Persistent Slab Avalanches Tepee Basin

Date
Sun, 02/23/2025 - 15:40
Activity
Snowmobiling

We got to ride into Tepee Basin with a pair of snowmobilers who were involved in an avalanche two days ago (2/23). The pair generously offered to join us and run us through the incident. It was an incredible opportunity to learn from each other. Read **details** about the slide.

The avalanche failed on the weak layer of facets that formed in late January. We also spotted another avalanche in similar, mid-elevation terrain likely triggered yesterday or earlier this morning. Both of these avalanches fit the pattern we've been seeing **in Lionhead** and the recent slide outside the forecast area **in the Black Canyon area** of Island Park. Other than the Black Canyon avalanche which is uncertain because we have not visited the site, the slides are taking place in mid-elevation terrain, smaller slopes with minimal wind-loading, and a thinner snowpack.

The snowpack in both the Tepee slides was thin relative to the average snowpack depth (129 cm).

Take Homes:

1. You aren't good to go if you avoid the steep, upper-elevation, wind-loaded bowls. Steep slopes at mid-elevations harbor weak snow and have the potential for an avalanche.
2. The persistent slab avalanche problem is alive and well. The epicenter of this problem is in the Lionhead area and the Southern Madison and Southern Gallatin Ranges.
3. The issue with this avalanche problem is the distribution. It's nearly impossible to tell which slopes will slide and which ones won't. On many, the weak layer isn't so weak and the likelihood of triggering one is low. On other slopes, the weak layer is very weak and the likelihood of triggering one is up there.

Region
Southern Madison
Location (from list)
Tepee Basin
Observer Name
Zinn and Staples