Poor decision making in small but dangerous terrain.

Date
Thu, 03/30/2023 - 13:15
Activity
Snowmobiling

After a long day of riding 2 to 3 thousand feet higher in good snow I was getting close to the truck after 10 or so miles on a mostly hard pack trail I decided to climb this hill in a split second decision. My sled was overheating and my plan was to cool it down. As I ascended the hill I hit a pencil hard wind slab about a third of the way up, I knew instantly that I was in trouble as this slope ended up being much steeper than I had initially thought. I made a decision in the moment to continue up the slope as it was not many vertical feet in elevation. My thoughts were that I had lots of speed and momentum built up and that that would carry me up I also thought that if I tried to make an aggressive turn it would put more stress on the snow pack and I also figured the closer to the top of the slab I was when it fractured the better off I would be. I made it about 100 feet from the top of the hill when it first fractured, I was about 20 feet from the fracture and there was a point slightly to my right that was the closest point of the fracture to me. I turned slightly right heading to the closest point of snow above the fracture line. As I turned the slope started sliding. The top of the of the slide rolled over like a large wave and a block hit me in the ribs luckily not nocking me off my sled. I maintained full throttle and kept my momentum traverseing through the rolling blocks. My only thought was to try to stay on top of my machine and keep forward momentum. In the last few moments of the slide I could feel I was loosing control of my machine because it was starting to get sucked into the avalanche. When the slide stopped I was in snow to my knee on my uphill side. I want to end this with a warning of complacency. I had been in big terrain all day and didn't analyze the slope like I should have a simple glance for a moment and I would have recognized the dangers of the wind slab. I got complacent and it almost got me injured or killed. Just because a slope is small doesn't mean it isn't dangerous.

Region
Dillon Area
Location (from list)
Blacktail Mountains