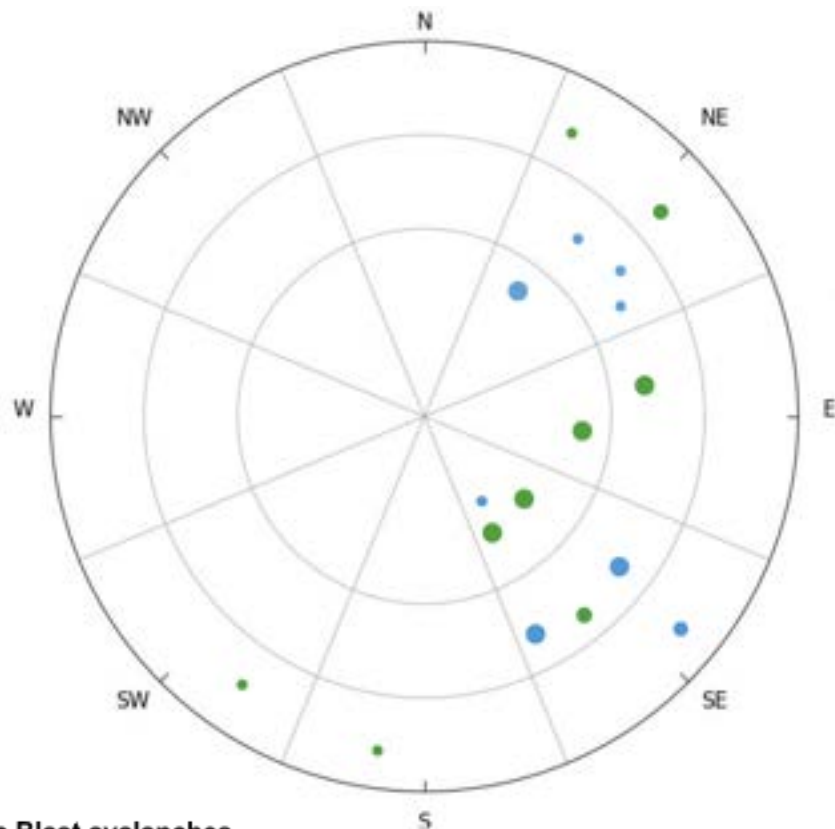


Weekly Summary December 23-29

Authors:	Dan Hohl and Zach Kinler
Dates:	Dec 23-29, 2022
Zones:	Crested Butte, Northwest & Southeast Mountains

Friday 12/23

The aftermath of the 12/21-22 Arctic Blast! Windward slopes are eroded or windboard. Some terrain features like abrupt concavities and rollovers were able to become wind loaded and form hard slabs, however these features have shown little reactivity. The silver lining to this wind event is the destruction of some of the near surface facet layer that was building during the high pressure days before the event. However this layer is still present on many aspects and elevations especially in areas with a shallow snowpack. Several wind slabs ran naturally during this event. All reported avalanches occurred on Northeast through Southeast terrain, the result of the sustained Westerly winds.



12.21-22 Arctic Blast avalanches



Saturday 12/24

Saturday 12/24 was warm with temps in the mid 20's, partly cloudy, with moderate Northwest winds. One to two inches of snow fell since yesterday. This is sitting on top of wind hardened surfaces or previously faceted surfaces and could become a buried weak layer if it facets before the next round of storms arrive. No signs of instability were reported today but several avalanches that ran during the wind event were observed, the majority of which were hard slabs on East through South aspects Near Tree Line.



Sunday 12/25

Christmas day was an unsettled one with mostly cloudy skies, moderate Northwest winds, and temps averaging in the mid 20's. The snow surface on wind affected terrain ranged from faceted to thin wind board to bullet hard sastrugi. Soft snow remained in very sheltered terrain, and was continuing to facet during this short high pressure ridge. Three human triggered avalanches were reported. All three were on Northeast aspects Near Tree Line.



Flank of a skier triggered avalanche. Facets over facets. NE aspect NTL

Monday 12/26

Another high pressure day of clear skies, temps in the low 30's, and light NW winds. No avalanches were reported today. The snowpack continues to weaken in sheltered terrain, where the faceting process has been uninterrupted. In exposed terrain, particularly above treeline, any lingering wind slabs have become unreactive.

