

General Bulletin for Wednesday, November 21, 2018

Expires at midnight on Saturday, November 24, 2018

General Bulletins are issued when unstable snow may exist within our forecast areas but before 5 scale avalanche advisories begin. Please remember that avalanches can occur before 5-scale avalanche forecasts are issued.

Terrain around Mount Washington continues to collect snow with snowfields increasing in size. Some avalanche paths are growing rapidly while others still continue to harbor more rocks and brush than snow. While snowfields are growing, most avalanche paths are not quite fully developed. Traditional start zones have not yet filled in, but smaller avalanches are occurring in areas that have enough snow. These same areas are the places getting attention from skiers and climbers. With the early season stoke in high effect at the moment and many people trying to ski and climb, it's important to remember the basics: travel one at a time and make use of safe zones, avoid skiing or climbing under or above another party, and bring your avalanche rescue gear.

Over that last four days, the summit of Mount Washington recorded over 15" of new snow. The 4" that fell yesterday arrived on lighter winds and will be subject to strong W and NW winds through the remainder of the week and into the weekend. In addition, another 2-4" is forecast for higher elevations Wednesday afternoon. Strong wind should continue to transport any available snow to the east side of the mountain range, further developing snowfields in lee areas of steep, extreme terrain. Bed surfaces are currently a mixed bag with terrain appearing to change on a daily basis as cliffs and ice bulges turn into snowfields. Over the course of the holiday, the weather forecast looks clear and windy, with the big story being the cold. Be prepared for mid-winter conditions if venturing into avalanche terrain with equipment to make snowpack assessments and to be self-reliant should the need arise. Respect small pockets of potentially unstable snow which have historically been the culprit of early season avalanche accidents on both ice climbs and larger snow slopes. In addition to avalanche hazards, be mindful of 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, heightening the consequences of a fall or small avalanche.
- **Long sliding falls** are a threat despite the appearance of new, soft snow on your approach. Wind can easily scour parts of your climb or hike down to a hard bed surface. What you thought would be a mellow snow climb can turn into something much more exciting. Consider using a rope in third class terrain or sooner than normal due to the slick surface.

The summer **Lion Head Trail** remains a preferred east side route to the summit over the Tuckerman and Huntington Ravine Trails, though watch for our recommendation towards the Winter Route that will come with additional snowpack development.

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.
- 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 7:00am on Wednesday, November 21, 2018. A new bulletin will be issued when conditions warrant.**

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