

Avalanche Advisory for Thursday, February 15, 2018

Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight

Huntington Ravine and Tuckerman Ravines have LOW avalanche danger. Generally safe avalanche conditions. Watch for unstable snow on isolated terrain features.

AVALANCHE PROBLEM: No significant avalanche problem exists today as our dry spell continues. Surface snow consists of refrozen rain soaked crust which is hard and strong enough to not only support your weight but also to resist a boot edge. Skier generated, wet loose sluffs may occur but they will likely be small and easy to manage due to a brief period of warming today. A few other mountain hazards may exist that should be accounted for in your route planning including the potential for a sliding fall on bullet proof snow, some rock or ice fall off of steep buttresses and reduced visibility this afternoon as the cloud ceiling lowers. A remote chance that warming could loosen the grip of the hangfire in the Lip, where it sits on the steep rock slab, would make me think twice about climbing or hanging out beneath it.

WEATHER: Yesterday consisted of largely clear skies with periods of summit fog that lingered in the Ravines. The maximum temperature on the Summit reached 22F. Today, the current temperature this morning is 23F on the summit and 30F at Hermit Lake with highs predicted to reach 30F on the summit at sunset with around 5000' to be the cutoff for the freezing mark. Wind will remain from the west, increasing from the current 45mph range to the 65-80 mph for the afternoon. The day is starting with minimal cloud cover that should thicken by early afternoon. A fast-moving low pressure system will pass New England later in the afternoon, bringing fog to higher elevations as well as light precipitation. Elevation will define precipitation type, though amounts will be small with less than 0.1" of water predicted by midnight.

SNOWPACK: Avalanche terrain received a reset after last weekend's rain and warm spell. A solid refreeze of the rain soaked upper snowpack has sapped the snow of the potential to propagate a crack and avalanche. Instead, the refreeze has left a surface better for climbing than skiing. There is the potential for softening today but the window will be brief as cloud cover grows and winds increase this afternoon. Lower down the mountain, conditions on the Sherburne ski trail will improve with the warming air temperatures.

Despite the current conditions, wintry weather, new snow, and elevated avalanche danger will return to the mountain. Join us at IME in North Conway this Saturday at 5:00 PM for an avalanche talk with Ryan Matz. This second event in the White Mountain Avalanche Education Foundation's Continuing Education series will focus on appropriate, strategic use of stability tests and other snowpack observations. It's free to attend!

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 Harvard Cabin.
- **Posted 7:30 a.m., Thursday, February 15, 2018. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

Frank Carus/Helon Hoffer, Snow Ranger
USDA Forest Service
White Mountain National Forest
(603) 466-2713 TTY (603) 466-2856