

Backcountry Weekly Summary

Intern:	Zach Kinler
Week and Year	November 14-20, 2018
Backcountry zone:	Crested Butte Area

Notable Weather Events (snowfall, SWE, winds, temps, etc.)

Sunny skies, a strong inversion followed by the warmest high temperatures of the season highlight this week in weather. High Pressure re-established itself over our area for most of this week as our two + week stretch of snow and/or wind came to an end. Along with the high pressure, a strong inversion developed in the Gunnison Basin and this pattern was locked in, as is the case many times when there are cold temperatures and continuous snowpack down to valley bottoms with a lack of mixing under strong high pressure. During this time we also saw highs climb above freezing up to ~12,000' with clear skies and strong solar radiation.

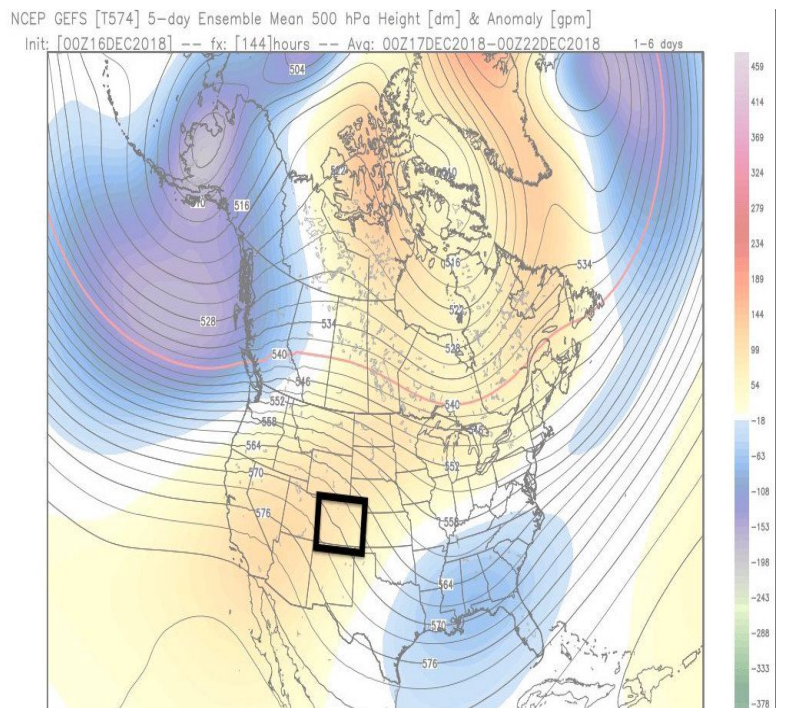
The week ended with a quick, cold shortwave riding the backside of the ridge and dropping 1"-4" of snow and strong Northwest winds. Not a big storm in itself but it signals the start of a pattern change that may allow several more storms to impact our area during this next week.

Below on the left is a screenshot of the weather stations in our area on the morning of Dec 17th with the temperature profile clearly showing much warmer temps as you gain elevation and colder temperatures at low elevations. On this day, a 32F difference in low temperature is present. Below and right is 500mb pressure for Dec 17-21 showing the high pressure trend over the western US during this time.

Gunnison

Click on column title to sort and static

Station	Elev	Temp	MxTp	MnTp	DewP	RH	Spd	Dir	Gst	F
Gunnison Arpt	7674	-4	2	-7	-9	78	0	0	-	
CW1428 Gunnison	7717	-4	-	-	-15	59	0	44	-	
Almont	8006	-5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Crested Butte (RWIS)	8926	4	-	-	2	89	0	335	0	0.0
Silver Jack Reservo	8927	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Park Cone	9601	-2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Butte	10161	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Irwin Guides StudyP	10400	12	-	-	4	69	4	349	5	0.0
Taylor Park	10501	11	-	-	-1	57	2	360	5	
Upper Taylor	10640	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Crested Butte Mtn R	11300	27	-	-	-	-	8	239	9	
Irwin Guides RidgeT	12000	24	-	-	-2	32	9	262	18	



Grand Mesa

Click on column title to sort and static

Avalanches

On 12/20 after 1"- 4" snow and strong winds, one small windslab on a westerly aspect was reported [here](#). The only other natural avalanches reported in our zone this week were a few loose wet dribblers from steep sunny terrain during peak heating.

At the [ski resort](#) and Irwin, explosives were able to pry out a few small slabs which ran on the 11/22/18 interface but all was quiet other than that.



D1 Windslab, West aspect



Explosive triggered D1.5 @ CBMR

Incident, accidents, close calls

No incidents were reported in our area, however just to our North in the Aspen zone, a large, human-triggered avalanche most likely occurring on Dec. 15th. This slide was above 12,000' on an East aspect in complex avalanche terrain. It propagated quite far and illustrates the type of avalanche that is still possible around our area which has a similar snowpack. Below is a picture of that slide from Josh Vogt.



Comments (anything unusual/noteworthy, thoughts on the near future)

With a return to snowy weather on the horizon, it looks like we will get back to building our early season snowpack. Continued snowfall will bury our basal weak layers deeper and hopefully continue the healing process that we have seen on these layers. Our attention will be on our latest weak layer(s) near the surface as these may be more sensitive and come to life with smaller loads, however we will still pay close attention to our deepest and potentially most destructive weak layer.