Avalanches at Buck Ridge

Date
Mon, 01/22/2024 - 14:25
Activity
Snowmobiling

We rode into Buck Ridge today, 01/22, towards the Bear Creek wilderness boundary. Dangerous avalanche conditions exist. Skiers and riders should give themselves wide safety margins when traveling around avalanche terrain. Cautious route-finding and conservative decision-making are essential.

We saw multiple natural avalanches in Beaver Creek, First Yellowmule, Second Yellowmule, Third Yellowmule, and McAtee Basin. The recent avalanches were large enough to bury or injure backcountry travelers (D2) and likely happened within the last 24-48 hours.

We stopped at the crown of an avalanche in Beaver Creek and found a stiff, cohesive slab of wind-drifted snow on top of faceted snow below (ECTP 13, HS=188). The avalanche failed on the interface between the wind-loaded snow and fist hard facets below. The avalanche broke 2-3 feet deep, 100 feet wide, and ran 100 vertical feet.

In First Yellowmule, Dave was crossing a low-angle slope and remotely triggered an avalanche in steep terrain from 750' away. This avalanche was 1-2' deep, 250' wide, and ran 200' to the meadow below. The avalanche failed on a layer of buried surface hoar. At the crown, we dug a snowpit and had ECTP10 results on this layer.

SW wind blew throughout the day. Small wind drifts had begun to form on the road while riding out.

Some avalanches we saw/ triggered were on wind-loaded slopes, and others were not. All steep slopes are suspect.

Region
Northern Madison
Location (from list)
Buck Ridge
Observer Name
Zach Peterson