Avalanches along the Bacon Rind Uptrack

Date
Mon, 03/04/2024 - 17:25
Activity
Skiing

We toured up toward the Skillet along the standard uptrack route at Bacon Rind. We deviated to the south to look for a natural avalanche that broke on March 2nd in the south-facing meadows a third of the way up. We did not find it but dug a pit. 95 cm HS with a newly buried weak layer of facets above a crust at 52 cm (ECTP22x2 plus an ECTN17 on this layer). The depth hoar near the ground was moist.

Somewhat dejected after failing to locate the avalanche, we proceeded back to the typical route. We came across a deep avalanche on a small rollover. 100 feet wide, 3-4 feet deep, and 50-75 feet vertical. Slope angles ranged from 29-33 degrees steep. It was an R5, D1.5 avalanche that certainly would have been very dangerous on a larger slope. ECT in the crown was unremarkable (this is not uncommon in the crown of an avalanche), PST 30/110 End.

Continuing up, the next open meadow had collapsed and was splintered with shooting cracks. The failure propagated through the trees with more cracks and buckle marks as the slab tried to release... which it did a bit further downslope. Again, the crown was 3-4 feet deep, and the terrain constrained the length.

No additional signs of instability.

These two avalanches were different than the two we were initially looking for. I suspect skiers triggered them remotely on March 2 given the amount of new snow on the debris, but they may have failed naturally. Regardless, avalanches in these locations are very unusual and are indicative of dangerous conditions. With more snow coming the next two days, travel in or near avalanche terrain requires a great deal of caution. Conservative terrain selection will be essential.

Region
Southern Madison
Location (from list)
Bacon Rind
Observer Name
David Zinn