Weak Snow and Wind Slabs

Date
Sun, 12/24/2023 - 10:50
Activity
Skiing

We skied north of Bridger Bowl today near the ramp. We dug at the top of the refrigerator chutes with an HS of 66 cm where 4" of new snow was on top of the existing weak snowpack. Here we had ECTN22 and ECTN16 results at the interface between early December snow and weak-faceted snow near the ground. We continued up the ramp towards the ridge where the wind was forming drifts of snow that were cracking at our ski tips. At the ridge, we were able to trigger a small avalanche on a test slope.
Below the ridge, we dug another snowpit in an area that was not wind-loaded. Here the HS was 72 cm and had 8" of new snow. The same poor structure was found here and we had an ECTP 20 result on the same interface of December snow on weak early-season snow.

While recent snow wasn't enough to dramatically increase the danger on the slope we chose to travel on doesn't mean that is the case everywhere. The snowpack structure in the Bridger Range is poor and careful assessment should be done if choosing to enter steep terrain. Slopes that have or are being loaded by wind will likely have easy-to-trigger wind slabs.
As we skied back to the ski area boundary the wind had begun to form drifts at the lower elevations that were easily triggered.

Region
Bridger Range
Location (from list)
The Ramp
Observer Name
Zach Peterson