Recent large avalanches near Cooke

Date
Fri, 12/20/2024 - 15:10
Activity
Snowmobiling

We rode out to Lulu Pass to look at the few avalanches that were reported yesterday on Henderson and Fisher Mtn. Today we did not see any avalanches that weren't previously reported, other than one small, but thick wind slab on south facing slope of Scotch Bonnet (photo). At least the avalanche on Fisher and one on Henderson broke near the ground (pics attached). Some slides were heavily refilled by drifted snow, so it was hard to tell how deep they broke.

Yesterday I saw a wide slab avalanche up on west Woody Ridge from town (photo attached). It happened late on Wednesday or overnight during or after the strong winds and snowfall.

We dug a pit on a north-northeast facing slope below Fisher Mtn. (on Rob's Knob). Snowpack was just over 3 feet deep with a stripe of surface hoar in the middle. Generally 1F to Pencil hard slab above the SH. Facets near the ground were 2-3mm and rounding. We had ECTP22 on the surface hoar and ECTN22 and PST 25/100arr.

Despite the generally hard and rounded facets near the ground, recent avalanches are a sign that those are a problem in addition to the surface hoar.

Clear and mostly calm today. A few rollerballs on southwest aspects.

Overall, the recent avalanche activity is a sign that the early season weak layers are a problem to watch going forward. Danger and likelihood of avalanches may decrease in the immediate future with a break from loading, but we need to be thinking about these layers when future storms add up.

Region
Cooke City
Location (from list)
Fisher Mtn.
Observer Name
Alex Marienthal