

Fewer Obvious Signs of Instability, Still Worried

Date

Mon, 01/29/2024 - 16:20

Activity

Snowmobiling

We spent the last two days riding in the Centennial Mountains. We had limited visibility for spotting avalanches but we did catch sight of one [slide](#) on a steep slope above Yale Creek.

There were fewer in-your-face signs of instability, such as the avalanches, shooting cracks, and collapsing, which were a staple of conditions last week. However, when we dug deeper (get it), we found the ingredients for a human-triggered avalanche in every [snowpit](#) we explored. All failed and propagated on the [surface hoar](#) or near surface facets buried 1-2 feet deep, with results varying from ECTV to ECTP21 indicating human-triggered avalanches are likely.

I told my riding partners that, in some ways, I am more worried about people triggering avalanches this week than last because last week, incredibly obvious signs of instability and avalanche warnings largely kept people out of avalanche terrain. This week, the feedback is not as clear, and folks may get tempted by steeper slopes. Our recommendation is to play the long game. Persistent weak layers demand persistent patience. Our best tool to have safe and enjoyable days in the mountains remains conservative terrain selection and sticking to slopes less than 30 degrees.

Region

Island Park

Location (from list)

CENTENNIAL RANGE

Observer Name

David Zinn