Lots of Action in Cooke City

Date
Thu, 01/18/2024 - 08:40
Activity
Skiing
Snowmobiling

North of Cooke City we observed numerous avalanches that likely happened last night or early this morning as snowfall stopped. Partly cloudy skies gave us a good view of the terrain and ridgelines. In the Fisher Creek drainage, we saw multiple natural avalanches on the east side of Henderson Moutain, including just south of Henderson Mountain off the Lulu Pass Road. At the back of the drainage, we saw another avalanche on the shoulder of Scotch Bonnet Moutain. Crown depths ranged in size but from afar seemed to be 1-2' deep. Several of these avalanches are wide and in sheltered terrain at mid-slope.

On the other side of Henderson Moutain in the Miller Creek drainage, we observed avalanches in the gully near the Daisy Pass road. Along the east side of the Miller Ridge, we saw large natural avalanches that happened just below the ridge line. On the south side of Crown Butte, the story didn't change with two large avalanches happening mid-slope, and near the summit. Again these crowns ranged in depth from 1-2' deep and deeper on the south side of Crown Butte.

On the west side of Henderson Moutain, we transitioned to skis and began ascending a low-angle slope toward a known avalanche path. Along the way, we experienced several collapses. Halfway up the slope, Ian noted snowballs rolling down the hill and around the corner, we could see the debris that had come from the steep terrain above. We had a clear view of this slope near the snowmobiles and it had not avalanched when we began ascending. At some point from several hundred feet away, we remotely triggered the slope. The avalanche was ~150' wide, 2' deep and ran almost to the road. Across the gully, we could see large cracks but the slope did not avalanche. Above, cracking and collapsing continued and we got a view into the upper part of the gully and saw another crown of an avalanche that likely happened at the same time as the slope below.

Roads that were groomed last night and by 9 am had wind drifts that were a few feet in size. The snow has stopped but the wind remained blustery through the morning and into the afternoon. Getting on or under steep terrain today was certainly not in our travel plans, and it will remain that way at least through the weekend.

More photos and video coming soon!

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