 a.m., Monday, May 4, 2015. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

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

