

Weekly Summary February 17 - 23, 2023

Authors:	Dan Hohl
Dates:	February 17 - 23, 2023
Zones:	Crested Butte, Northwest & Southeast Mountains

Friday 2/17

The overnight lows leading into Friday dropped to the negative twenties at the valley floor. An inversion kept the higher elevation terrain above zero. The clear sky brought daytime temperatures up into the low 30's F. Winds were light out of the west. A large wind slab was triggered by a small wet loose on a south slope above tree line on Mineral Point. This resulted in a close call for a group of skiers who had just ascended the terrain. Other small wet loose avalanches were observed on steep, rocky solar slopes on Belleview.



Wind slab triggered by a wet loose on Mineral Point

Saturday 2/18

Saturday was a mild day. Daytime highs reached the upper 20's F, winds light out of the west, and the sky was clear. The only signs of instability reported were small 1-2" wind slabs that were actively forming as alpine winds increased to moderate speeds.



Sunday 2/19

The winds overnight into Sunday gusted up to 61 mph out of the west at Scarp Ridge and 55 mph out of the west at CBMR. Average wind speeds were in the 20's out of the WNW. The Irwin Guides study plot, CBMR, and Schofield Pass recorded no new snow, however the moderate to strong winds likely skewed those numbers as observers reported 1.5 to 3 inches of new snow.. Two skier triggered wind slabs were reported. One D1 on a NE aspect near tree line on Schuylkill Ridge and a remotely triggered D2 on a SE aspect below tree line in Little Lady Bowl.



Monday 2/20

Westerly winds overnight into Monday were strong, Scarp Ridge gusted up into the 60's and CBMR gusted into the mid 30's during the morning. Winds decreased during the day but held at moderate speeds with significant snow transport. Daytime snow accumulation exceeded expectations as the mountains received 2-5" on average. Wind slab growth was significant as the winds continued to blow. Skiers intentionally triggered a D1 wind slab on a NE aspect near tree line in West Brush Creek.



Skier triggered wind slab NE NTL West Brush Creek

Tuesday 2/21

A trace to 2" fell overnight leading into Tuesday morning and the winds remained at moderate speeds but shifted slightly to the southwest. The snowfall tapered off by the early morning but snow transport continued due to the sustained winds. Several D1-1.5 avalanches were reported today that likely ran sometime between Monday and Tuesday morning. All of these avalanches ran above tree line and were primarily on east through north aspects as well as a single slide on a south aspect. Additional wind slabs were observed to be reactive on near tree line slopes.



Wind slab in Teo Bowl on CBMR intentionally triggered by Patrol

Wednesday 2/22

The storm arrived in force on Tuesday night. By Wednesday morning Irwin Guides reported 9". Snowfall continued throughout the day and by the evening CBMR received 4", Irwin finished with 16", and Schofield Pass showed 19". Strong southwest winds accompanied the snow. Scarp Ridge gusted to 83 from the WSW, CBMR hit 60 from the NNW, and Schofield gusted at 32 from the NNW. Two large avalanches ran in the Climax Chutes, one a D2 and another a D1.5, the larger of which ran 1900' vertical feet. Additional D1 and D1.5's were skier triggered below tree line on E and NE slopes on Mount Emmons.



D2 avalanche on NE NTL slope in the Climax Chutes

Thursday 2/22

The brunt of Wednesday's storm pushed out of the valley overnight but the mountains still squeezed out 2-5" by Thursday morning. Residual snowfall continued during the day and 24 hour snow totals finished at 6" for CBMR, 16" at the Irwin Guides study plot, and 18" for Schofield Pass. Moderate southwest winds caused significant snow transport over the course of the day. No avalanches were reported but skiers observed large collapses and shooting collapses on Mount Emmons. A few more inches are forecasted to fall overnight into Friday before dry weather returns. Sunday appears to be the next chance for snow.

