Natural Wind-Pocket Soft-Slab Release

Date
Sat, 11/19/2022 - 12:20
Activity
Skiing

My partner and I were skinning up a west-facing slope in Beehive Basin when we stopped out of the wind at a large rock outcrop.

Shortly after stopping to re-assess, a small, wind-deposited, pocket of snow popped off the rock face above us triggering a soft-slab slide which gained momentum and stepped down through a rocky choke, fanning out in the open face below the rocks, before coming to a stop directly at our skis.

We witnessed no additional natural avalanches that day or found any significant instabilities in the snowpack on adjacent slopes. We can only attribute our near-miss to luck, if the avalanche had occured five minutes before we stopped (while skinning across the slope), or five minutes after (while continuing upslope to our desired objective), our day might have ended quite differently.

Region
Northern Madison
Location (from list)
Beehive Basin