

General Bulletin for Friday, December 5, 2019

A new bulletin will be posted when conditions warrant and resources allow.

General Bulletins are issued when unstable snow may exist within our forecast areas but before 5-scale avalanche forecasts begin. We will start 5-scale forecasts on Wednesday, January 15 or earlier, if possible.

Please remember that avalanches can and do occur before 5-scale avalanche forecasts are issued.

Be on the lookout for fresh windslab particularly at the base of the steepest terrain or where wind piles it into pillows of hollow sounding slab. Most snow fields and gullies are not filled in yet so any avalanche activity should remain on the small side. The flip side of this is that the poorly developed snow fields and gullies have many obstacles and terrain traps in them. Small, early season avalanches can carry significant consequences due to the ease with which an avalanche can bury a person on a low angle bench or sweep them off a cliff.

The recent weather system that passed well to our south dropped around 5" of new snow. This new snow was blown into largely stubborn wind slabs or scoured to older, edgeable old snow. New snow in the form of upslope showers is in the forecast as we move into the weekend.

The Tuckerman Ravine and Huntington Ravine trails are challenging climbs with significant avalanche hazard during winter. Both have been the scene of serious accidents where they pass through the steepest terrain of these Ravines. **The summer Lion Head Trail remains the safer choice for accessing the summit of Mount Washington from the east.** As more snow falls and avalanche paths grow on the summer Lion Head trail, the Lion Head Winter Route will become the preferred route to the summit. Using the Lion Head Winter Route too early causes significant erosion and resource damage. **An ice axe and crampons are currently needed at treeline and above.** The Sherburne ski trail has snow coverage to the parking lot though numerous water bars remain partly open. Most but certainly not all rocks are covered.

Ice climbs are growing in size and pockets of unstable snow between ice pitches are notorious for causing problems. In addition to avalanche hazards, remember to take into account other early season hazards that exist in the terrain:

- **Rocks, trees and bushes** lurk in the snow and in the fall line. Skiing or sliding into obstacles can ruin your day or worse. New snow may just barely cover a season ending stump or boulder.
- **Terrain traps and cliffs** make burial and significant injury a real possibility, even if you are only swept off your feet by a small avalanche.

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 the avalanche danger to change 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.
- **Posted 6:35 a.m. December 5, 2019.**

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USDA Forest Service

