

snowpack is becoming stronger

Date

Sat, 01/07/2023 - 18:20

Activity

Snowmobiling

I am finding very solid snowpack in most areas. We dug one pit yesterday that exhibited two weak layers in the top 35cm and one near the ground. This was a wind loaded slope with HN 230cm. CT test did not fail. No evidence of surface hoar at this location. 9100 feet on a NE aspect.

At lower elevations I found evidence of surface hoar forming, but not necessarily on the snow, see photo.

We are entering a warming trend, which is generally healthy for the snowpack. The conditions are right for surface hoar development; however, I am only finding very isolated evidence of this. Something to keep an eye out for.

We have several weak layers in the snowpack that could fail causing an avalanche, likely a large deadly avalanche. It's hard to find places that exhibit reactive test results, but the evidence is in recently human triggered avalanches. We are not getting a ton of new snow and together with the mild temperatures this will create a strong snowpack over time. The places to watch out for are shallower snowpack areas where the persistent weak layer is easier to trigger.

Region

Island Park

Location (from list)

Sawtelle Peak

Observer Name

Bret Rasmussen