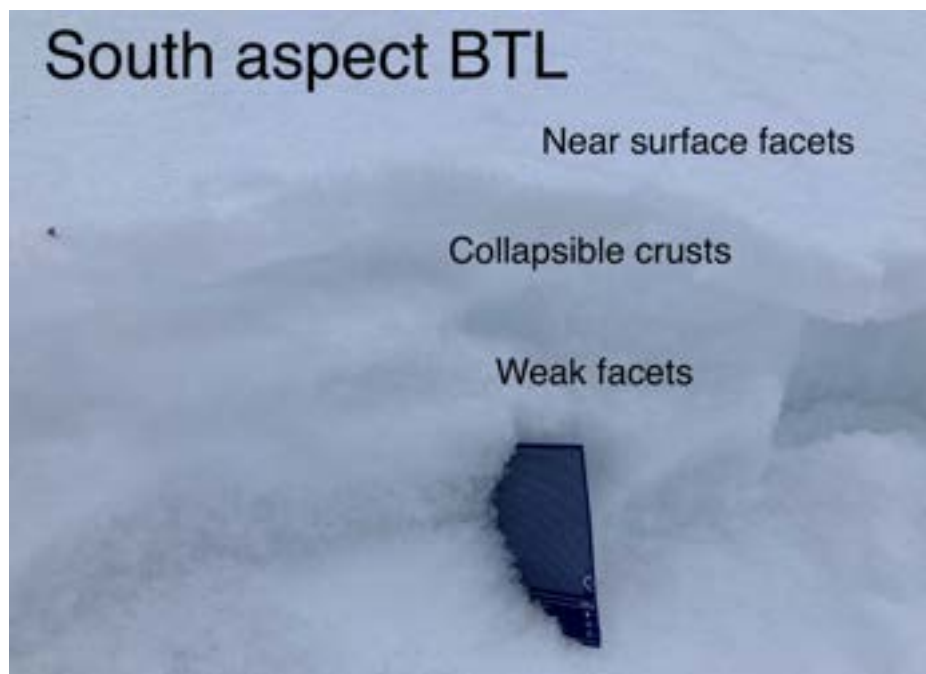


Tuesday 12/27

Tuesday began mostly sunny and transitioned to mostly cloudy by the afternoon as the temperature and winds picked up in front of the incoming storm. Small skier triggered facet sluffs were reported from Snodgrass.



These sluffs ran in start zones of previous avalanches and each entrained more weak snow as they traveled down slope. This kind of full faceting is present on most shady terrain, whereas solar aspects hold a combination of collapsible crusts sandwiched between facet layers. Surface hoar was also reported on all aspects Near and Below Tree Line in the Cement Creek and Brush Creek drainages as well as the Anthracites. These are the layers that are now buried from the storm that began Tuesday night.



Wednesday 12/28

Winter has returned to the valley! In the last 24 hours CBMR received 7", Irwin clocked in at 12", and Elkton is showing 13". This significant load of new snow jumped the avalanche danger from Moderate to Considerable to High over the course of the day. The warm temperatures that accompanied this storm added even more stress to the snowpack. Sixteen avalanches were reported today, all on the Eastern half of the compass, and the vast majority on true East. Many of these avalanches were human triggered, and more specifically remotely and sympathetically triggered.



Thursday 12/29

Thursday was mostly dry with occasional light snowfall and light Northwest winds. The storm total in favored areas since Wednesday morning is over 20 inches. Irwin reported 21" and Elkton came in with 18". Three avalanches were reported on Thursday. One was a natural D2 on the Southwest side of Gothic and the other two were skier triggered soft slabs within the new snow, also on solar aspects of Anthracite Mesa. Looking ahead to the weekend, light snowfall will begin tonight and ramp up over the course of the day on Friday and should continue until Monday morning. Avalanche danger will quickly rise again once the snow begins to fall and looks to stay elevated through the weekend. Very dangerous conditions are expected by Saturday.



Skier triggered soft slab on solar aspect of Anthracite Mesa