

Avalanche Advisory for Saturday, February 27, 2016

Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight

Tuckerman Ravine has MODERATE and LOW avalanche danger. Right Gully, Sluice and the Lip have Moderate avalanche danger. Natural avalanches are unlikely and human triggered avalanches are possible. Heightened avalanche conditions exist on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully to identify features of concern. Other forecast areas have Low avalanche danger. Natural and human triggered avalanches are unlikely except in isolated pockets. The Lobster Claw, Lower Snowfields, and Little Headwall are not posted due to an overall lack of snow in these areas.

Huntington Ravine has LOW avalanche danger. Natural and human triggered avalanches are unlikely except in isolated pockets.

AVALANCHE PROBLEM: Wind Slab is the avalanche problem today. High winds blew the 3" of new snow that fell on Thursday night and Friday morning off the alpine snowfields and down into some areas of the Ravines. Most areas are scoured to old icy surfaces, but expect a few places to harbor some instabilities. These locations are limited, but stay aware of changes as you transition from old ice to new slab. A busy Saturday should also focus your attention to others above and below you.

WEATHER: High winds have dropped off for a beautiful start to the day. Cool temperatures will rise to about 10F on the summit with an increasing W wind moving from 30 to 40 mph, gusting over 80 later today. Expect a growing cloud deck with a slight chance of afternoon snow showers. This shouldn't effect danger ratings, but will reduce this morning's awesome visibility.

SNOWPACK: With March just around the corner I am finally facing the music that winter has little chance of recovery. All areas continue to be thinly covered and am starting to believe some of our forecast areas will never get a rating this season. Our travel up the mountain has fallen apart and we are now walking the lower sections, which has us scrambling to get the advisory out on time. The main snowpack issue are new slabs at the surface in some areas. Theses issues were developed yesterday through the day as winds increased and are sitting on a slick old surface due to rain from several days ago. Anticipate poor bonding and be suspect of slab strength until proven otherwise. New slabs are most prominent in Tuckerman's Lip and Sluice, followed by Right gully. The Center Bowl, the upper climber's right of the Chute, and down low in Left gully have some isolated pockets, but are most accurately rated at Low. In Huntington, the standout pocket is in the lower section of Central Gully. Otherwise the vast majority of Huntington is scoured down to old surface. Falls are the main hazard today. It will be very challenging to stop any kind of fall on the old icy surface. A rope would be a prudent choice for groups having members of limited skills and experience in terrain when the consequences are high.

The Sherburne ski trail ice is growing by the day and is the most I have seen in 26 years. Don't take this as a challenge, but you will not be able to get up the Tuckerman Ravine trail from Pinkham without some kind of traction like crampons or micropikes. We hope a busy day will grind up the ice a bit.

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 8:40a.m., Saturday, February 27, 2016. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

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