

Avalanche Advisory for Thursday, February 22, 2018

Expires tonight at 12:00 midnight

Huntington and Tuckerman Ravines have LOW avalanche danger. All forecast areas have Low avalanche danger. Generally safe avalanche conditions exist. The Little Headwall is not rated and is once again an open waterfall with very little snow coverage remaining.

AVALANCHE PROBLEM: Avalanche concerns today have been erased by the record setting warmth and rain over the past several days followed by a return of colder temperatures. An inch and a half of rain early Tuesday and record high temperatures have melted ice and snow in many locations. Avoidable and easily assessed spring hazards have emerged. Today, slide for life conditions will exist on all aspects of steep slopes making an ice axe and crampons and the ability to employ them effectively key tools for safe travel. Running water behind ice climbs in Huntington may have damaged ice or created ice dams that could rupture with a misplaced swing of an ice tool. In Tuckerman Ravine, the Open Book waterfall hole, low in the Lip forecast area, has opened along with the main waterfall hole higher. Both of these waterfall holes have been the scene of fatal accidents so consider giving them a wide berth. Moats and cracks have also developed across the Lip and Center Bowl though remain narrow. All of these hazards should remain on your radar as new snow arrives on Friday.

WEATHER: The temperature on the summit reached a record high of 48F yesterday which tied the record high not just for the month but for the winter season previously set on Jan 13, 2013. Hermit Lake reached 55F. The warm air temperatures were accompanied by a couple hours of sunshine and high winds before clouds rolled in. Today's weather is decidedly more wintry, with a current temperature at Hermit Lake of 19F while on the summit it is 15F with a NW wind at 45 mph. Today's high is expected to reach into the upper teens to low 20's F. Northwest winds will blow in the 45-60 mph range but diminish through the day to the 25-40 mph range.

SNOWPACK: Free water has mostly drained from the snowpack and cold temperatures are once again bonding grains together in the firm, and now icy, snow of our forecast areas. If you are venturing off trail, or onto seldom used trails, you are likely to encounter post-holing conditions since softer snow doesn't set up as firmly as the snow in our steeper and more wind hammered terrain. Rocks and ice will dominate most of the length of the Lion Head Winter route making microspikes a good choice for the lower angle sections of that and other similar routes. Even the Tuckerman Ravine trail to Hermit Lake is too slippery for easy walking without some sort of traction devices in your feet. And lastly, in the litany of grim news, the Sherburne Ski Trail is no longer continuous snow with several long sections of previous wind scoured trail now bare grass and dirt.

The next chance for precipitation comes late Friday when the mountain may receive a few inches of snow but with mixed precipitation at lower elevations.

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 22, 2018. A new advisory will be issued tomorrow.**

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