

Snowing and Blowing in Cooke

Date

Sun, 03/23/2025 - 16:30

Activity

Skiing

We rode up to the east Henderson Bench and back around to Scotch Bonnet and the Rasta Chutes. There was 5" of low-density new snow throughout the day and strong winds were actively drifting snow. Instability in the upper few inches was evident, with shooting cracks and small avalanches on steep drifts. In terrain unaffected by the wind, loose snow avalanches in the top few inches slid easily.

We dug on a northeast-facing slope ("Almost Died"), and two on southeast-facing slopes at two elevations in the Rasta Chutes. There was a recently buried [weak layer](#) 20-30 inches deep in all the pits that failed and propagated in two out of three--both the SE Rasta Pits (ECTP21 & ECTP25). I don't think we'll see a widespread avalanche cycle on this layer, but it is worth digging for and assessing before considering steep terrain. We saw Beau Fredlund at dinner and he came across an avalanche in Sheep Creek that broke 2-3 feet deep and 300 feet wide. I suspect it was this layer; however, the slope that avalanched was different in that it was a thin snowpack with some grass poking out. Our pits were 250-350cm DEEP!

The bottom line:

- Significant amounts of recent snow and strong wind this afternoon, and more snow forecast for tonight. Avalanches on wind-loaded slopes are likely to very likely. Currently, I would avoid all the big, heavily wind-loaded terrain in Cooke City. This is where you'll [trigger](#) a [slide](#) and it has the potential to break a few feet deep.
- Dig down three feet to test for instability before skiing or riding steeper non-wind-loaded terrain.

Region

Cooke City

Location (from list)

COOKE CITY

Observer Name

Zinn and Darby