MOUNT WASHINGTON AVALANCHE CENTER

Avalanche Forecast for Wednesday, March 27, 2019

The Bottom Line

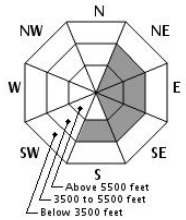
We are starting the day with **LOW** avalanche danger in all forecast areas. Generally unreactive wind slabs in the terrain have had time to settle and strengthen but will be subjected to some heating today. Cold, dry, chalky slabs on shady mid elevation slopes may survive the warm-up today but sunny aspects are likely to soften in the sun this morning. Remember that softening of a firm wind slab equals weakening so keep your guard up and manage your exposure to this hazard. As this heating occurs the potential to trigger a larger slab may push the avalanche danger to **MODERATE** on sunny or warm aspects and elevations.

Mountain Weather

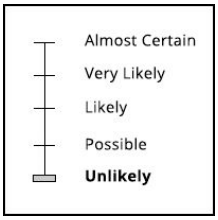
Temperatures rose yesterday in the full sunshine to above the freezing mark at Ravine elevations. The air temperature on the summit reached a high of 18F by late afternoon where it remained overnight and will rise further to the mid-20s today. The current temperature at Gray Knob is 24F, at Harvard Cabin, 30F with 28F at 4,000' on the Auto Road. Expect partly cloudy skies by noon to increase in coverage through the day. Summit wind is currently from the west-southwest at around 40 mph which will shift a bit to the west and increase slowly through the day, reaching the 40-55 mph range by nightfall as clouds fill the sky. Light precipitation arrives tonight with an inch of snow up high and rain at lower elevations.

Primary Avalanche Problem

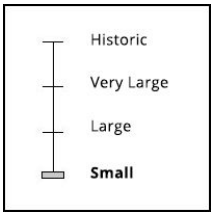
Wind Slab



Aspect/Elevation



Likelihood



Size

The two main wind slab types in avalanche terrain will be subjected to limited warming today. Softer wind slabs will respond first to any warming that occurs today though these slabs are isolated. Firmer wind slabs may soften a bit further than yesterday on the surface which could weaken their bridging power over any lingering weak layer. Human-triggering of these slabs hinges on the degree of warming that occurs today.

Secondary Avalanche Problem

Lower elevation slopes have been heated already this week and don't contain much other than small, unreactive slabs on otherwise mostly refrozen snow. Temperatures will push above freezing quickly this morning. Webster cliff gullies with enough snow in them could have this problem. **Loose wet** activity on larger mid elevation slopes and gullies should be easily manageable.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Instability caused by warming can occur quickly. Competing weather factors today make pinning down the rate of warming difficult. Increasing cloud cover can provide shade on a slope but can also reflect enough radiation to create a greenhouse effect if the cloud cover is thin. The prevailing opinion among forecasters this morning is that heating won't be enough to wet the slabs to create a wet avalanche problem but the limited warming that we will see today is enough to raise doubts about the reliability of large slabs that remain in the terrain following last weekend's avalanche cycle. The areas of most concern for this to occur would be in the hangfire in Sluice and Lip in Tuckerman Ravine as well as in Oakes Gulf. Though it's a remote risk, it pays to increase your margin by limiting your time spent on or under these slopes...booting up a lower angle or shady line will reduce your chance of triggering the slope even further.

Frank Carus, Snow Ranger; USDA Forest Service, White Mountain National Forest; (603)466-2713 TTY (603)466-2858

Please Remember: Safe travel in avalanche terrain requires training and experience. This forecast is just one of many decision making tools. You control your own risk by choosing where, when, and how you travel. Understand that the avalanche danger may change when actual weather differs from the weather 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 at the Harvard Cabin.