Poor Structure and Wind-Drifted Snow

Date
Tue, 01/16/2024 - 13:05
Activity
Skiing

We toured into Mount Blackmore and up the standard route on the southeast-facing shoulder. Winds at higher elevations resulted in some drifting and there were pillows of recently drifted snow evident on the east face of Blackmore. We did not experience any collapsing, shooting cracks, or obvious signs of instability on our tour.

We dug at the top of the shoulder with unremarkable results (ECTN5 5" below the surface on a hardness change). The structure is very weak but it lacks a cohesive slab in many areas to push it over the edge toward instability. It is possible to trigger an avalanche on slopes with recent wind-drifting or where a thicker slab is resting on persistent weak layers. Avoid wind-loaded slopes and you will minimize the chances of finding a trigger-point.

With snow on the way, we expect to see the danger rise in the coming days. Recent avalanche activity, collapsing, and shooting cracks are all reasons to chose travel on slopes less than 30 degrees in steepness.

Region
Northern Gallatin
Location (from list)
Mt Blackmore
Observer Name
David Zinn