Cracking and collapsing in Taylor Fork

Taylor Fork
Southern Madison
1/9/2019
Code
Elevation
8800
Notes

From an email: "Lower elevation snowpack was a wallow through deep and unsupportable facets. We were sinking 12" - 18" on skis... straight to the ground off skis. Off the road, our sled tracks were dropping down almost to the ground.

At 8200'+ the snow was a bit more supportable. No collapsing, cracking, woomphing until...

We got to 8800' and were running out of time so decided to ski out. I was going to dig a pit on a 15 degree adjacent to a steeper pitch and as soon as I stepped out on to a more cohesive slab from the shallow snowpack I was on, the whole slope collapsed and shifted downhill a few inches (See photo). Didn't dig the pit... turned around, traversed to the trees, and slid home. Based pole and hand pit, the slab seemed to be about 1F - 4F over 18" - 24" Fist hardness facets.

The difference between the slope that collapsed and the rest of the tour was the slab. There had been recent windloading and the slab was more cohesive."

Number of slides
1
Number caught
0
Number buried
0
Problem Type
Wind-Drifted Snow
Images
Cracking and collapsing in Taylor Fork
Slab Thickness units
centimeters
Single / Multiple / Red Flag
Single Avalanche
Advisory Year
18-19