Lionhead Jan 23

Date
Thu, 01/23/2025 - 16:45
Activity
Snowmobiling

We went to Lionhead, seeking some of the thinnest and weakest snow. We found relatively thin snow - the snowpack was mostly a 1 meter deep (3.2 ft). It was supportive for sleds and you could walk on top with about 6-8 out of every 10 steps not punching through to the ground. This is because there is a very cohesive slab on top of the early December facets.

What surprised us was how stubborn that weak layer was in our tests. We dug in 4 different places on E, E, E, and NW aspects between 8000 and 9200 feet. ECTs either wouldn't even break or would propagate on the weak layer after mid- to high 20s for taps.

We observed some new facets near the snow surface that formed last weekend during very cold weather. On Lionhead Ridge we found these facets capped by a hard but thin (~4 inch thick) wind slab.

Summary

- The early December faceted layer seems mostly dormant for now.
- Wind slabs are the main problem and they will be extra sensitive as more snow comes Friday providing winds more ammo to make the wind slabs deeper. Because these wind slabs may be resting on facets, they could stay a problem for sometime.
- We did not get a chance to map how widespread or isolated this wind slab/facet combo is.

Region
Lionhead Range
Location (from list)
Lionhead Ridge
Observer Name
Staples & Zinn