

Elephanthead Mountain, Absaroka Range

Date

Fri, 10/16/2020 - 11:41

Hi guys, I know that the Absarokas are out of your observation range, but since the storm activity and temperatures seem to be sort of consistent throughout the greater area I thought I'd submit some general observations from Elephanthead yesterday anyway. I ran in and climbed the peak via the North face coming direct from Mission Creek and observations are from the N/NE face at about 2 pm. Rain turned to snow around 8,000' and the snow from 8K to about 8700' was pretty wet and warm, pinwheeling down easily and on its own and only about 3-4" deep. Above 8700' to about 9,000' the snow dries out a little but remains very thick and sticky and there are areas where it has fallen on top of snow from previous storms. Above 9,000' of course is boilerplate ice .5" to 2" thick covering every surface except rock outcroppings that is either scoured by the wind or covered with thick wind slabby snow (mostly cross loaded). I just dug a couple of hand pits where there was enough snow and what I found was at the base there is a thick, hard crust of old snow that I couldn't scratch through with my hands. Layered on top of that is some softer snow that is pretty dense and seemed to be fairly well bonded to the crust underneath for now. On top of that is a wind crust 2-6" deep where I observed sun and wind affect on the surface. The snowfields have 6"- 4' of new snow loaded onto the preexisting crust of old snow. There is enough snow up there to ski if you're willing to battle your way in there and it is encouraging to see the snow coming in warm, dense, and sticky this year. The old snow has created a bed surface that is a cause for concern as more snow falls, the wind continues to blow, and temperatures drop. Also the areas where the wind has cross loaded into thick slabs is a bit worrisome. Those are easy to see in the photos I attached. Cheers!

Region

Out of Advisory Area

Observer Name

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