

Unstable weak layers in the S Madisons

Date

Fri, 02/21/2025 - 14:00

Activity

Snowmobiling

Clear skies, sunshine and great visibility today allowed us to cover a lot of ground in the Southern Madisons. We traveled up the Taylor Fork to the weather station in Sunlight Basin, over to the head of Carrot Basin, through Sage Basin and up and over into Cub and Cabin Creeks.

Winds were light all day and only picked up later in the afternoon, gusting moderately from the south in the parking lot. Solar aspects moistened in the upper 1-2" of the snowpack, but we noted minimal signs of wet snow instability.

We came to the Taylor Fork searching for signs of instability from persistent weak layers and wind slabs, and we found both. We saw up to five recent avalanches from the last few days. 1-2 looked to have failed on PWLs, and the rest were wind slabs. [Cornice](#) collapses triggered at least two of these avalanches.

Outside of recent avalanches, a few other red flags jumped out at us. While traversing to our pit site in Sunlight Basin, we triggered a whumpfing [collapse](#) and a shooting crack up to 100' long across an adjacent slope. This [snowpit](#) on a SE [aspect](#) was made up of a dense [slab](#) of recent snow, sitting on top of many different layers of junky, faceted grains. [Propagation](#) was easy to find (ECTP 11, HS: 112). We also dug snowpits on N and SW facing slopes. While we found weak snow on these slopes, the N (ECTPX) and SW (ECTP25), the snowpack was deeper in both areas and the weak layers were less developed. When compared to [what Alex and Mark found](#) three weeks ago in this area, these instabilities are becoming less widespread and more stubborn to [trigger](#), but an avalanche breaking on these weak layers is still possible.

Region

Southern Madison

Location (from list)

Taylor Fork

Observer Name

Haylee Darby