

Avalanche Advisory for Tuesday, February 28, 2017

Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight

Huntington Ravine and Tuckerman Ravine have LOW avalanche danger. Natural and human-triggered avalanches are unlikely in all forecast areas. Watch for unstable snow on isolated terrain features. The Little Headwall is no longer forecast this season as it is now an open river.

AVALANCHE PROBLEM: The avalanche problem today will be **Wind Slab**. This formed Saturday into Sunday on S shifting to W winds and can be located primarily under rollovers in the steepest terrain or in sheltered locations from west winds. With up to an inch of snow today, this wind slab may grow in size, however this increase should be negligible in affecting its stability. As this advisory expires at midnight, precipitation should turn to rain. With this changeover in precipitation, this wind slab will become saturated and become a **Wet Slab** problem. As the snowpack beneath saw 5 days straight of above freezing temperatures last week, the rain should only snow that has fallen since Saturday.

WEATHER: Winds are currently from the west at 40mph with temperatures in the upper teens. Temperatures should increase through the day as the cloud layer lowers and winds shift to the SW. An approaching warm front will bring moisture to the mountains this afternoon with up to an inch of snow before transitioning to rain around midnight. Rain tomorrow should provide an opportunity to stay inside and break out your edge file for the approaching cold snap this weekend.

SPRING HAZARDS: With the warm spell last week, springtime hazards have emerged early this year. Recent cold temperatures have mitigated some of these hazards (icefall) and increased others.

- The refrozen snowpack is a prime surface for a **long, sliding fall**. Self-arresting will be very difficult, meaning climbers may want to consider breaking out the rope on your approach.
- Ice dams – water flowing down Huntington gullies can build up pressure behind ice and burst naturally or more likely from the whack of an ice tool or crampon.
- Glide cracks, moats and crevasses have opened in places and are now concealed with the new snow making locating these a challenge. The largest ones at the moment are under the cliff that separates the Sluice from the Lip, at the top of the early season ice climb called the *Open Book*, and on the approach to Central Gully near the climb called *Cloudwalkers*.
- Undermined snow over stream channels can be a problem in gullies but more of a danger lower in the tributaries. The generally warm winter so far hasn't allowed many streams to freeze so this undermining is emerging early this year. The Little Headwall is mostly open water, making exiting the Bowl on skis difficult.

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 7:50a.m., Tuesday, February 28 2017. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

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White Mountain National Forest