

General Bulletin for Saturday, May 07, 2016

Expires at 12:00 midnight Monday, May 09, 2016

A General Bulletin is in effect for Tuckerman Ravine. A new General Bulletin will be issued within 72 hours or when conditions warrant. We are no longer monitoring conditions in Huntington Ravine.

We are starting Saturday with thick overcast skies and a chance of showers in the afternoon. Summit temperatures will get into the 40's before falling slowly overnight and through Sunday. Sunday will get nasty with some early rain, changing to a "wintry mix", then to snow later as winds rage towards 90mph. 3" to 5" inches of total snow are expected for the higher terrain. This will make alpine travel a hypothermia event for those unprepared with the best gear. Rain soaking your gear, changing to snow with heat sucking wind, is never ideal for a pleasurable mountain experience. Generally, not a great weekend weather wise, but you won't have a lot of competition for your favorite rock to sit on, or gully to ski/ride. So if you have the right gear with an adventurous, yet cautious spirit, maybe we'll see you over the next couple of days. The icy trail from the parking lot to Hermit Lake has improved a lot, and although traction like microspikes might still be handy, most will find ski poles enough. Of course if you get into steep terrain in the Ravine we always recommend crampons and an ice axe.

We continue to recommend the left (south) side, such as Left gully, over traveling in the center or right side of the Ravine. Remarkably Left Gully is hanging in there pretty well, and while it has been changing, it's been melting slower than other locations. Although general mountain risks should be considered on the left side the objective hazards are dramatically less than the rest of the Ravine. Areas immediately adjacent to and under the closed "Lip" area on the right side have all of the hazards listed below so travel in this area is not recommended. In addition to being the bulls-eye for icefall, it should be avoided because it's "no fall terrain" due to holes, rocks, and crevasses. The consequences of a slip or fall here could lead to the worst possible outcome.

Spring Hazards in Tuckerman Ravine:

- **FALLING ICE** – Over the years many people have been severely injured or killed by falling ice in Tuckerman. The most hazardous locations are in the center and right side of the ravine, including Lunch Rocks, the Sluice, Lip, and Center Bowl. Warm weather and rain increase the potential for icefall to occur. Avoid spending time in high risk areas such as under the Headwall or at Lunch Rocks, more aptly known as "Icefall Rocks".
- **CREVASSES, HOLES, AND UNDERMINED SNOW** – The most dangerous of these are in the Center Bowl over to the Lip on the lookers right side of the Ravine. Breaking through weak snow into crevasses and holes has been the cause of numerous injuries and fatalities. Generally, climbing up what you plan to descend will allow you to see most of these hazards for your descent.
- **LONG SLIDING FALLS** – Age hardening can create very dense alpine ice that remains very slick even on warmer days. Freezing temperatures makes hard icy conditions more likely, but many people fail to understand how hard, and quick, soft snow can become when it goes into the shade on sunny afternoons. Planning ahead for the flash freeze shadow line is smart. Very hard and icy surfaces make, a slip, trip, or fall a very serious situation so good terrain choices and judgement as well as proper equipment, like an ice axe and crampons, are your best defense. The bottom sections of popular runs are also melting uphill making it possible to fall into rocks and terrain features while still in steep terrain.

A section of the Tuckerman Ravine Trail is closed to all use. This is due to the severe consequences of a fall in this area. The closed section extends from the top of Lunch Rocks to the junction of the Alpine Garden Trail above the ravine. Only this section is closed. Hiking or skiing in the vicinity of the closed trail is not permitted. (**ATTENTION AUX RANDONNEURS!** Une section du sentier du Tuckerman Ravine est présentement fermé à toutes les activités. Cette section est située entre Lunch Rocks et le sommet du Headwall jusqu'où ce dernier rejoint le sentier du Alpine Garden. Cette fermeture inclut également toute activité de descente dans le secteur du Lip. Seulement cette section du sentier est fermé. Cette fermeture annuelle est due à l'ampleur des crevasses et à la gravité qu'occasionnerait une chute dans ce secteur.)

Please Remember:

- Safe travel in avalanche terrain requires training and experience. This bulletin 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, or the AMC at Pinkham Notch or Hermit Lake.
- **Posted 7:20a.m. May 7, 2016. A new advisory will be issued when conditions warrant.**

Christopher Joosen, Snow Ranger, USDA Forest Service, White Mountain National Forest

