

General Bulletin for Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Expires at 12:00 midnight Friday, May 20, 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. Remember that avalanche activity may occur under a General Bulletin so always make your own snow stability assessments when traveling in avalanche terrain.

Snow returned earlier this week, producing 5.5" of accumulation over 3 days, and a record low temperature for May 16th on the Washington summit. These winter conditions will slide back giving way to more seasonal conditions with forecasts expecting rain on the summits tomorrow. High pressure with nicer weather returns for Friday and Saturday before rain threatens again on Sunday. Last week we noted a clear shift in traffic patterns from skiers/riders to hikers as we head into our last two weekends of the spring season. If you are thinking of hiking soon and getting above treeline, realize there are no options to hike through Tuckerman, only into it and then backtracking down again. Obviously, if you get above treeline through a variety of other options there is also no way down through Tuckerman. Although it was a poor winter the cold spring has allowed snow and ice to linger in the Ravine later than initially expected. At this point we're not too far away from average coverage for the date. Expect water ice to exist on many of the region's higher elevation trails. This is particularly true on those just below the alpine zone where tree coverage has shaded them from the sun. Microspikes continue to be a smart thing to have with you if you explore trails with limited condition reports.

Areas immediately adjacent to and under the closed "Lip" area on the right side have all of the hazards listed below; travel in this area is not recommended. Some large chunks of ice are still clinging to the Headwall and Center Bowl area. In addition to being in the bulls-eye for icefall, the center and right side of the Bowl should be avoided because it's also "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 currently are in the center and right side of the ravine, including Lunch Rocks, 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 looker's right side of the Ravine. Falling into one has been the cause of numerous injuries and past fatalities. Generally, climbing up what you plan to descend will allow you to see most of these hazards for your descent and realize there may be large open spaces under the surface near these holes. Expect the recent snow to hide some of these threats.
- **LONG SLIDING FALLS** – Temperatures often fall below freezing even late into spring. Additionally, age hardening can create very dense alpine ice that remains very slick even on warmer days. 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'ou 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 7:50a.m. May 18, 2016. A new advisory will be issued when conditions warrant.**

