It is getting dangerous in Lionhead

Date
Tue, 01/09/2024 - 12:10
Activity
Skiing
Snowmobiling

We rode into Lionhead today towards Lionhead Ridge. Cloudy with consistent snowfall through the afternoon. The wind was out of the west and was blowing snow around at all elevations. We stopped at Ski Hill and dug on an east-facing slope at 8000'. While isolating our ECT we had a failure 15cm below recent snow on a well-preserved layer of surface hoar (ECTPV). From here we transitioned to skis and continued up to the ridge. As we approached the ridge we experienced frequent collapses and shooting cracks that extended 20 feet in front of our skis. At a rollover, while breaking trail there was a collapse, and 3" wide cracks shot in all directions and the slab moved a few inches downhill. If this terrain had been any steeper it certainly would have been an avalanche.

We continued towards the ridge and intentionally remotely triggered an avalanche on the steep terrain below the south end of the ridge. This avalanche broke 1000' wide, 18" deep, and ran 100 vertical feet to the trees. This avalanche likely happened on a layer of buried surface hoar similar to what we found in our pit on ski hill. Strong west winds at the ridgeline continued to blow snow and made for poor visibility but as we continued more cracking was seen and cornices were remotely triggered when walking near them.

Snowfall and strong winds continued making for poor visibility at ridgetop. We skied back to the snowmachine and portions of our skin track had been filled in by the steady wind and snowfall.

Region
Lionhead Range
Location (from list)
Lionhead Ridge
Observer Name
Zach Peterson