The Missing Ingredient

Date
Mon, 01/01/2024 - 12:35
Activity
Skiing

We toured into Beehive Basin and up and over to Bear Basin. The snowpack was thin, a maximum of two feet deep, and it has entirely transformed into piles of weak facets. Off the established skin track, we were breaking through the snowpack nearly to the ground in this weak snow except where melt freeze crusts supported our skis. We were hunting for slopes that still had a cohesive slab above the sugar and couldn't find it ourselves. We dug four snowpits and found non-propagating failures or ECTX results. We performed a PST in our pit below the cornice line in Bear Basin to see if we could get the last trace of a slab to propagate failure and got non-propagating slab fracture results.

We did talk to a skier who went farther up the ridge toward Middle Peak. Also hunting for instability, he found one spot with enough of an overlying slab to get propagating test results once, but could not reproduce them in that pit or anywhere else.

Other than watching out for thin snow cover and rocks, we will continue to monitor the snow under our feet as we travel for changes and isolated instability where the slab remains sufficiently intact to produce an avalanche.

Region
Northern Madison
Location (from list)
Beehive Basin
Observer Name
David Zinn