Unstable Snow in Cooke City

Date
Wed, 01/17/2024 - 13:00
Activity
Snowmobiling

We rode to the bottom of an avalanche on Sheep Mountain that had been triggered by riders from the bottom. This avalanche happened on Monday, 01/14, but by today it had been filled in by recent winds and new snow. From here we worked our way north of Round Lake and found 10"-12" of new snow (0.5" SWE), compared to the 5" of new snow near Sheep Mountain. Near the wilderness boundary, we found unstable snow and while getting a snowmobile unstuck in the flats remotely triggered a small avalanche from 100' away. We then rode to a northern aspect at 9600' and found 170 cm of snow and had poor results in our stability tests, with an ECTP 6 on buried weak layers below the last week and a half of storms.

From here we rode to the top of Henderson Bench and dug on an east-facing slope at 9500'. While walking to our snowpit location we collapsed the slope and a small pocket of snow below a tree avalanched. Here we again had poor stability test results, ECTP 11, this area had previously been wind-loaded during last week's storm. Storm totals here were less than what we found north of Round Lake, with 5" of new snow at 3 pm (0.2" of SWE).

Wind through the day was calm but is expected to increase tonight. Snow will continue tonight into tomorrow morning. Expect danger to rise as snow totals increase and wind begins transporting snow.

Region
Cooke City
Location (from list)
Sheep Mountain
Observer Name
Zach Peterson