

Avalanche Advisory for Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight

All forecast areas of Tuckerman and Huntington Ravines have Low avalanche danger. Natural and human-triggered avalanches are unlikely. Watch for unstable snow on isolated terrain features. Lobster Claw, the Lower Snowfields, and Little Headwall are not posted due to a lack of snow in these areas.

AVALANCHE PROBLEM: The snowpack in Tuckerman is likely to continue to melt in place through the warmth today, due to recent rainfalls having already affected the slopes. Avalanche problems are secondary to the spring hazards listed below. Stretching the realm of possibility, the most likely avalanche problems you'll see out there today would be deep persistent slabs or surface layer wet loose slides. Given the thickness and strength of the crust layers, deep slab avalanches are unlikely. Loose wet slides are slightly more likely, but much more manageable and less consequential.

Emerging spring hazards include:

- **Long sliding falls** – Crampons and ice axes are strongly recommended in steep terrain. Snowshoes and microspikes are no substitute. Spring weather brings variable snow surface conditions that change by the hour and by aspect.
- **Crevasses, moats, and waterfall holes** – Snow creeping downslope and warm water flowing under the snow pack create holes and thin spots in surface snow deep enough to injure or kill you.
- **Falling ice** – Falling ice is unpredictable, but tends to happen most often during spells of prolonged warmth like we are currently having. The best thing you can do is reduce your exposure by limiting the time you spend downslope from frozen waterfalls. Falling ice chunks can move with surprising speed and follow unpredictable trajectories. **Lunch Rocks is not a safe place to spend time, as it sits below some of the largest ice that falls each spring.**

WEATHER: Today, you'll be looking at a reasonable weather day. It won't exactly be perfect spring ski weather, but temperatures will hold above freezing with rather light winds. Clouds will begin to lower late in the day. Since Monday afternoon, when a light snow began falling, summit temperatures have risen slowly and steadily. The snow quickly changed over to mixed precipitation at the summit and rain at lower elevations. Last night, the summit finally broke out above the freezing mark and all elevations will likely stay there for the duration of today. Tonight and tomorrow, as well as perhaps after this weekend, new snow may fall on the mountain. With this, you may see the return of a snowpack discussion and even some elevated avalanche hazard.

TRAILS INFO:

- The **Tuckerman Ravine** Trail uphill from Pinkham to Hermit Lake is mostly wall-to-wall ice. Traction devices or crampons are necessary for reasonable travel on this trail.
- The **Lion Head** Summer Trail is open. The winter route is now closed.
- The **Sherburne** Trail is closed about 2/3 mile up from the parking lot. Please respect the closure by walking over to the Tucks trail at the rope to reduce erosion on the ski 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 8:15a.m. Wednesday, March 16, 2016. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**