Blackmore early season

Date
Mon, 10/28/2024 - 09:55
Activity
Snowshoeing

From e-mail: "I went for a quick run up to Blackmore yesterday afternoon/eve (10/21) to have a look at the snow.

Brief summary:

-snow on SSE-S-SW-W had melted off completely, but as soon as I wrapped to SE or NW there was still an appreciable amount of snow, with dry gaps forming between snow patches.

-E-NE-N (and flat terrain) had settled HS of 15-20cm at 8,500' and 25-30cm by 9,500'. The snow here formed a thick blanket over the terrain, covering/smoothing a lot of the roughness. All of the snow I encountered had either an ambient melt-freeze crust on the surface (thin, pencil hard), or a thicker sun crust (depending on aspect, a bit thicker, pencil hard). Presumably these crusts had melted during the day (and the previous days) but were already refreezing by late afternoon. Underneath the crusts the snow was dense, moist to wet, and quite homogenous, though I could make out some graupel grains without obvious layering at the upper end of my traveled elevation (summit, ~10,150').

-Right now the snow on the ground looks lovely! Moist/wet, dense, homogenous, filling in terrain roughness, etc. As it sits, this would make an excellent base. There is a lot of potential for strong gradients and facet development at/near the surficial crust, but the temps have been so mild that this hasn't been an issue yet (where I observed the snow). Looking into the future, we may get colder temps next week and a dusting of snow on top of the current snow... this would be a great way to turn a nicely developing base into an ugly weak layer, but only time will tell... As far as skiability goes, a lot of the terrain that is holding snow now would quickly become skiable with a decent storm on top. Still dangerous from rocks/stumps/etc, but definitely skiable.

-Ice: I didn't go into the main fork, but based on observations it seemed like it has been too warm for much/any ice to be forming. Tons of water moving through the landscape though, just need some cold. Also, there is a ton of snow down on the Sphinx (marginal photo below), I bet that comes in quickly when we get overnight freezes."

Region
Northern Gallatin
Location (from list)
Mt Blackmore
Observer Name
Ben VandenBos