

Avalanche Advisory for Tuesday, January 26, 2016

Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight

All forecast areas of Tuckerman Ravine have LOW avalanche danger. Natural and human-triggered avalanches are unlikely. Watch for unstable snow in isolated areas. Lobster Claw, Lower Snowfields, and the Little Headwall are not posted due to lack of snow cover. Exercise caution in these areas.

Huntington Ravine is under a General Avalanche Bulletin. General Bulletins are issued when instabilities are isolated within forecast areas and are issued every three days or earlier if conditions warrant. Forecast areas in Huntington have less well-developed snowfields to produce avalanches than Tuckerman, but understand instabilities in these smaller locations may exist. It is critical that you assess snow and avalanche conditions if venturing into Huntington.

AVALANCHE PROBLEM: The primary avalanche problem today is windslab. After forming during the high winds almost 7 days ago, these firm slabs remain unreactive. I expect to find overall good stability around Tuckerman. However, as the total snow for the season is still low, there are areas where the slab could be thin enough to allow a person's weight break the bridging strength and initiate a crack. These areas primarily exist where terrain features have only recently been covered, such as the Lip and Center Bowl.

WEATHER: After three days of sunny weather on the mountain, today will diverge from this trend. Temperatures are expected to rise through the morning and peak just when precipitation may start, early afternoon. Currently, at 8:00am, elevations between 2300' and 4300' are above freezing. What form the precipitation comes in will all depend on when it starts and how quickly temperatures drop. Forecasted amounts of rain and snow are minimal and I expect whatever falls from the sky today to have little adverse effect on the current snowpack. Winds today will be strong, gusting to the century mark by nightfall.

SNOWPACK: Over the past week, the summit has recorded a total of 0.03" SWE, delivering 0.9" of snow. Sustained, strong winds that abated on January 22 have left us with a surface layer of firm windslab throughout Tuckerman. While faceting is likely taking place beneath this bridging layer, in most places it would take a truck to create enough force to impact any weakness existing below this surface slab. That being said, the real snow has yet to arrive for the winter and there are many terrain features lying just beneath the surface that create enough hazard to require bringing your A+ terrain management game. Areas that provide the best possibilities for skiing have rather ugly looking runouts below.

Huntington Ravine remains under a General Bulletin. It is important to remember that avalanches can occur under a General Bulletin. The biggest potential areas are the snowfields in Central and South Gully as well as at the base of the ice in Pinnacle and Odell. The northern gullies of Yale, Damnation, and North are primarily ice and contain very little snow. The **Lion Head Winter Route** is now open. Bear in mind this is not a hiking trail and mountaineering sense should be in your backpack, right next to you crampons and ice axe. The **Sherburne Ski Trail** is skiable top to bottom and is seeing a fair amount of traffic. This traffic is pushing snow to the sides, revealing a good amount of water ice and rocks that had been covered. Expect challenging conditions.

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 8:15am January 26, 2016. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

Helon Hoffer / Jeff Lane, Snow Rangers
USDA Forest Service
White Mountain National Forest
(603) 466-2713 TTY (603) 466-2856

