

Wind Slab and Storm Slab on S.Face of Ellis

Date

Mon, 02/17/2025 - 17:15

Activity

Skiing

At 16:10 I arrive at the summit of Ellis. The wind was Westerly 0-5mph. I planned to ski the South Face of Ellis and then come up and ski the typical East face slides back to the car. The south face was skied on Saturday and I was told there was a stout melt freeze crust with roughly 6 inches of new snow. I was also told it was skied out after 4 skier had skied the face.

From the summit I make 2 ski cuts to safe spots. The snow was unreactive, but it was wetter/ denser than expected. There was 6-8 inches of new snow. Roughly 150-200 vertical feet down the face I bailed. Wind affected snow was becoming widespread and I noticed the new snow falling at the apex of my turns (storm slabs). The new snow was thinner, 4-6 inches and the crust was very noticeable. In tight trees I transitioned and skinned over to east face. Skiing through newly formed wind slabs there were small shooting cracks (not particularly energetic) that extended roughly 10 feet. Wind slabs were up to 2 feet deep. The melt freeze crust was easily breakable in some places and unbreakable in others.

Long winded, but the new snow and wind loading lined up exactly with the forecast.

Region

Northern Gallatin