

Middle Basin, Middle Peak, and Upper Bear Basin

Date

Sun, 01/16/2022 - 09:30

Activity

Snowboarding

Yesterday (1/15) we toured up to Middle peak via Middle Basin then then dropped into upper Bear Basin to take advantage of the stable conditions and ride one of the couloir back there. Conditions were extremely stable. We saw no signs of avalanches or instability at any point during the day. The main thing to note is that snow quality was very variable. East facing slopes for the most part seem to be holding decent snow still. However, other aspects and spots along ridgelines were very wind scoured, leaving an extremely hard surface that made skinning and riding difficult at times. The open face of Middle Peak had these conditions and it caused us to back off our main objective of riding the couloir off of Bear Claw Peak due to the fact it was the same aspect of Middle Peak and we were worried if it had similar snow quality it would make for a dangerous climb and ride. We found this hard wind scoured surface in exposed spots in Upper Bear Basin as well. If we get a good dump of snow this would make a very slick bed surface for avalanches to slide on.

We saw a lot of medium to large sized cornices as well, including a very large cornice hanging over upper Bear Basin along the ridge NW of Middle Peak. These cornices seemed to be rock solid but will make huge bombs if we get a warming event. We saw multiple cornice collapses along the ridge between Beehive Basin and Middle Basin. We were unable to tell if they were natural or skier triggered but they looked to be old and did not cause any reaction from the snowpack.

The west side of the ridge between Beehive and Middle Basin is completely stripped of snow along the ridge line. The wind has even started to transport exposed dirt. Very few options are available to ride this side of the ridge into Beehive Basin.

Region

Northern Madison

Location (from list)

Bear Basin

Observer Name

Connor Culver