

Winter Information for Tuckerman and Huntington Ravines

Posted December 29, 2015

This posting will be updated when conditions warrant.

This is an updated early winter informational statement. We'll continue to monitor conditions closely and will issue a General Bulletin or Avalanche Advisory when the likelihood and consequence of avalanches increase.

We have been paying attention, for sure, but Mother Nature has not been cooperative in getting this winter underway. Today (12/29) we are experiencing a winter storm across the entire region, which certainly makes it feel more like winter than it had been feeling. This new snow will have an effect, but prior to it there was only about 1" of snow sitting on the ground. Seriously, the total snow depth on 12/28 was about 1". Aside from a small isolated patch of snow at the top of Left Gully, there was nothing that resembled a snowfield. So in essence, we are still waiting for enough snow to fill in the ravines to warrant issuing our first General Bulletin.

Please consider the following as you plan your trip:

- Hiking trails through steep terrain (e.g. Tuckerman and Huntington Ravine trails) may be covered in ice and snow. Mountaineering skills and equipment are required for safe travel on these routes. **Microspikes are not a substitute for real crampons in steep icy terrain.**
- The Lion Head Summer Trail is still open and at this pace, it'll stay open for a while yet. This trail does have a lot of water ice on it, making crampons or other traction devices a smart choice.
- Ice climbing routes are still developing. One recent report was that the ice in Pinnacle Gully is gone. Expect poor protection and ample amounts of water in Huntington's gullies and in the headwall area of Tuckerman. Remember that on Christmas Eve the summit broke a record with a max temperature of 46F.
- The length of daylight is very short at this time of year. Carry a headlamp or two, even if you have no expectation to need it.
- Check summit weather forecasts before heading out. Weather above treeline is often much worse than down at the base. You can find the MWObs summit forecast [here](#) or the National Weather Service summits forecast [here](#).
- Avalanche hazards can exist in very small areas. Expect a handful of micro/nano sized bed surfaces to accept the loading of new snow. Although not enough to justify an avalanche General Bulletin or Avalanche Advisory, be prepared for some extremely isolated areas of instability with future snowfalls. Be sure to check back for updated information as winter continues to take hold up here.

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.

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