Wind slab activity in Hyalite

Date
Thu, 02/29/2024 - 15:50
Activity
Ice Climbing

Climbing near the Silken Falls / Dribbles areas from 11:00 to 17:00, we observed strong winds throughout the day. HN was 7-12cm on valley floors, and as we passed the Dribbles on the approach we noted a 20-25cm stiff wind deposit near the base of the buttress was that 1F- in firmness.

Wind transport was intense throughout the day both in areas we traveled and visible plumes at alpine ridgelines with the amount of fresh snow available for transport —a photo will not do the experience justice. Due to the protected nature of the climbs we were on, it was hard to tell which direction winds were blowing from. We observed 15 to 45cm of snow in the gullies we traveled (N & NW facing, ~7600-8600'), with the average HS being 20cm. While there was limited wind stiffening at the surface of much of the snow in these gullies, wind slabs were not present in the areas we traveled. We did not travel to the very top of any gully system, so I cannot speak at length to the hazard at the upper reaches of this wall.

Looking out towards Divide Peak and the Divide Cirque at the end of the day, we noted 3 fresh crowns that were not present in the morning. These were D1 to D1.5 in size, breaking along the base of cliffs, and appeared to be wind slab avalanches from a brief peek through some glass. There was a lot of small loose dry activity that we observed across canyon at middle to upper elevations as you would expect with strong winds and fresh snow. All activity was in line with what one would expect given the forecast and weather inputs.

Region
Northern Gallatin
Location (from list)
Divide Cirque
Observer Name
Maushund