

Not as Obvious but Still Unstable

Date

Sun, 02/11/2024 - 14:25

Activity

Skiing

On Mt. Blackmore we dug a pit on the east face near the ridgeline. We measured 10-12" of new snow that fell over the last week, equalling 0.7" of [snow water equivalent](#). In the trees and less wind affected areas there were 14-16" recent snow, but we did not measure SWE there. In our [snowpit](#) on an east-facing slope at 9700' we found this new snow sitting on 2' of [faceted snow](#), showing us that the structure is there to create avalanches. While [stability](#) tests were not remarkable with scores of ECTX and ECTP29, we did not feel like stepping into avalanche terrain was an appropriate decision for two reasons. First, we know the snowpack setup is capable of creating large avalanches and new snow will increase the likelihood of this. Second, recent wind has drifted the new snow into thicker denser slabs that will add additional weight to already unstable slopes. We saw clear signs of [wind loading](#) with fresh cornices forming at ridgelines and pillows of wind-drifted snow forming at the top of rollovers. While skiing out my partner and I both noted that the snow felt unsupportable with our skis breaking through to the facets below. We also discussed that as more snow and wind come this week dangerous avalanche conditions will continue to exist.

Region

Northern Gallatin

Location (from list)

Mt Blackmore

Observer Name

Zach Peterson