

Spooky Snowpack in the Western T-Roots

Date

Sat, 04/15/2023 - 07:00

Activity

Skiing

While skinning into Big Bear gulch, off Wisconsin creek, we encountered a couple of small whumphs in a flat meadow below treeline. We also encountered one instance of localized cracking within the trees, near the hollow created by a dead tree. At the top of the ridgeline there were small cornices, and we noticed significant wind loading higher up on Old Baldy mountain.

In our east facing pit, just below the Little Bear ridgeline, we found a large melt freeze crust complex near the surface, interspersed with layers of much softer snow and NSF. Below the stout crust layers, the snowpack drastically reduced in hardness, with fist hardness facets near 50cm from the ground. We had moderate CT results (CT 12 Q2 @ 140cm) within the crust complex, and more difficult CT results (CT 23 Q2 @ 30cm) within a layer of large (3mm) striated depth hoar near the ground. Our ECT test resulted in an ECTX, possibly indicating the strength of the crusts, which neither skis nor boots would penetrate through. Our ECT column did pull out of the wall as a cohesive block when we applied shear from behind. Our pit profile was submitted through Snowpilot.

Based on these observations, and the warming we believed would occur later in the day, we decided to not ski off of Old Baldy mountain, and rather took some laps at a nearby low-angle meadow.

Region

Out of Advisory Area

Location (from list)

Tobacco Root Mountains

Observer Name

Wyatt Hubbard